

The Book of Micah

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(1975 Study with Excerpts from a 1993 Study)

The following notes on the Book of Micah were compiled from a Bible study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu circa 1975 with excerpts from a 1993 study. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. Each paragraph preceded by “**Comment**” or “**Q**” (an abbreviation for “**Question**”) was introduced by someone other than Bro. Frank.
2. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
3. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
4. Finally, Bro. Frank did not review the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

THE BOOK OF MICAH

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu circa 1975 with excerpts from a 1993 study)

Micah 1:1 The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

The “word of the LORD” came to Micah in the days of kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, all of whom were of the Judah line. What Micah saw concerned Samaria and Jerusalem. Samaria, the capital of the ten-tribe kingdom, represented the ten tribes, while Jerusalem, the capital of the two-tribe kingdom, represented the two tribes. Thus Micah’s prophecy pertained to both houses of Israel.

Micah, a Morasthite, came from Moresheth, which was in the lowlands of Israel. Evidently, then, Micah had been a farmer.

Micah 1:2 Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is: and let the Lord GOD be witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple.

The prophecy starts abruptly after a *brief* introduction. Here “earth” refers to the *people*, the social order, and not to the physical planet. “All” of the people in Israel in Micah’s day were being addressed primarily, although a secondary application pertains to the last days of the present evil world. Micah *literally* addressed the nation back there, and there is also a message for the people living today.

The message came not only from the Lord God but also from His “holy temple.” With the source being stated this way, the message was even more authentic to the people. They could each take the message personally, for it originated from God’s own personal resentment and indignation. Micah wanted the hearers to know that the message came not from him but from *God* and from *His* “holy temple.” God was threatening the people.

In addition to the message originating from Jehovah’s holy Temple, there is the thought that He would come *down* from the Temple. Verse 2 also shows that God’s own throne in heaven is sometimes spoken of as a “temple.” The literal temples of Israel were merely a reminder or an illustration—a memorial, a place of worship, a convenience, where God talked to His people—of something much higher and grander.

Micah 1:3 For, behold, the LORD cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth.

Not only would God come down, but also He would come *forth*. The use of that expression indicated that a strong message would be delivered. God was coming down and forth to tread the “high places of the earth,” but why was He not coming just to tread the “earth”? The places of false (heathen) worship were usually in the groves on the hills, that is, in prominent places. Moreover, the wicked individuals controlling society were seated in “high places.” In other words, the rich and the wealthy—the leaders of the nation—would primarily get the brunt of this message. Antotypically, the message is addressed to leaders in positions of responsibility in Christendom, especially to those in *religious* realms. The mention of treading alludes to the treading of the winepress, when God will manifest *vengeance*.

Micah 1:4 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.

An earthquake is the backdrop for this lesson. When an earthquake occurs, fissures open up and molten lava flows forth from the crater down the hill. It was as if God would come down and touch the high places and melt them so that molten lava would flow down. This is a *strong* picture of trouble! Often there is a valley between two mountains, and it would take a *very great* earthquake to separate the mountains to the point of causing a cleft in the valley.

The lava was described as being (1) like wax and (2) like waters “poured down a steep place”; that is, it would descend rapidly from the mountains. Mount Vesuvius and Pompeii are well-known examples of fast-flowing lava. We know that Micah was alluding to a volcanic eruption because the tops of the mountains were involved. An earthquake can set off a volcanic eruption or be associated with it.

Back there at the time of judgment, a literal earthquake could have taken place to remind the people of Micah’s message. However, at the end of the age, this earthquake and volcanic eruption will be symbolic.

Micah 1:5 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?

The previous verses showed that the motive of Jehovah was to tread the high places. Now verse 5 gives the reason: “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?” In this context, “Jacob” refers to the ten-tribe kingdom. What was wrong with Samaria and Jerusalem? Why did Micah single them out? Power and responsibility, both religious and civil, were *concentrated* in the two capitals, and corruption was centered there too. Although corruption was widespread throughout the two kingdoms, it was worse in the seats of government.

Micah 1:6 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.

A farmer might remove stones from the top layer of soil and pile them up in a heap, or he might build a fence by placing stones in a heap. Almost all of the major archaeological digs of the last hundred years have been in “heaps,” for a city would be leveled and another built on top of it, etc. Ancient civilizations were buried in a “heap” and covered over with soil, sand, and rubble. Many cities have become heaps (called “mounds” or “tells” by archaeologists).

God said He would make Samaria not only a heap in the field but also a place for planting vineyards. In preparation for a new planting, the remains of a former crop or vineyard were removed and piled up as debris or tossed in a heap. When sufficiently dry, the excess dead vines were often burned.

God further declared that He would “pour down” the stones of Samaria into the valley and “uncover her foundations” (see Revised Standard Version). In other words, the city had to be leveled in order for its foundations to be uncovered. Antotypically, this is a picture of the civil and religious institutions being destroyed—which means that the corrupt conditions in Christendom’s high places will be revealed in the great Time of Trouble. This corruption, which is the cause of so much injustice in society, will be exposed at its source.

Micah 1:7 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.

Verse 7 is a reminder of the “harlot” picture in Revelation chapter 17. In the type, God rolled down Samaria’s stones and uncovered her foundations. This likening of the city of Samaria to a harlot is similar to the description of Babylon the Great, to which Micah was alluding. The fact that the graven images would not just topple over but had to be beaten into pieces shows a *concentrated* and *organized* effort. The purpose of breaking the images to pieces would be to prevent their ever being rebuilt or put together again. Hence *complete* destruction is shown.

“All her hires [earnings] shall be burned with fire” (RSV). Not only would Samaria be destroyed, but the wealth and money associated with her would also be decimated. To be “burned with fire” indicates that the basic metals used for money would be melted and reused. In the antitype, the money of the current order will lose its value and identity in the melting process.

What is the difference between “graven images” and “idols”? In addition to sculptured images, false religions use pictures, icons, etc. Hence statuary will be destroyed, money will be melted and burned, and all furnishings and accessories connected with idol worship will be destroyed. On the higher plane, not only will the false religious systems be destroyed but all their trappings as well.

“For from the hire of a harlot she gathered them, and to the hire of a harlot they shall return” (RSV). Micah likened the wealth and much goods of Samaria to the earnings of a prostitute, or harlot. To the Jews of Samaria, it did not appear that way, for in their own eyes, their wealth was legitimate. However, at the time of the destruction of the ten tribes, the wealth was seen in its true light. The people then realized they had acquired their wealth unjustly. This portion of verse 7 is another way of saying that the foundations would be uncovered, that the real source of their revenue would be revealed. By ignoring their consciences, the people began to believe their wealth was legitimate, but exposure came eventually.

Today this principle can be seen in churches that have raffles, Bingo, parties, etc. Such activities provide revenue for the denomination, with the wealth all supposedly being for the Lord’s cause, but the day will come when the activities will be seen in their true light. These practices encourage gambling and can even break up homes by taking money needed for necessities. The nominal Church should not be predicated on that type of revenue. Giving should be on a voluntary basis and not of constraint. “God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).

Micah 1:8 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 the prophet was talking, and verse 8 gives us insight into something he literally did; namely, he went naked and howled like wild animals. This method certainly attracted the attention of the people, but it would have required *much* faith and courage on Micah’s part. To get his message across, he purposely dramatized and thus made himself stick out like a sore thumb in society. He was saying in effect, “What you see in my deplorable condition, and in my howling and wailing, *will happen to you.*” This was a *powerful* message by a prophet who was sincerely stirred up and full of indignation. If not genuinely affected by the message, Micah would have given a weak wail, obeying only because the Lord had told him to do so. But he personally **FELT** the message. Because of his indignation, he experienced no shame over his nakedness. His attitude was, “If you think you shame me by looking at me, you are mistaken. You are looking at what will happen to *you!*” Micah had to be an extremely *strong* character. This dramatization reminds us of Isaiah, who spent two years with his buttocks exposed.

Incidentally, the prophets Isaiah and Micah overlapped for part of their ministries, although Isaiah began earlier and they served in different areas.

Comment: In the RSV, “dragons” and “owls” are “jackals” and “ostriches,” respectively.

Reply: An owl or dove is known for its wise-looking eyes. Similarly, the frogs of the froglike, unclean spirits that come out of the mouths of the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet are noted for their croaking doctrines and pronouncements and their “wise” look. The owl hoots at night under cover of darkness. What exactly the “dragon” is in nature is hard to say, but as the Revised Standard says, it could be a jackal, which is like a hyena. However, the word “dragons” of the King James is providential, for it reminds us of the dragon in the Book of Revelation. If “dragons” refer to the crocodile family, perhaps such beings make unusual sounds at night. Otherwise, the animal would be the jackal or the hyena. The word “owls” is probably more accurate than “ostriches.”

Micah 1:9 For her wound is incurable; for it is come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem.

The Revised Standard Version reads, “For her [Samaria’s] wound is incurable; and it has come to Judah, it has reached to the gate of my people, to Jerusalem.” Samaria was being likened to a harlot, a woman, and hence was a “she” or “her.” The harlot’s sickness was incurable and needed drastic action or “surgery.” Mystic Babylon, too, has an incurable wound: “We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed” (Jer. 51:9).

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

Gath was one of five royal Philistine cities. The burden of this prophecy was more against the professed people of God than against the heathen. Aphrah means “dust.” Like verses 11-14, verse 10 is a pun, or play on words, with the names of the towns. The message was directed primarily against Judah and Samaria, and not against the heathen towns, even though the latter were sin cities. The purpose of the pun could have been to affect the attitude of Judah and Samaria toward the towns. The Jews were magnifying the towns by *unfavorably* sounding their names; that is, when they mentioned Gath, it was from an unfavorable standpoint. The name was used in derision—as an object worthy of evil consequences. Micah took up these colloquial expressions as if to say to Judah and Samaria, “The laugh is really on you, for the mourning and weeping will not occur in these traditional places but will happen to *you!*”

Micah 1:11 Pass ye away, thou inhabitant of Saphir, having thy shame naked: the inhabitant of Zaanan came not forth in the mourning of Beth-ezel; he shall receive of you his standing.

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

Micah 1:13 O thou inhabitant of Lachish, bind the chariot to the swift beast: she is the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion: for the transgressions of Israel were found in thee.

Micah 1:14 Therefore shalt thou give presents to Moresheth-gath: the houses of Achzib shall be a lie to the kings of Israel.

Micah 1:15 Yet will I bring an heir unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareshah: he shall come unto Adullam the glory of Israel.

Verses 11-15 read as follows in the RSV: “Pass on your way, inhabitants of Shaphir, in nakedness and shame; the inhabitants of Zaanan do not come forth; the wailing of Beth-ezel shall take away from you its standing place. For the inhabitants of Maroth wait anxiously for good, because evil has come down from the LORD to the gate of Jerusalem. Harness the steeds to the chariots, inhabitants of Lachish; you were the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion, for in you were found the transgressions of Israel. Therefore you shall give parting gifts to Moresheth-gath; the houses of Achzib shall be a deceitful thing to the kings of Israel. I will again bring a conqueror upon you, inhabitants of Mareshah; the glory of Israel shall come to Adullam.”

Verse 1 stated that Micah was from Moresheth, which is mentioned in verse 14. Thus the locality in which the prophet was born and raised was included as part of the prophecy. (A higher significance lies behind that name.) Moresheth was near the Philistine territory.

Shaphir and Zaanan were towns in Israel that bordered the Philistine territory. Verses 10-15 are difficult for us to understand, but Micah was talking about things familiar to the people of his day. Therefore, the sarcasm and play on words would have been understood back there.

The Book of Micah began by saying it was a prophecy directed against Samaria, a *city* used to represent the ten tribes, and Jerusalem, a *city* used to represent the two tribes. Then the prophet went into a play on words by using the same consonants but just changing the vowels or the pronunciation, thereby giving two different meanings. The sarcasm was directed against the nation of Israel.

Sodom and Gomorrah are symbols of wickedness and of what will happen to the evildoer, yet the Lord described Israel in one part of her history as being “Sodom” and “Gomorrah” (Isa. 1:10). Thus, while the criticism of these other cities not under the Lord’s name was just, the nation of Israel, who thought she was in a better position, was sinful and wicked herself. The moral lesson was a reflection on the nation. While the Jews spoke derogatorily of others, they themselves were guilty, and their words would bounce back on them, for the contagion of sin that started in the area surrounding Israel permeated her also. That is the general idea of what Micah was saying, but the actual meaning of verses 10-15 is difficult to comprehend.

Micah 1:16 Make thee bald, and poll thee for thy delicate children; enlarge thy baldness as the eagle; for they are gone into captivity from thee.

The RSV reads, “Make yourselves bald and cut off your hair, for the children of your delight; make yourselves as bald as the eagle, for they shall go from you into exile.” In olden times, a person made himself bald because of sin or debasement. For example, if a battle was lost, penance before God could be shown by making oneself bald. The individual debased himself and also usually put on sackcloth (burlap) and ashes. It was an attempt to belittle one’s own glory, beauty, strength, or cleanliness in order to have a petition answered by the Lord.

Although Micah was referring to an event yet future, the King James has him speaking as if it were already in the past. In other words, he was predicting that Israel and Judah would both go into captivity. Judah had already gotten the cancer, and it was only a matter of time until captivity would occur. At the time Micah spoke, Judah was not yet in captivity, but he spoke as if the land were already rid of its inhabitants. Thus this prophecy was derisive. Verse 9 shows Judah had reached the point of no return, and therefore, the future captivity was a sure thing.

Micah 2:1 Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand.

Verse 1 is a moral lesson that reminds us of the great Time of Trouble. Here the time of trouble and visitation was seen to be coming on Judah, upon those who devised wickedness at night; that is, they planned the wickedness at night and then waited for the next business day to cheat someone out of his property, goods, or services. However, the time was approaching when the wicked themselves would experience trouble (see verses 2 and 3).

Micah 2:2 And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.

Micah 2:3 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily: for this time is evil.

The wicked coveted fields and took them with *violence*. The Revised Standard says they “oppress ... a man and his inheritance. Therefore thus says the LORD: Behold, against this family I am devising evil, from which you cannot remove your necks; and you shall not walk haughtily, for it will be an evil time.” Those who devised wickedness would not escape; they would not be able to “remove” their necks. “It will be an evil time” was another way of saying that it would be the time of trouble for them back there.

One form of wickedness concerned people being defrauded out of their inheritance. Houses that had been in one family for generations were *permanently* taken away. For instance, when the Jubilee year came every fiftieth year, all properties were to be restored, but this wicked element refused to comply with that arrangement. The Jubilees were very imperfectly observed at this point in Israel’s history. As the 70 years’ desolation was drawing near, there was only a token observance. “Inheritance” pertained to land *rights*, not merely to present tenure. That which properly belonged to the people was taken away and not returned. Under the Jubilee arrangement, no one was supposed to lose his inheritance except on a *temporary* basis for only *part* of the 50 years.

Micah 2:4 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 2:5 Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the LORD.

The RSV has, “In that day they shall take up a taunt song against you, and wail with bitter lamentation, and say, ‘We are utterly ruined; he changes the portion of my people; how he removes it from me! Among our captors he divides our fields.’ Therefore you will have none to cast the line by lot in the assembly of the LORD.” Verses 4 and 5 tell how the ruling classes took advantage of the common people. Verse 5 refers to a method of casting lots in the Temple. From the pure Urim and Thummim arrangement came a corruption with dice or physical objects to describe the Urim and Thummim. Then stones were used to cast lots, and finally an even cruder form of using cords or lines was devised. A “line” was similar to today’s practice of using straws of different lengths. When the longer line or cord was selected, it was attributed to Divine Providence, since the system was set up by the priesthood and used in the Temple.

Thus the priesthood were also involved in the wickedness, and judgment would be meted out to the leadership for oppressing their fellow man (verse 2). Conditions became intolerable in Judah, just as they had become so earlier in the ten-tribe kingdom.

Micah 2:6 Prophecy ye not, say they to them that prophesy: they shall not prophesy to them, that they shall not take shame.

Not wanting to hear Micah's prophecy, the priests and the leaders said to him, "Do not preach ... one should not preach of such things; disgrace will not overtake us" (see RSV).

Micah 2:7 O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the LORD straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?

While the *Lord* was punishing the people and it was a *divine* judgment, the punishment was *not* God's fault—it was their *own* fault! If they had obeyed Him, the judgments would not have come. Whenever a prophet—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, or another true prophet—pronounced a message of condemnation, the reaction was, "Oh, it is nothing but trouble! Here comes another sermon!" Because of the repetition of the judgment message, the people got the thought that the Lord was associated with that type of message. But God was saying, "Do not blame me for the judgment; it is your own fault for disobedience. If you had walked uprightly, this judgment would not have been necessary."

Over and over Micah spoke sarcastically, and his words cut the people to the quick because he was RIGHT! He was blunt and got directly to the heart of the matter. Remember what Ahab said to Elijah, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" (1 Kings 18:17). And in the incident with Micaiah, the king of Israel said, "Oh, he always prophesies bad things concerning me" (1 Kings 22:8,18 paraphrase).

Micah 2:8 Even of late my people is risen up as an enemy: ye pull off the robe with the garment from them that pass by securely as men averse from war.

The RSV has, "But you rise against my people as an enemy; you strip the robe from the peaceful, from those who pass by trustingly with no thought of war." Verse 8 provides further information on the misdeeds of the priestly and governing elements. Peaceful passers-by were robbed. "Ye pull off the robe with the garment" shows in figurative language that the leadership, not content with just the outer coat, stole the undergarments as well; that is, the victim was left with very little.

Within the nation of Israel, a certain element were so greedy for wealth and/or power that they were willing to take advantage of their fellow man. Men were deprived of inheritances, their houses were robbed, etc. Micah was severely condemning the whole arrangement and likening the greedy element to an enemy. Violence was emphasized in verse 2 and again here.

Micah 2:9 The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever.

The normal function of the mother is to raise her children to recognize certain principles and a moral standard for living and, of course, to know and honor the Lord, but this practice was broken up. Instead of being raised in the true tradition—instead of going directly to the Mosaic Law—the people were taught traditions of men, the Talmud, etc. This watered-down message resulted in a lack of faith. Family life deteriorated because of corruption and oppression by the rulers and the priests.

Such deterioration is happening today too, because women are working full-time instead of properly bringing up their children. The children are either left alone or put in the care of other people. As a result, they are growing up not respecting their parents or the law (authority).

Instead of women having the pleasant duties of a home, they are removed from this environment and transferred to an environment that is not conducive to their role in life. They are taken out of the house and thrust into the business world—a man’s realm. Women should remain at home and raise their children.

Micah 2:10 Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction.

Micah was saying, “Depart from the land; it shall destroy you.” In other words, the inhabitants would be taken into exile so that the land could rest and enjoy its sabbaths. Because the land was not getting the rest that was so essential, it would cast them out.

From the time the Israelites entered the Promised Land, sabbaths (whether a day, a year, or a Jubilee) were to be counted. Because these cycles were not properly observed, retribution was coming. God made certain stipulations in His original contract with the Israelites, but because of disobedience, the Mosaic Law became an enemy to them; it became a law of condemnation and *death*, not life. If the sabbaths had been properly observed, the land would have brought forth twofold, tenfold, etc., but through the people’s disobedience, it became a curse to them instead of rest and plenty. Thus the land *destroyed* them. Whether the Law or the land is considered, the principle is the same.

Here again Micah used a play on words. More than any other prophet, he used sarcasm, paronomasias, and innuendos. He capitalized on common, everyday expressions about other cities, people, and things, giving them a new slant or pun so that they boomeranged back on the Israelites. Because these expressions are no longer used today, we understand only a fraction of what Micah was saying, but his words were mighty powerful back there. It is profitable to study the Book of Micah, for we learn certain principles that help us to evaluate other pictures and prophecies.

Micah 2:11 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.

The RSV reads, “If a man should go about and utter wind and lies, saying, ‘I will preach to you of wine and strong drink,’ he would be the preacher for this people!” In other words, the people listened to false prophets, and not to the true prophets. Micah was being *sarcastic*. The liar and the thief were accepted but not the prophet who gave a true message.

There was a parallel in the Gospel Age when religious leaders (monks) went from house to house extorting money from the people while drinking wine. When they entered a house, the inhabitants were expected to give them the best food and drink, and failure to do so resulted in increased taxes. Then, in a half-intoxicated state, they prophesied in the name of the Lord—and that practice was accepted!

Thus verse 11 shows the corruption in the priesthood. The priests and religious leaders uttered “wind,” or empty words; that is, they were windbags.

Micah 2:12 I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men.

Micah 2:13 The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them.

For verse 13, the RSV reads, “He who opens the breach will go up before them; they will break through and pass the gate, going out by it. Their king will pass on before them, the LORD at their head.” Verses 12 and 13 are a separate little scene. First, there was a denunciation of conditions that existed locally in the prophet’s day. Then, almost as if written in italics, some words come out that are foreign to the situation. Probably verses 12 and 13 were uttered somewhat later, at a different time from the previous. This message is favorable.

Why does verse 12 say, using a natural picture of sheep being returned to the fold, “I will surely gather *all* of you, O Jacob” (see RSV), and then, “I will surely gather the remnant of Israel”? A fold is usually a fenced-in, protected area. The thought is that the Israelites will be gathered to a more localized or centralized place at the end of the age, that is, in our day. When sheep are first gathered into a pen, the noise is very apparent, with much bleating, because a great number of sheep are confined together. Then, all of a sudden, the picture changes from sheep to men. Micah was showing the Jews being regathered to their homeland, and the fold is Israel itself, *the land*. Just as the Jews were scattered in the Diaspora, so they would be gathered back to Israel.

The fact that “their king will pass on before them, the LORD [Jehovah] at their head,” pinpoints the primary fulfillment of this prophecy as way down the stream of time to our day and future, yet the prophecy provided a measure of comfort to the Jews when they were taken captive to Babylon in 606 BC. Also, when they returned to their land after 536 BC, they felt that Divine Providence had arranged the return. Thus the prophecy was designed to be a double blessing.

Bozrah means “sheepfold,” and here the word is used *favorably*. The hills of Bozrah were especially suited for raising sheep. Here the emphasis is on fruitfulness and number, or multitude. The Jews will be regathered back to the land of Israel, but the land will be too small for the great numbers. The people will feel as if they are in a straitjacket, all crammed together. To date, we have seen only one type of regathering to Israel, but in the second regathering, the Gentiles will ship or help the remaining Jews back from their lands. The hunting and fishing take place *before* Israel’s deliverance in Jacob’s Trouble, and the regathering with the help of the Gentiles will occur *after* Jacob’s Trouble. That is why Micah made a distinction; namely, “I will surely gather all of you,” and then, “I will surely gather the remnant.”

The design is to ultimately bring all Jews back to Israel, and verse 12 tells of an ingathering before the Time of Trouble and an ingathering after the Time of Trouble. At present, the “remnant” is being dealt with, not the nation. This Holy Remnant will be the nucleus of the Kingdom on earth with the Ancient Worthies at their head. They will be the survivors, but to that remnant will come a great multitude or influx into Israel. When Michael stands up for the children of Daniel’s people (Dan. 12:1) and deals with the other nations, the Jews will know that he is the Messiah and that Jehovah is Israel’s God, and it will not take the Jews in other countries very long to go back to Israel.

“Their king [Jesus] shall pass before them, and the LORD [God] on the head of them.” After the Kingdom is established, after the regathering, and after the Lord is seen to be her King, Israel is described as being like a fire before all nations, for all the world will be under her control, and the nation that refuses to go up to Jerusalem to visit will not receive rain (Zech. 14:16,17). Another picture calls Israel at that time a devouring lion (Micah 5:8). All of these pictures have to do with the power, prestige, and influence of that little nation after the Kingdom is set up.

The Ancient Worthies will be resurrected in Israel, but then they will go forth to be “princes in *all* the earth” (Psa. 45:16). No doubt they will have companions with them during the time they are in other nations. Moreover, the Ancient Worthies will have rotational offices, so that each

will have a turn presiding in the Temple in Jerusalem. The Jews who accompany each Ancient Worthy will undoubtedly consist of a mayor, department heads, etc. The Lord will designate who the helpers are, as well as perhaps allow each Ancient Worthy to take some friends with him. We only know about the top rewards in the future, but there will be many lesser rewards, as shown by the principle that an individual who gives a cup of cold water to one of the saints will have his deed remembered (Matt. 10:42). Every person will be rewarded up to the *level* of his cooperation and kindness. All acts of every individual are recorded, whether for good or for bad. Also, the higher the level of motivation—for example, recognizing that one is a “saint” and thus helping him—the higher the reward will be. One way to reward such kindnesses would be to assign the individuals to an association with an Ancient Worthy and a minor office and responsibility. The Ancient Worthies will be the top earthly officials, but helpers in various capacities will be under them.

To become one of the Holy Remnant who will survive Jacob’s Trouble, a Jew will have to “pass under the rod” (Ezek. 20:37). There will be a purging experience so that only the right-hearted individuals with faith will live through the trouble. Their very survival will be based on *merit*. Gentiles receive no such ironclad guarantee; they are merely given a *general* guideline to “seek righteousness, seek meekness: it *may be* [that] ye shall be hid” (Zeph. 2:3). However, not a single Jew, whether in Israel or elsewhere in the world, will survive the Time of Trouble unless he is *handpicked* to do so. Consequently, Jews who return at the second ingathering from the Gentile nations will also be handpicked. Following their return, some will be assigned responsibilities and a minor office with the Ancient Worthies in other lands—and thus leave the “fold” temporarily. And so it is with a real sheepfold—the sheep are gathered into an enclosure for protection, especially against wolves at night, and then let out again in the morning to graze. After the Lord has protected the Jews and delivered them, they will be free to walk in and out of Israel.

Micah 3:1 And I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel; Is it not for you to know judgment?

The RSV reads, “And I said: Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know justice?” Micah was primarily addressing the civil ruling element or leaders of the nation of Israel. Strong language is used here and in the next few verses.

Micah 3:2 Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones;

Micah 3:3 Who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron.

For verse 3, the RSV has, “Who eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones in pieces, and chop them up like meat in a kettle, like flesh in a caldron.” Instead of using their offices to be like shepherds of the people and to help them, the leaders selfishly took advantage of the people for their own gain and not for the public good. The analogy is to an animal that is flayed (the hide is removed) and its flesh eaten. What a strong picture! Violence is shown here, and rapacity, avariciousness, and greed. It was as if the common people were ground up and chopped and put in a stew or soup. First, the hide was used, then the flesh, and finally the bones—until *nothing* of value was left.

The “caldron,” or pot, refers to the preparation of a meal in a home. In Jeremiah 1:13,14 and Ezekiel 24:2-14, Jerusalem is described as a pot, or caldron, in connection with evil judgment coming from the north. There the *people* came into the caldron and got stewed, whereas in this picture, what the leaders had done to the people—fleecing and depriving them, especially in

Jerusalem and in Samaria—would happen to the nation, particularly the *leadership*. The common people were working like slaves all along. Therefore, if they were taken captive to a foreign land, they would just *continue* as slaves, but it would be a real change for the leaders. Thus, according to the flesh, the common people would not be suffering much more, and if obedient, they would actually be treated quite well. The brunt of the trouble would fall on the rich, for they would lose all wealth and power. Antotypically, the brunt of the great Time of Trouble will be on the religious and civil *leaders* of Christendom. Those who are placed in positions of power to dispense justice and then misuse their offices are especially guilty.

Micah 3:4 Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.

“As they have behaved themselves ill in their doings” is rendered as follows in the RSV: “because they have made their deeds evil.” Mostly the *rulers* would cry to the Lord, but no response would be forthcoming at that time. If the civil and religious leaders had extended mercy to the people, they themselves would have gotten mercy. When the common people pleaded for mercy and forgiveness, the leaders refused to listen. Hence *retribution* would come.

Micah 3:5 Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that 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 RSV reads, “Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who cry ‘Peace’ when they have something to eat, but declare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths.” Verses 1-4 were directed primarily to the *civil rulers*. Verses 5-7 were directed primarily to the *religious leaders*, or false prophets, who gave the people a false vision and thus led them astray. Moreover, the false prophets caused trouble for those who resisted them, especially the true prophets. (For example, the false prophets declared “war” against Micah.) They spoke peaceably to those who reimbursed them or proffered them honor or goods or some kind of service, but they opposed those who either could not afford to pay or refused to pay. Thus two classes are shown here: (1) those who would not support or cooperate with the false prophets, and (2) those who would. How did the false prophets declare “war” on the true prophets, who resisted them? They tried to kill their influence or to harm them physically or in some other way. The false prophets were looking for material gain, and those who would not render it received a “bite.”

Micah and the true prophets spoke against the sins of the Israelites and prophesied of coming retribution, whereas the false prophets remained silent about the people’s sins and prophesied peace. They called the true prophets liars and claimed that their own authority came from occupying the office of prophet, sanctioned by the Lord. The true prophecies of doom were belittled.

Such was the situation on the *national* level, but in regard to *individuals*, the false prophets were busy too. They predicted good things and told good fortunes to those who greased their palms with money. Thus they spoke “peace” to individuals who paid them well, and they also spoke “peace” to the nation by saying there was little danger of an enemy invasion.

Micah 3:6 Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them.

The false prophets were supposed to be children of *light*, but they would be in *darkness*. They were to prophesy of things they would see (or imagine they would see), but the sunlight of

ability to “see” would darken. Some people can lie very well and may also have visions while they are lying and give all sorts of details, but even the ability to lie would depart. The false prophets spoke with confidence, and the people believed them, but Micah was saying that the time would come when the people would no longer believe them. The false prophets kept crying “Peace,” but the time would come when thousands of troops would be seen entering Israel. Thus, in due time, all the lies of the false prophets would be exposed, and their imaginations would be darkened. The sunlight of favor with the people would go down, so that the people would no longer look to them as religious guides. When things would *obviously* go wrong, the people would cease to esteem them.

Micah 3:7 Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God.

“They shall all cover their lips” is a reminder of the leper who, by the Law, was required to cover his lips with a mask as an admission that he was a spreader of disease. Whenever he approached within ten feet of anyone, he had to yell out, “Unclean, unclean!” If the leper did not do these things, he could be assaulted. The covering of the upper part of the mouth was to be self-recognition of guilt and of the disease. Accordingly, the seers, the false prophets, would be ashamed and have to admit their wrong when the fulfillment of trouble came. No answer would come to them from God.

Micah 3:8 But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.

Verse 8 provides a little insight into the character of Micah. Not only did he dutifully repeat what the Lord had told him to say about the sins of the people and the coming trouble, but he said, “What I am telling you is the gospel truth! You may not believe it now, but the time will come when *you will have to believe it*. I am speaking by the power of the Lord’s spirit!” Not satisfied to just declare the message, Micah wanted to get somebody to listen to him. He pleaded with the people that he was telling the truth. Micah’s personality becomes apparent in this earnest pleading. He was not speaking as a robot but actually *felt* his message and the power of its truth. He was declaring “unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.” He told the whole nation to their face—and with great courage too!

Micah 3:9 Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity.

The civil rulers abhorred justice by hating good and loving evil in two ways (see verse 2). They abhorred (1) the *exercise of their minds* on good qualities and (2) the *performance* of justice. Not only were they reluctant to do what conscience told them was right, but they *disdained* to do it. Thus they did not like even the principle of right, let alone the act or the deed. They loved evil in both senses of the word: mental sympathy as well as performance.

They “pervert all equity.” An example would be a judge who took a bribe to render a decision in favor of the guilty party in spite of incontrovertible evidence to the contrary. Thus justice was turned upside down and perverted by allowing the guilty party to go free and punishing the innocent one.

Micah 3:10 They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity.

The King James marginal reference is Jeremiah 22:13, which gives half the thought; namely, either there were no wages at all for labor performed, or else the workers were drastically underpaid. Verse 10 indicates that a building work was going on in Zion and in Jerusalem, the

capital. The Temple walls and government buildings, as well as private homes, were being extensively rebuilt at the expense of the people, who were being exploited and crushed. The city looked as if progress was being made, for it was beautiful, but every brick that was laid cost the people blood and cheated someone out of his wages. Thus Micah was being very sarcastic once again. He was saying, “Look at all this. Isn’t it wonderful?!? See how the Temple of the Lord is prospering and the city is being rebuilt and repaired.” Actually, however, the condition was the *opposite*.

Micah 3:11 The heads thereof judge for reward, and 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.

“The heads thereof judge for reward” is rendered in the RSV, “Its heads give judgment for a bribe.” The civil rulers, priests, and false prophets all had a common denominator: the love of *money*. The priests’ teaching for hire suggests a *regular* form of remuneration. The false prophets divined not only for the nation but also for individuals who would pay. Thus they used the office, which was supposed to be only for the oracles of God (prophesying or explaining the Word), for *personal gain* by supposedly prophesying out of the Word about an individual. They vulgarized the Word down to a common, unauthorized level and performed like a gypsy, divining and telling fortunes and dealing with little secret things in individual lives. Divining included cutting out the entrails of animals and making predictions from the resulting shapes. Such *imagination* they ascribed to the Word of the Lord!

Micah 3:12 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.

The “high places of the forest,” or the “wooded height” (RSV), was lower than the barren portion of the mountain above the timberline. To “be plowed as a field” meant that Zion would be overturned as a farmer overturns the soil in the field; that is, the masonry would be leveled. “Zion” referred to the Temple Mount area, whereas Jerusalem was the city itself. The “mountain of the house” also referred to the Temple.

In the antitype, Babylon will be overthrown, both civil and ecclesiastical—just as both civil and ecclesiastical natural Israel were overthrown back there. The religious and civil leaders thought they were building up the Temple and the city with material gains and prosperity. Both had a beautiful facade, but the inside was filled with dead men’s bones, that is, with corruption, blood, oppression, and iniquity. Because of these basic wrongs, the Temple and the city would be demolished. Jerusalem was to become a “heap of ruins” (see RSV).

Micah 4:1 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.

Micah 4:2 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.

Abruptly there is a change—from Zion being plowed as a field and trouble coming, to this scene of exaltation, where the Law will go forth out of Zion and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. The exaltation is quite a contrast to the previous verses! *Both* the city and the Temple that were destroyed will be rebuilt in the Kingdom.

Micah repeated part of Isaiah's prophecy but then added to it. The two prophets overlapped during three kings of Judah: Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. In part, they were contemporary prophets, although Micah lived beyond Isaiah's death.

Why did Micah introduce this prophecy about the "last [latter] days" at this point? After all his thundering predictions of trouble and destruction, he wanted to encourage the people. The Hebrew gives the thought of the "mountain of the house of the LORD" being *firmly* established. This figurative language about the house of God being established in the top of the mountains and above the hills means that Jerusalem will become the capital of the world—the most prominent city in the entire world, *exalted above all other governments*. No doubt, too, it will literally be higher than the surrounding hills after the earthquake mentioned by the Prophet Zechariah takes place (Zech. 14:4,5,10). All "people shall flow unto it" shows figuratively that there will be *voluntary* cooperation; the people will be *drawn* and not driven there.

"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." Some of the nations will cooperate quickly, right away, while the more recalcitrant ones will need judgments first.

The *Law* shall go forth from the Church in glory (Zion), whereas only the *declaration* of a judgment that comes from above will go forth from the earthly phase of the Kingdom, Jerusalem. Although this prophecy still has not been fulfilled, the contrast of hope and blessing with Micah's previous thundering gave encouragement to the people in the prophet's day. Up to the level of their thinking back there, this prophecy was designed to give them hope; that is, they considered "Zion" to be the literal Temple Mount, whereas we see the primary fulfillment to be the higher spiritual level.

"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." This Kingdom statement will be very far-reaching. It will be spoken by individuals, families, nations, and internationally—by *all* who are moved to go to the house of Jacob for instruction.

"People shall flow unto it [the mountain of the house of the LORD]." The word "flow" indicates a *voluntary, willing* going. It also shows that the people's hearts will be affected—they will be moved to go. Notice that the people will be drawn to the "God of Jacob." Not only will they recognize that God is the Supreme Creator and that His center seems to be in the nation of Israel, but also they will realize that He is the *God of Israel*. Moreover, this title shows that Israel will be greatly blessed in connection with its deliverance from Gog.

"For the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." The executive branch of the government in the Kingdom will be Zion, the Church in glory with Jesus as Head. The pronouncements of the laws will be done primarily by the Ancient Worthies.

Micah 4:3 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.

In the *Volumes*, the Pastor inserted some extra words: "He shall judge [previously in the Time of Trouble] among many people." It will take time after the Kingdom is established for the swords to be beaten into plowshares and the spears into pruning hooks, that is, for the conversion of war implements into peaceful agricultural and domestic pursuits or purposes. (Pruning hooks were hooks at the end of a long pole that was used to prune high branches.)

If the correct translation is as stated in the RSV, "He ... shall *decide* for strong nations afar off,"

the thought would be that God will counsel and give instruction to the strong nations. Hence they will not use their own judgment and discretion but will have to follow orders. If the correct thought is as rendered in the King James, “And he shall ... *rebuke* strong nations afar off,” the meaning would be that the strong nations will be reluctant and resistant along certain lines. The word “decide” harmonizes with the thought of the rod of iron and *authority*.

The beating of the swords into plowshares will require time. In fact, in just Israel alone, it will take seven years to convert the booty of metal, weapons, armor, etc., into domestic use (Ezek. 39:9). War goods will be changed into instruments and goods of peace. The rebuking of “strong nations afar off” will be short compared to the melting down of war implements.

In the anarchy period, there will be no organized wars. Individuals will have guns, but nations will no longer be fighting each other. When the food supplies run out, national armies will stop fighting, but individuals and gangs with guns will loot for food and pillage and steal. However, even the anarchists will look for the Lord when all food is exhausted.

“Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” After Armageddon, there will be no recurrence of war. When the host of Gog and Magog go up against the “camp of the saints” at the end of the Kingdom Age, they will be a figurative army, not a literal one (Rev. 20:7-9). They will act much the way students or workers do when they rebel; there will be no violence, but they will voice their displeasure. God will send “fire” down from heaven to destroy them.

In addition to no more war, there will be no false religious revival during the Kingdom, for the beast and the false prophet will figuratively go into the “lake of fire,” or Second Death (Rev. 19:20). Therefore, through the process of elimination, we can surmise that the rebellion at the end of the Millennium will be along another line.

Micah 4:4 But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.

Micah quoted the prophecy of Isaiah 2:4 and then added this verse, which describes a condition of *peace* (the opposite of war)—serenity, pleasure, and joy with material things in *simplicity*. The simple pleasures of life are promised. Imperfect man likes to sit in a penthouse or on a yacht, for example—in something built with his *own* hands—instead of under a simple and beautiful vine and fig tree. Now man labors to pay taxes or to supply the rich with bribes, but in the Kingdom, his labor will provide for his *own* table, and he will be able to relax and enjoy it. This picture is very sweet.

Let us return to Micah 3:5 for a moment. “The prophets who lead my people astray ... cry ‘Peace’ when they have something to eat, but declare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths” (RSV). When false prophets spoke “Peace,” they usually referred to an impending invasion or attack by an enemy, telling the people not to worry. The true prophets, on the other hand, predicted Israel’s defeat. Verse 5 reminds us of a prophecy of the end of the age: “When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (1 Thess. 5:3). The preceding verse talks of the Lord’s *parousia*: “The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (1 Thess. 5:2). Both the world of mankind and the nominal Church are unaware of the Lord’s *parousia*. When the nominal Church shall say, “Peace and safety,” then will come the great Time of Trouble. Back in Micah’s day, the false prophets who cried “Peace” were equivalent to the religious leaders in our day. A concerted message will go forth from the mouth of the beast and of the false prophet, boasting their confidence that things are under control. Today the bulk of society are frightened by the lawlessness they see in the earth, and they wonder what it

will lead to and how it will ever be contained. Eventually a strong, conservative government (a police state) will put down the anarchistic, rebellious element—but only *temporarily*. When it becomes manifest that the strong government has inherent weaknesses and prejudices and thus is not fit to have such power, then will come the explosion into worldwide anarchy.

Bro. Russell showed that in many places, “we” and “us” refer to true Christians, while “they” and “them” refer to professed Christians only. Thus the primary picture in 1 Thessalonians 5:3 is of the nominal system and its false prophets saying, “Peace and safety.” The “sudden destruction” is described as travail upon a woman with child. The word “travail” is often explained as spasms (*plural*) of trouble. If the word were properly “travail,” this definition would be true. However, the Greek word means “the birth pang” (*singular*—see *Diaglott interlinear*). Sudden destruction will come as the birth pang upon a woman with child. Just as the sudden seizure (of any one pang) comes on the woman, so will the trouble come. The sudden destruction *will not be prolonged*, such as it was with World War I and World War II.

In the Old Testament, the word “travail” is used to indicate a series, or spasms, of trouble, but that is not true in Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians. As the pang comes with suddenness upon a woman in the later stages of pregnancy—with a seizure—so sudden destruction will come upon those who say, “Peace and safety.” This destruction will be *real destruction*, not partial destruction followed by a little more and then a little more, etc. Just as the stone will smite the image with suddenness and great force and shatter it, so this text shows *sudden destruction*.

The same Greek word *odin* that is translated “travail” in 1 Thessalonians 5:3 is used in Matthew 24:7,8, “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” Notice the plurals: famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and sorrows. The word “sorrows” is the same word that is singular in 1 Thessalonians 5:3, but here it is translated in the plural. In travail, there would be a series of pangs, so in Matthew 24, the plural is proper to use because the context is a history of what has happened down through the Gospel Age.

The following distinctions in usage should be noted. In Jeremiah 4:31, the noise and anguish (that is, the “voice” of a woman) are likened to travail, or spasms of trouble. In Jeremiah 6:24, the pain of anticipation is called travail, or spasms. In 1 Thessalonians 5:3, the suddenness of the trouble, when it comes, is likened to the birth pang (*singular*).

Every man will sit under his own vine and fig tree, and no one will make him afraid during the Kingdom. Normally a person would sit under a vine or fig tree for shade and food, and so each person will have personal security in his own home. The strong, divine central government will make this condition possible.

“For the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.” Imagine that the *great Jehovah* has to tell us this for emphasis!

Micah 4:5 For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.

The Revised Standard Version corrects the tense: “For all the peoples *walk* [present tense] each in the name of its god, but we *will walk* [future tense] in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.” Verse 5 contrasts two different time periods: the present evil world versus the Kingdom, when Israel will have been delivered. From that point forward, Israel will walk *forever* in the name of Jehovah. Micah was contrasting conditions in his day with conditions under the future Kingdom; that is, “Though all nations *now* worship idols, we [Israel] will, at

that time [*future*], worship Jehovah for ever and ever.” No doubt the faithful few living in Micah’s day also applied this verse to themselves at that time, but in addition, they knew the day would come when the *entire* nation would worship Jehovah.

If we assume that the future tense in the King James is correct (“For all people *will walk* every one in the name of his god”), then another way to interpret verse 5 is to say that *in the Kingdom*, all peoples will walk in the name of Jehovah, and Israel, too (*especially*), will worship Him forever. (Of course in that case, “God” would begin with a capital letter.)

Micah 4:6 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;

The RSV has, “In that day, says the LORD, I will assemble the lame and gather those who have been driven away, and those whom I have afflicted.” Jehovah was addressing natural Israel. The Jews who were carried away captive into Babylon derived some comfort from this verse, but its primary fulfillment is in our day. Notice that regardless of the human instrument or agency used, God assumes the responsibility for the affliction of the Israelites during their period of disfavor: “whom *I* have afflicted.”

Micah 4:7 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.

The RSV reads, “And the lame I will make the remnant; and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and for evermore.” In other words, the Holy Remnant, who survive Jacob’s Trouble, will become the nucleus of the Kingdom: “a strong nation.” “Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee” (Jer. 30:11). The Holy Remnant will be a spared or rescued element.

Jehovah “will reign ... from this time forth and *for evermore*.” Jehovah’s reign will be forever, whereas the purpose of Christ’s rule, for the thousand years only, will be to bring the alienated human race into atonement with the Father. At the end of the Millennium, Christ will hand over the Kingdom so that God will be “all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28). The Kingdom is merely an *interim* government.

Jacob was made halt, or lame, when he wrestled all night with the angel; he limped thenceforth for the *rest of his life*. Jacob’s lameness was a sign of his experience and hence was not unfavorable, whereas Israel’s lameness was an unfavorable sign (Gen. 32:24-32).

The very characteristics that have made the Jews undesirable to some Gentiles will be the same characteristics that, when they are a changed, repentant people, will impel them to be superior to other nations in their humility and anguish over having rejected Jesus as their Messiah. There is a peculiar, perverse trait in man to make a scapegoat of one who is lame, to make him an object of scorn and ridicule. Rulers, too, capitalize on the weak. Thus Israel, in a lame and halt condition among the various nations, has been made an obstacle of derision and persecution. When convenient, rulers have made the Jew a scapegoat—an action that has been completely unmerited in many cases.

Micah 4:8 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.

As the “tower of the flock,” Jesus stands out head and shoulders above every other being except God. Verse 8 refers to The Christ, which, as a multitudinous seed, will also stand out

above all other beings except God. The Christ will be on a higher plane than the other sheep that will be developed among mankind during the Kingdom.

The first (or former) dominion is the one that Adam had: the earth. We know (1) that Christ is the Head of the firstfruits class, the Church; (2) that saviors (plural) will be on top of the mountains of Israel; and (3) that the New Covenant will be made with the nation of Israel, not with the world of mankind. Therefore, when the first dominion does come (and the Kingdom blessings with it), it will be through the arrangement made with the nation of Israel. In laying down his life to pay the ransom price, Jesus purchased the human race and thus got the rights to the first dominion. In the meantime, his merit has been loaned to the consecrated of the Gospel Age in connection with their standing before God and having the robe of Christ's righteousness. Since those who are faithful unto death will be part of the sin offering, the right of first dominion is also involved with them and their sacrifice, even though Christ previously purchased it. And the Kingdom blessings will come through the nation of Israel. Therefore, the way verse 8 is expressed, it could be viewed from any one of these three standpoints: Christ alone, The Christ, or natural Israel. Jesus alone and also The Christ are the "strong hold" of the nation of Israel. The Deliverer is to come forth out of Zion, and saviors (plural) are to rescue Israel at the end of the age (Obadiah 21). The term "daughter of Zion" refers to natural Israel.

The Christ in glory is "the kingdom" proper, yet there is a play on words here, as in other parts of Micah's prophecy. Just as the Church in glory will inherit the Kingdom, so natural Israel will inherit the restitution blessings of the Kingdom.

Micah 4:9 Now why dost thou cry out aloud? is there no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail.

The RSV reads, "Now why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in you? Has your counselor perished, that pangs have seized you like a woman in travail?" Jehovah was audibly addressing natural Israel through the mouth of the Prophet Micah. Israel has had a *series* (plural) of labor pangs and experiences. In the past, Israel's kings delivered them from trouble or at least had some hopeful counsel, but here the people were in labor pangs and anguish with no consolation or hope. The prophet was goading them on with a form of sarcasm, saying, "Don't you have a king?" Of course Israel had a King—Jehovah—but the people did not acknowledge Him as such. They were so used to looking to earthly leaders that when the earthly "king" had no counsel, they were without a leader. In truth, they should have had God as their leader all along—much as iron is attracted to a magnet.

Micah 4:10 Be in pain, and labour 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.

The RSV has, "Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail; for now you shall go forth from the city and dwell in the open country; you shall go to Babylon. There you shall be rescued, there the LORD will redeem you from the hand of your enemies." Verse 10 was like rubbing salt in a wound: "Writhe and groan! Haven't you got anybody to give you counsel? What is the matter with you? Why are you complaining?" Then the prophet gave the nation over to hard experiences: "All right, you deserve to be in pain and in labor. It is a lesson you really need." The Jews would have to leave the "city [Israel]" and go to the "open country [or field]," that is, to Babylon. Of course the "city" was Jerusalem in the strictest sense, but it represented the whole nation. Verses 9 and 10 would have been very powerful to the Jews living back there around the time of the Babylonian captivity.

Israel would be “delivered,” “rescued,” and “redeemed” from bondage in Babylon at the end of the 70 years of desolation when the Media-Persia Empire would eclipse the Babylonian Empire.

Micah 4:11 Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion.

Micah 4:12 But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.

Verses 11 and 12 read as follows in the RSV: “Now many nations are assembled against you, saying, ‘Let her be profaned, and let our eyes gaze upon Zion.’ But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, they do not understand his plan, that he has gathered them as sheaves to the threshing floor.” There might be a partial application to past history where other nations gloated over the captivity of the Jews, but the main application is at the end of this age. The analogy is to bundles, or sheaves, of wheat that are beaten, threshed, winnowed, etc., before the valuable wheat germ is garnered into the barn or bin for future use. Thus God will gather the various onlookers like sheaves of wheat (or grain) and thresh (or beat) them with hard experiences at the end of the age (see verse 13).

Micah 4:13 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.

At the end of the age, the *little, tiny* nation of Israel will beat and thresh these other nations. Number-wise, Israel is insignificant, but God will help the nation to thresh “*many people*.” The “daughter of Zion” can be natural Israel here, but it can also be considered the glorified Church, who, with Jesus, will rule the nations with a rod of iron. Just as oxen turn the wheel on a threshing floor, so here the oxen (Israel) will walk with brass hooves among the sheaves (Gentile nations), the stone wheel *and* the hooves doing a threshing work. A “horn” represents power, and “iron” is inflexible. Hence the “daughter of Zion” will be an inflexible power, or rule. “Brass” (or “bronze” in the RSV) has the thought of hardness.

When Israel is engaged in a military battle at the extreme end of the age, the nation itself will have to be taught a lesson, and the Lord God alone will deliver them. He will fight for Israel as He did in the days of old and make bare His holy arm (Isa. 52:10; Zech. 14:3).

The drama at the end of the age can be considered in still another sense. If we were a Gentile nation fighting against Israel in Jacob’s Trouble at the climax of Armageddon, and first Israel was defeated but then God rose up and wrought deliverance, we would feel that in a sense, *Israel* had achieved the victory, even though the nation had been helpless and God alone was responsible by divine power. Thus *Israel’s* God will fight for them by making their horn as iron and their hooves as brass. Actually Israel will be powerless at that time, but God’s power operating through the Holy Remnant will be so mighty that all resistance will be broken down.

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.

Micah 5:2 But 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.

The RSV reads, “Now you are walled about with a wall; siege is laid against us; with a rod they

strike upon the cheek the ruler of Israel. But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.”

There is a break in the narrative here. Micah 4:13 showed that the Church in glory and natural Israel would be accredited with breaking in pieces the Gentile nations. Micah 5:1 describes the siege in AD 70. It may be that just as the nation of Israel was laid in siege in AD 70, so there will be similar circumstances down here at this end of the age. However, one big difference is that while Israel will be *temporarily* defeated in Jacob’s Trouble, the Lord will fight for them with mighty power and rescue them, whereas in AD 70, the nation was not delivered. In the near future, *all* of Jerusalem will be *taken*, and the defeat will be just long enough to make sure that under no circumstances will Israel be able to deliver itself. *Then God alone* will go forth and fight for His people. Divine power will bring the victory.

“With a rod they strike upon the cheek the ruler of Israel” (RSV) is probably an allusion to Messiah. This clause, which is a play on words, is contrary to fallen human nature. The one the nation smote will be their future ruler, whereas usually the one who has been maltreated would turn around and permanently cast off the nation. The very one whom Israel rejected and denied will be their ruler and deliverer. The siege and destruction in AD 70 was wholly attributable to Israel’s rejection of Messiah. Verses 1 and 2 will be a powerful witness to the Jews in the future, when it is seen that Jesus fulfilled all of these prophecies: Messiah, their future ruler, was to be born in Bethlehem, and he was to be struck on the cheek.

An educated Jew who is living at the time of Gog and Magog and sees the hostility of the enemy will probably think of AD 70. Seeing the city surrounded in siege and knowing the hatred of the enemy at that time will call to mind the previous desolation in AD 70 and the horrible outcome. Even now the Jews know that the Arabs would like to push them into the sea (eliminate the Jewish state entirely). This hostility is giving the current generation of Jews an idealism and a desire to fight, for they know they will perish if they do not keep up their preparedness. They are greatly outnumbered, so they have to be prepared to fight 25 to 1. In Jacob’s Trouble, they will know they are facing total extermination. At that time, things will be called to their attention about Jesus, and the right-hearted among them will realize he is their Messiah and will understand their extremity—they will recognize Jesus as the one who will deliver them. Therefore, verse 1 applies to both the AD 70 siege and Jacob’s Trouble.

“Ephrathah” is the name for the environs of Bethlehem. Rachel died in the vicinity of Bethlehem (in Ephrathah), giving birth to Benjamin. Bethlehem Ephrathah was little among the thousands of clans or towns (small hamlets) of Israel. Verse 2 shows that at one time, Judah was much more populous than it is today. Jesus is the ruler who was to come forth out of Bethlehem Ephrathah in Judah. Bethlehem Ephrathah is a *geographical* identification of Messiah, and Judah is a *family* identification of him. Incidentally, when the decree went forth from Herod to slay all the male children in Bethlehem Ephrathah from two years of age and under, Jesus was less than two years old—probably 1 1/4 or 1 1/2 years old—but Herod wanted to play safe by extending the age a little.

“Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” This clause was inserted to show that it was *in the plan of God* for the future ruler to come from Bethlehem Ephrathah and to be smitten on the cheek. It was general knowledge among the Jews that Messiah would come from Bethlehem, an insignificant village.

Trinitarians often use verse 2 to try to prove that Jesus and God are the same individual and that Jesus is everlasting, as implied in the King James Version. However, in many cases, *olam*, the Hebrew word for “everlasting,” does not necessarily mean from eternity to eternity but

has the thought of “to a completion” or “for an age.” When “everlasting” is truly the thought, either the context would prove it, or the Hebrew *olam* would be repeated, that is, used twice.

Q: What is the difference between a Nazarite and a Nazarene?

A: A Nazarite took either a temporary or a lifetime vow of refraining from alcoholic beverages and of being specially devoted, or consecrated, to the Lord. A Nazarene was an inhabitant of Nazareth.

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.

Here Israel is the one in travail. Because the nation crucified Jesus, God gave them up to the period of disfavor until the time that the Church is complete. Their “house” was left desolate, and they were delivered up for the period of the Gospel Age, the period of their travail (Matt. 23:38). Now, at the end of the age, favor has been shown to Israel in that they are back in their land, but a few hard experiences still lie ahead, climaxing with Jacob’s Trouble, which will result in the Holy Remnant’s recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. Both the vision of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37 and the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus picture Israel’s period of travail during the Gospel Age.

Isaiah 66:7-9 has both a spiritual application (in regard to the completion of the Church) and a natural application (pertaining to the nation of Israel). The natural application (“Shall the earth ... bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once?”) harmonizes with Micah 5:3, for the birth of the nation corresponds with the ending of its travail. First, Israel needed the experience of disfavor down through the Gospel Age, then there was a partial regathering to the land, and still a future wave of anguish must occur with Gog and Magog. Following the deliverance of the Little Flock and the Great Company, Israel will be delivered out of Jacob’s Trouble. God’s deliverance of Israel from Gog will result in the birth of the nation “in one day.”

“Then the rest of his brethren shall return to the people of Israel” (see RSV). Down through the Gospel Age, a small percentage of Jews have accepted Christ, but after Jacob’s Trouble, the remainder (the *vast majority*) will also accept Christ—and thus “return to the people of Israel,” as Micah describes it.

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 RSV reads, “And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.” Jesus will stand and particularly feed Israel, “his flock,” and also the Gentiles (the other sheep).

“They shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.” From the time the Kingdom is inaugurated, Israel will dwell securely, and Jesus shall become known throughout the earth.

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.

For verse 5, the RSV has, “And this shall be peace, when the Assyrian comes into our land and

treads upon our soil, that we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men.” At the time the Assyrian (Gog) invades Israel for Jacob’s Trouble, peace will come when the “seven shepherds” and the “eight princes of men” are raised against him.

After the Assyrian is successful in tearing down Christianity, that element will become very boastful, as shown by Isaiah’s saying the axe will boast and the saw will get so large it will think it has shaken itself (Isa. 10:15). God will permit this condition just so long, and then He will render a judgment, destroying the Assyrian *suddenly* with a *mighty* display of power and simultaneously rescuing the Holy Remnant of Israel. Isaiah 10:12 states, “When the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I [that is, God] will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.” That same verse in the RSV is rendered, “When the Lord has finished *all* his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem he will punish the arrogant boasting of the king of Assyria and his haughty pride.”

In the books of both Micah and Isaiah, the Assyrian is a symbol of the invading force at the end of the age. With the Prophet Micah sometimes quoting fragments of Isaiah’s words, a rapport existed between them. God used these two prophets, Isaiah being the greater of the two.

Verse 3 just stated, “Then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.” Now subsequent verses provide details of that return and how it will be brought to pass. For example, when the Assyrian comes into the land, God will raise up “seven shepherds” and “eight principal men.” Judgment will be visited on Assyria—not merely on the forces on the scene in Jerusalem and environs but also on those back in the *homelands*. The visitation will be upon Gog and also upon Magog, the *land* Gog came from (Ezek. 39:6).

Some Bible commentators feel that the “seven” and the “eight” apply to the Maccabean history and their success in warfare. Thus the Bible is couched in words that can be beneficial to God’s people, whether natural Israel or spiritual Israel, in whatever time period they are living. However, we live in the end time, and the “seven shepherds” and the “eight principal men” have a particular significance for our day as the Church and the Ancient Worthies, respectively. Just as the Lord has been selecting his Church down through the seven periods of the Gospel Age, so seven messengers have been specially used, one in each period. This spiritual leadership—the glorified Church as kings and priests—will see that the prophesied destruction comes on the Assyrian. In addition, the Ancient Worthies will be involved. Obadiah 21 shows that the deliverance of the Holy Remnant will take place at the hands of the glorified Church: “And saviours [plural] shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD’S.”

Verse 5 indicates the *power* and the *authority* that will be manifested by the Ancient Worthies when they are raised. These representatives of the Kingdom in the flesh will not just be lecturers! Called “eight principal men,” they will be raised perfect (Heb. 11:40). They will be a leading element but on an earthly plane during the Kingdom. The Holy Remnant will assist and be honored, but they will not be on the same level as the elite Ancient Worthies, the “princes in all the earth” (Psa. 45:16).

Q: Does the number “eight” signify “a new beginning” at the start of the Kingdom Age?

A: Yes. Incidentally, there is an “eight” that pertains to the Gospel Age, an “eight” that pertains to the beginning of the Kingdom Age, and an “eight” that pertains to the age beyond the Millennium.

Q: In verses 5 and 6, the pronoun “our” is used repeatedly in reference to Israel—“our land,” “our palaces,” and “our borders.” But the pronoun “we” is also used.” “Then shall *we* raise

against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men.” To whom does “we” refer?

A: The pronoun “we” is a reference to the Heavenly Father and Jesus. At that time, God’s plan will bear recognizable fruitage. The world will see that God is doing something. Verse 5, then, is explained as follows: “And this man [Jesus] shall be the peace, when the Assyrian [Gog] shall come into our land [Israel]: and when he [the Assyrian] shall tread in our [Israel’s] palaces, then shall we [God and Jesus] raise against him [the Assyrian] seven shepherds [the glorified Church], and eight principal men [the Ancient Worthies].”

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.

For verse 6, the RSV has, “They shall rule the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod with the drawn sword; and they shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he comes into our land and treads within our border.” After the seven shepherds and the eight princes of men deliver Israel from the Assyrian (Gog, who will invade Israel and tread within its borders), they will rule the land of Assyria (Magog, the land of Gog) with the sword.

“And they [the seven shepherds and the eight principal men] shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod.” The seven messengers represent the entire gospel Church in glory, and the eight principal men are the Ancient Worthies, who will come forth at “midnight” in Jacob’s Trouble (Psa. 119:62). What do the terms “land of Assyria” and “land of Nimrod [the area of Babylon]” signify? When will their judgment take place? (We usually think of the king of Babylon as Papacy or Christendom, but that judgment will occur earlier, before the Great Company wash their robes in the general tribulation.)

Gog and his associates will come from the “land” of Magog. Not only will Gog and allies be punished at that time in Israel, but also a “fire” (anarchy) will be sent upon the land of Magog (Ezek. 39:6). Micah was stating the same thing. Instead of saying, “I will punish the Assyrian,” he said the judgment would come on the “land of Assyria.” Here the “land of Nimrod [Babylon]” represents the *nations* of Christendom, but not the religious aspect. Therefore, instead of saying, “I will punish Nimrod [mystic Babylon],” Micah said the judgment would come on the “land of Nimrod.”

In the books of Isaiah and Micah, the “Assyrian” represents Gog. Hence the forces of Assyria here are the equivalent of the forces of Gog in the Book of Ezekiel. Nimrod was an enemy of God, particularly from the standpoint of being “a mighty hunter *before* the LORD”; that is, he was venerated *more* than God (Gen. 10:9). The First Commandment is, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me [in priority or importance]” (Exod. 20:3). With the “land of Nimrod” referring to the *nations* of Christendom, the coming judgment will be on both non-Christian and supposed Christian nations.

“The land of Assyria ... and the land of Nimrod [will be wasted] in the entrances thereof.” Anciently, judgment was determined in the entrance (or gate) of a city. Thus the gate represented the authority or rulership of a city, for whoever controlled the gate controlled the city.

“Thus shall he [Jesus primarily] deliver us from the Assyrian, when he [the enemy] cometh into our land, and when he [the enemy] treadeth within our borders.” Inferentially, the glorified Church and the Ancient Worthies will be under Jesus; they will be associated with him.

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.

Verse 7 is speaking about those of the Holy Remnant who survive Jacob's Trouble in lands other than Israel. They will be like "dew from the LORD" and "showers upon the grass" in the midst of many peoples. Why is the time element then added: "that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men"? *In the Lord's due time*, the Holy Remnant will be rescued. The "whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain ... [waiting] for the manifestation of the sons of God"; it has been a long wait—and a long groaning—for the "desire of all nations" to come (Rom. 8:19,22; Hag. 2:7).

Early morning dew is invigorating and refreshing. Hail will precede the dew; that is, God's judgment and rebuke will prepare the people to receive the dew—the Lord's Word and instruction. Before the still, soft voice (1 Kings 19:12), the Lord will speak once, twice; yea, He will thunder! Man will have to be beaten down to his knees so that he will recognize the Lord as the only possible source of help—not the United Nations or anything else. When mankind comes to understand restitution blessings in the fullest sense—that there is some sort of healing connected with Israel—this desire will be like dew spreading out.

The Holy Remnant will have a refreshing influence like dew and gentle rain that is almost miraculous. Accordingly, they will bring a blessing where they are scattered in other nations. However, just as dew and moisture from gentle showers do not last long, so the surviving Jews will not tarry in these other lands. The Gentiles will ship them to Israel.

The "tarrying" takes on a new meaning from this standpoint. When the people see that blessings are coming from the Lord, they will realize that the best thing they can do is to MOVE and get in under those blessings. A delay might mean losing out. Moreover, a certain blessing and prestige will be attached to moving quickly, before additional severe experiences are needed to bring them into line. The Lord will deal with the Holy Remnant that is spared, and the lesson will be to speedily hearken to the Word of the Lord and to come under the new arrangement. Suppose a nation ponders and weighs the matter and, consequently, is about the thirty-fifth nation to accept Christ. Wouldn't it be much nicer to be the first, second, or third? This illustration is crude, but there will be a certain prestige in the recognition of that which is good. For example, the Israelis were happy that the United States was the first country to recognize Israel as a government. President Truman went out on a limb, not taking time to talk things over with an adviser, and recognized Israel right away. Similarly, a quick, spontaneous recognition of Israel in the Kingdom will be desirable: "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob" (Isa. 2:3). After sufficient time has passed, the nation that will not recognize Israel will be deprived of rain—a harsher measure (Zech. 14:16,17).

The Church will rule through the Ancient Worthies: "whom thou [the Church] mayest make princes in all the earth" (Psa. 45:16). "Instead of thy fathers [the Ancient Worthies] shall be thy [The Christ's] children." Another picture shows Jesus as the "father" of the regenerated race of Adam, and the Church as the "mother." The Ancient Worthies will be representatively placed throughout the earth, and their influence will be wholesome wherever they are. Dew has a wholesome influence that seems to permeate everything; it distills quietly and without commotion on every little blade of grass—that is, on every human being in the Kingdom.

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.

As the king of the beasts, the lion walks arrogantly and puts on airs as if he owns the jungle, lording his majesty over the other animals. He sleeps and lounges until he is hungry and goes after prey; then there is pandemonium from the “king.” As the lion, Israel will be *preeminent* among the nations until the end of the Millennium. After the Millennium, there will no longer be a preference for any one nation over the other nations, as Jesus indicated when he spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well. First, he said that salvation is of the Jews and that it was proper for Israel—and Jerusalem in particular—to be given more prominence than the mountain in Samaria. Then he said that the Father seeks such as worship Him “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:21-24). In other words, there will come a time in earth’s history when geography is no longer significant. Wherever a man is, he will not have to look to Jerusalem for guidance because all people will be in close communion with the Lord. At that time, Israel will no longer have the prominence, but until that time, salvation is of the Jew. Even in the Gospel Age, salvation is of the Jew in the sense that Jesus was a Jew, and so were the apostles.

Israel will be “like a young lion among the flocks of sheep, which ... treads down and tears in pieces, and there is none to deliver” (see RSV). Young lions are more destructive; they rampage through a flock, biting a head off one sheep and an ear off another. An older lion will concentrate on *one* sheep to get meat to eat, whereas a young lion pursues sheep partly for sport and excitement, mauling *several*. The thought is that the other nations will be *fearful* of Israel in its new role of having divine recognition and authority. It will be very humiliating for Hitler and Nero, or someone like them, to find out that salvation is of the Jew. The Scriptures show that in this new role, Israel will be a changed people—contrite, humble, and crushed over the fact that Jesus really was the Messiah. That fact alone will take the wind out of the Jews, as it were, so that they will be meek and good representatives of the Kingdom.

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

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:

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

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

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.

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

With regard to the nation of Israel, the lesson is that the victory will come not by the Jews’ own might, power, or intelligence but by the Lord, who will first destroy all of their weapons, doctrines, witchcraft, soothsayers, graven images, etc. Today the Jewish religion is much like the Catholic religion in form; for instance, the Jews have rituals and candles for the dead (believing that the dead are not really dead). Also, the Jewish people are given to signs, such as the shape of the wax drippings of a candle. All of these practices must be destroyed and changed. There is even a “catechism” from the standpoint that much has been added to the Old Testament through commentaries by rabbis. Hence the Jewish religion of today is, for the most part, very different from that given to Moses. The Christian, on the other hand, is to prove everything by a “thus saith the LORD.” Although we may admire and respect leaders who help us understand God’s Word, we must prove that what they say is correct—even if the

teachings come from one of the seven messengers.

Spiritually speaking, “chariots” are organizations, and “horses” are doctrines. “Soothsayers” foretell good things (the term is taken from the word “soothe”). They give a person false confidence based on something that is of the fallen angels’ imagination. The false prophets were known for speaking “smooth” things when they should have been “barking”—warning the people (Isa. 30:9,10; 56:10). Those who say that “barking” is un-Christlike have the wrong attitude, for there is a lot to Christianity besides “soft” talk. Of course the nominal systems are the primary spiritual counterpart.

“You shall bow down no more to the work of your hands” (see RSV). Spiritually speaking, the “work” would include erroneous doctrine, but it refers mainly to efforts that are not of the Lord’s spirit or leading. We are told to work, to be busy, and not to fold our hands, but our work should be in harmony with the Lord’s Word. Work should not even be attempted without prayerful consideration and a request for guidance.

There is also a natural application. In light of the intelligence and superiority that the Jews have shown as a race, it would be difficult for them NOT to manufacture something with their hands or minds. However, talent and creative ability should be used according to the *Lord’s* will. Many Jews have even gone so far as to think their *nation* is the Messiah. Rather than see that Messiah’s light will be *reflected through them*, they think it *originates with them*. They are intellectual leaders, so they think that even as a little nation, they could be the leaders of the world. They trust in their *own* intelligence.

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

God will deal with Israel, nominal Christianity, and the nations, doing a cleansing work with all of them. What have “the heathen [the nations] ... not heard”? They have no conception of how terrible the judgments will be when God performs “his strange act.” “The LORD shall rise up ... [and] be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act” (Isa. 28:21).

Micah 6:1 Hear ye now what the LORD saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice.

Micah 6:2 Hear ye, O mountains, the LORD’S controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.

The RSV reads, “Hear what the LORD says: Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the LORD, and you enduring foundations of the earth; for the LORD has a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel.”

Probably Micah dramatized this prophecy, mimicking the actual speaking to the mountains and hills, so that the people would take notice. Imagine his addressing hills and mountains as if they were personalities! Through this method, the people would have caught the point. “Mountains” symbolize the nations in general. In chapter 6, God was warning the nations and contrasting them with Israel. The “enduring foundations of the earth” were the powers that be of “the establishment”—the existing order.

In succeeding verses, God showed that He had some problems with the nation of Israel. He pleaded and reasoned with the people, and reminded them of His former spectacular

leadership, especially in connection with their deliverance from Egypt under Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, who had a musical role to perform. He also reminded them of the incident with Balaam and Balak and of what happened from Shittim to Gilgal. After this manifest deliverance, the Israelites forgot what God had done for them and bemoaned their present circumstances. In Micah's day, the people had problems, but they did not rely enough on the Lord.

“The LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.” God first emphasized that He had a controversy with Israel. In contrast, Jeremiah 25:31 tells that God has a controversy with all of the nations that will come up against Israel. Evidently, before the Lord really blesses Israel at the end of the age, His purpose is to reveal the shortcomings of that nation. That way the people will be truly humble when they get the blessings, and thus they will be appropriate instruments for blessing mankind as the leader nation. In the Lord's “controversy” (or argument) with Israel, He will reason on what He did for them in the past and on what they are doing at present. Faith is the exercise of the mind with respect to God and His promises, and Israel, as well as the majority of the world, is lacking in faith.

Micah 6:3 O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.

Micah 6:4 For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

Micah 6:5 O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD.

God continued to talk through Micah. The RSV reads, “O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me! For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and redeemed you from the house of bondage; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the LORD.’”

What did King Balak of Moab devise, and what did Balaam answer? Balak wanted Balaam, as a prophet of the Lord, to curse the children of Israel. The Bible does not say whether Balaam was merely a nominal prophet of the Lord or whether he had been a true prophet at one time, but based on the fact that later the Holy Spirit overruled and caused Balaam to utter a profound, true prophecy, it would seem that he did have the Lord's favor at one time. When Balak persistently tried to get Balaam to curse the Israelites, the prophet replied that God did not want him to. Therefore, he knew it was not proper to curse the children of Israel. However, when Balaam procrastinated and said he would see what the Lord had to say, he left the door a little bit open to the temptation instead of just slamming it. The result was that even though Balaam repeatedly gave a negative reply, the king eventually persuaded him to go to the top of a mountain ostensibly to pronounce the curse, but God overruled so that Balaam *blessed* the children of Israel instead. Although Balaam failed to give the curse, he did succeed in giving *bad advice*. He told King Balak to promote intermarriage between the people of his nation and those of Israel. In other words, if Balak urged his people, particularly the women, to fraternize with and seduce the Israelite men to marry or have relations with them—an uncovenanted people—then in time, the morale of Israel would be undermined and heathen religions would be intermingled, for mixed marriages would result in a controversy over how to raise the children, religiously speaking.

On the one hand, God's “savings acts,” or “righteousness,” overpowered Balaam so that the

prophet blessed Israel instead of cursing the nation. On the other hand, Balaam did give bad advice, which the heathen nation successfully followed to undermine Israel. Therefore, this reminder of Balaam and Balak was a rebuke to Israel for succumbing to the worship of other gods. If the Israelites could appreciate the fact that although Balaam was their enemy in certain respects, he ended up blessing them, then they would be impressed with God's mighty power to save. It is like Pharaoh—he did not want to let the Israelites go, but after the ten plagues, he said, "Go! and pray for me too while you are there so that I will get a blessing." Even the hard-hearted Pharaoh was overpowered by the Lord's Spirit for a little while.

Certainly the great Jehovah knew He had done nothing wrong! What He was trying to bring out was that the fault lay with *Israel*. God was pleading with the people, coming down to a level comparable to a family relationship. He was saying, "If you have anything legitimate to say, you may testify against me, but you have *nothing!*"

The use of the word "weariest" in verse 3 indicates that the Israelites were tired of God's leadership. They were also weary when Moses ascended Mount Sinai and was gone for 40 days. During his absence, they could not wait, so they built a golden calf.

Micah 6:6 Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?

Micah 6:7 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?

God answered these questions in later verses, showing that He wants *obedience*, not sacrifice. In his Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul used this same style of reasoning. He gave certain lessons and then anticipated what questions the hearer might have in his mind. For example, Paul asked, "Doesn't having the Law profit the Jew anything?" Then he answered the question: "The Jew has much advantage every way" (Rom. 3:1,2 paraphrase).

Some incorrectly conclude from verses 6-8 that God was not interested in sacrifices and that, therefore, there should not have been any. However, *God ordained the sacrifices Himself*, so they had to be proper. The point is that the sacrifices taught lessons; they had a typical value. The main lesson was that without the shedding of blood, there could be no remission of sin; that is, *death* was connected with the forgiveness of sins. Indeed the sacrifices should have pointed the nation of Israel to Messiah.

God was not saying that the Jews should have abandoned the Law and the sacrifices, for that would have been still worse—that would have been outright disobedience. The problem was that the sacrifices were often the sicker, weaker animals or even dead ones. Or if a prime animal was given, it was offered grudgingly and not from the heart. Still others thought that by giving a proper sacrifice, they had a perfect standing with the Lord and needed nothing else, including the Messiah. Such were obeying the ceremonial Law but not the moral Law. (This type of reasoning is comparable to a nominal Christian's thinking he can go to church on Sunday and then do whatever he wants the rest of the week.) The moral requirements of the Law—how one should treat his neighbor, for example—were relegated to the background, and the ceremony, or form, was given the precedent, whereas it should have been the other way around. The moral Law was of primary importance and of a character value, while the ceremonial Law was secondary and mainly of value as types. There is a similarity with baptism for the Christian. The primary significance is the giving of one's heart to the Lord, while the outward manifestation of water immersion is a picture and thus is of secondary importance.

Notice the technique the prophet used. It was as though he could read the people's minds, for he anticipated and asked their questions for them. He gave the thoughts of those who were wondering how to approach God. For example, "Will He be pleased with burnt offerings?"

In what way would a "firstborn" be given for a transgression? By following the evil practice of offering children to appease the god Molech, some of the Israelites actually passed their firstborn children through the fire. They reasoned that because they would have many children, one child could be used to atone for sin. What dreadful reasoning to justify murder!

Why was the question asked, "Will the LORD be pleased with *thousands* of rams?" God was speaking from a *national* standpoint, as well as from an individual standpoint. In some of the national services, literally thousands of animals were offered. Thus God was criticizing the people at large. The same explanation applies to "*ten thousands* of rivers of oil." Oil was mixed with meal and baked into cakes that could be offered, and oil was also offered in drink offerings, which were poured out on the sacrifice. Drink offerings were for God "to drink"; that is, they were supposed to appease and satisfy Him. Jesus "poured out his soul unto death" by offering himself (Isa. 53:12).

Micah 6:8 He hath shown 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 was talking. While God was behind this whole arrangement and lesson, He allowed the personality of the prophet to shine through. Micah entered into the spirit of the lesson by saying, "God is showing you what He really wants—He wants your heart, your life, not all of these sacrifices. He has shown you what is good, what He requires of you." We quote verse 8 quite frequently.

Micah 6:9 The LORD'S voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.

The RSV has, "The voice of the LORD cries to the city—and it is sound wisdom to fear thy name: 'Hear, O tribe and assembly of the city!'" In the type, or natural picture, Jerusalem was "the city" that represented the whole nation. In the antitype, Babylon represents the whole arrangement of Christendom. To the end of chapter 6, the "voice" of Jehovah will continue to cry "to the city," for He was giving a tongue-lashing. It would be sound wisdom to listen to the voice of divine authority and to take correction and instruction ("the rod"). The King James Version is better at the end of this verse.

Micah 6:10 Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable?

The RSV reads, "'Can I forget the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is accursed?'" An expression in the Book of Hebrews gives the same lesson. "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:23-27).

Why do people pursue evil? They do so because evil brings pleasure and rewards. Moses could have gotten a reward in Egypt, but he gave up the pleasures and riches there to follow the

gospel of a coming Messiah. Does the “house of the wicked” offer real treasures? Does one who abandons himself to lust, greed, and power have real treasures? NO! After all is said and done, what the wicked acquire by their wicked works is not really worth the effort. The Lord was saying, “Can’t you give up these toys and the tinsel [the evil] and follow after that which is more substantial?”

Micah 6:11 Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?

The RSV has, “‘Shall I acquit the man with wicked scales and with a bag of deceitful weights?’” One of the evils specifically mentioned was along monetary lines. The scales were so shrewdly manipulated that the buyer got less than he paid for, yet he could not detect the fraud. For example, the container for the product might have weighed more than it should have so that its weight subtracted from the weight of the contents. Then the customer was charged for gross weight and not for net weight. Another example is where the butcher put his thumb on the scale when weighing the meat, and all the while he just pretended to be carefully determining the weight. These are examples of *planned* deception.

In the old days, a merchant had a bag of different-sized round weights with slots in them. To determine the weight of the product, weights were fastened on the line balancing the scale. However, the weights were intentionally marked incorrectly to give a false measure in favor of the merchant. Then a man who earned \$100 a week by using deceitful practices would go into the Temple and donate \$20. God was saying, “Shall I count this man pure who comes to me being *ostensibly* very liberal when the money was acquired by deceitful practices?” This principle is very soul-searching, for it can come home to us in little ways.

Micah 6:12 For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

Jerusalem was supposed to be the “holy city,” but its inhabitants got rich through deceitful practices and “violence.” Examples of this violence would be robbing widows’ houses (foreclosing on widows’ houses when they were in dire straits), extortion, seizing lands, wicked balances and deceitful weights, and exploiting the poor.

Much of Micah’s prophecy was reprimanding the rich: judges, nobles, merchants, and priests. All strata of society were corrupt, but the burden of the prophet’s message was to the upper class.

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

The RSV has, “‘Therefore I have begun to smite you, making you desolate because of your sins.’” This verse refers to the coming judgment whereby the land would be made desolate, or fallow, by the Israelites’ being taken captive to Babylon.

Micah 6:14 Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee; and thou shalt take hold, but shalt not deliver; and that which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword.

The RSV reads, “‘You shall eat, but not be satisfied, and there shall be hunger in your inward parts; you shall put away, but not save, and what you save I will give to the sword.’” Verse 14 was also a prophecy of the impending disaster that was to come on Jerusalem. Ironically, a person could be doing all sorts of tricks and violence to accumulate money, and then in would

come a foreign conqueror who would brutally murder members of that person's family and take the saved-up money. Hence a lifetime of extortion in preparation for retirement on a bed of ease could suddenly go up in smoke. Such extortioners would then feel doubly guilty. They had used a double standard in order to get their reward, and when the reward was taken from them, they had two disappointments: one of conscience and one in regard to the disappearance of their "nest egg." In addition to what the leaders seized, soldiers of conquering armies took booty from the conquered; that is, they took what the leaders left behind.

Micah 6:15 Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.

Verses 13-16 were predicated on the capture of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar, which also affected the environs of the city and brought just retribution.

Micah 6:16 For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people.

Omri was an evil king of the ten-tribe kingdom, and so was Ahab (1 Kings 16:25,26,30). The ringleader of the breakaway from Judah, and thus the first evil king of the ten tribes, was Jeroboam. The people, especially the rich and the powerful, walked in the statutes of Omri in that they followed his evil example and character instead of hearkening to the Lord. Because of the evil, God would make Israel "a desolation" and their inhabitants "an hissing."

Micah 7:1 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 RSV reads, "Woe is me! For I have become as when the summer fruit has been gathered, as when the vintage has been gleaned: there is no cluster to eat, no first-ripe fig which my soul desires." God likened Himself to when the summer fruit has been gathered, and there is nothing to eat. A pathetic situation was being described here—nothing of value was left. The crop had been thoroughly harvested and nothing remained. A lot of labor was expended for virtually no gain—just an isolated unripe grape here and there. The allusion was to the fact that the tithe was not being given according to the Law.

Micah 7:2 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.

For the beginning of verse 2, the RSV has, "The godly man has perished from the earth." The grapes (verse 1) were like the godly man in that there was no cluster of either. Only an *individual* here and there remained upright, Micah being one and also Isaiah, a contemporary prophet. After all that the Lord had done for Israel, there was no community of faithful believers. When Jesus healed the ten lepers, the situation was similar—only *one* came back! There is very little appreciation of God in times of crisis, and that is what we are approaching today. Notice that "each hunts his brother with a net," trying to ensnare and take advantage of his fellow man instead of loving his neighbor as himself (compare RSV).

Micah 7:3 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 mischievous desire: so they wrap it up.

The RSV reads, "Their hands are upon what is evil, to do it *diligently*; the prince and the judge ask for a bribe, and the great man utters the evil desire of his soul; thus they weave it together." The people were actively searching for evil to do. *Entire* employment centered

around evil. Stated another way, the inhabitants were engaged in *full-time* service in evil.

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.

Imagine even the *very best* of them being like a “brier,” that is, sharp and dangerous! “The day of thy watchmen and thy visitation [punishment—RSV]” was the day of judgment. The prophets were the “watchmen” of the day of trouble. This thought is based on the fact that fortified cities in the past had walls upon which watchmen took turns day and night to look for approaching trouble, enemies, etc. That way the city could always be warned of impending trouble. Similarly, the Lord had some prophets arise late and early to watch over His people, Israel. Warnings were continually given of a coming day of judgment if the people did not repent and change their evil ways. Here Micah said that the day of judgment had come, that the experience was upon them.

In the antitype, Christendom will be in this situation, especially after the Harvest when “summer is ended” and the “salt of the earth” has been taken away (Jer. 8:20; Matt. 5:13). For the most part, no righteous man will remain (except the Great Company, who will not have a stabilizing effect on society).

Micah 7:5 Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.

Micah 7:6 For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man’s enemies are the men of his own house.

For verses 5 and 6, the RSV has, “Put no trust in a neighbor, have no confidence in a friend; guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your bosom; for the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man’s enemies are the men of his own house.” These verses remind us of what Jesus said the Lord’s people should expect in the Gospel Age, especially during the Inquisition period of the past and again at the end of the age. At that time, we may even be betrayed by our own children. Remember, Jesus came not to bring peace but a sword (Matt. 10:34). In the end time, husband may rise against wife, daughter against mother, etc. During the Inquisition, it was not uncommon for a person to betray a member of his own family.

Verses 5 and 6 indicate that on the one hand, discretion may have to be exercised at the end of the age in regard to certain truths being uttered among one’s own family. On the other hand, some will use this line of reasoning in order to be prudent and remain silent, and thus will miss the opportunity to speak out at the right time. It is difficult to know what to do when the pressure is on and the chips are down. Near the end of Jesus’ ministry, he realized it was time for him to die according to Daniel’s prophecy. Prior to that time, he was prudent, using discretion and withdrawing himself, but when he saw it was the end of his earthly ministry, he threw caution to the wind and spoke out strongly, bringing about his apprehension. He went to Jerusalem, knowing what the result would be.

Verse 5 advises not to speak in one’s own house. In regard to the persecution at the end of the age, it will be wiser to speak out and be persecuted for righteousness’ sake than to refrain from speaking out and have persecution forced upon us later, after the Little Flock is gone. In other words, it will be better to die in defense of the truth than through some dumb, foolish mistake because of unwisdom. A life should not be needlessly frittered away when the truth could be defended on a more auspicious occasion.

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

Verse 7 will be good advice for those left behind after the Church goes beyond the veil. It reminds us of the text “Seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger” (Zeph. 2:3). The worldly element should use discretion because they are not consecrated to the Lord. It will be prudent for those who are righteously inclined but not of the spiritual class (1) to hide themselves, (2) to seek meekness and righteousness, and (3) not to get involved in wrathful, vociferous disputes and violence.

Therefore, verse 7 is advice not to the Christian but to the unconsecrated remaining behind in the Time of Trouble. With the Church, the advice will be the opposite. When religious issues are in the forefront, the Christian will have to speak out against them, for to be quiet at that time would be a compromise of principle. Hence we must be careful not to wrest Scriptures out of context and thus fail to give a witness. The feet members will be placed in a position where they will have to either declare themselves or remain silent by compromising. We could not speak out through our own strength, but the Holy Spirit will give the necessary courage. Knowledge alone is not sufficient—we must do the best we can and then rely on the Lord to prompt us at the right time.

Micah 7:8 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 7:9 I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.

Verse 8 is a break in thought. In spite of Israel’s unclean condition, which justifiably merited God’s judgments in the past (606 BC, AD 70, AD 135, etc.), He will have mercy on them. Most of Micah’s prophecy was a denunciation, but from here to the end of the book, Israel’s reclamation and future blessings are foretold. God will redeem or rescue a purged class out of Jacob’s Trouble to become the nucleus of the Kingdom. This class will be prudent; they will mourn like doves and seek the cleft of the mountains. In fact, the primary application of the text to “seek righteousness, seek meekness” is to the Jew, although we also apply it to the Gentile; it is instruction on what to do in the Time of Trouble.

The spiritual lesson is secondary here. All down the age, the Lord’s people have suffered and been unrecognized by the world, and although it is true that they will be vindicated in the resurrection, the primary application is pertinent, practical advice to the unconsecrated Jew and Gentile living in the end of the age. Not only will the Church have a wonderful witness opportunity in the near future, but when the trouble is really close at hand, many of the unconsecrated will ask advice on what to do. Scriptures such as “seek righteousness, seek meekness” will give them some understanding.

Micah 7:10 Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the LORD thy God? mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

After Jacob’s Trouble, the Gentile powers will be covered with shame and say to Israel, “Where is the LORD *your* God?” The Gentiles have wrought judgment against Israel in the past, but this time the judgment will boomerang. Those who have scorned the Jew will see the Lord redeem Israel and change them as a people.

Micah 7:11 In the day that thy walls are to be built, in that day shall the decree be far removed.

“In that day shall the *decree* be far removed.” God had determined the times in which the Gentiles would be supreme. During that time, from 606 BC to 1914, His face was turned away from His people Israel, but here the time has come to tear down that decree and give a period of favor. A radical change will be seen.

Verse 11 is a figurative expression of the rebuilding in Israel of that which has fallen down. The “walls” imply material prosperity, reclamation of the land, Jews returning to Israel out of every nation, the Ancient Worthies being on the scene, Gentiles acknowledging Israel as the capital of the world, Ezekiel’s Temple being built, etc.

Micah 7:12 In that day also he shall come even to thee from Assyria, and from the fortified cities, and from the fortress even to the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain.

This prophecy pertains not only to King Nebuchadnezzar’s victory in 606 BC but also to Gog (the Assyrian) in Jacob’s Trouble. Verses 12 and 13 are given in reverse order. At first, Israel will be temporarily defeated by Gog, but then God will effect a miraculous deliverance.

The defeat and destruction of Jerusalem will occur in the day that Israel is prospering. In the final analysis, Israel will be reclaimed and restored, but first, a judgment will occur because the whole society, from top to bottom, is corrupt.

Micah 7:13 Notwithstanding the land shall be desolate because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings.

Notwithstanding the encouragement of verse 11, the land shall first be made desolate.

Micah 7:14 Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old.

The RSV reads, “Shepherd [rule] thy people with thy staff [rod], the flock of thy inheritance, who dwell alone in a forest in the midst of a garden land; let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old.” God will ultimately shepherd the Israelites in rich pasturage.

Micah 7:15 According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things.

The RSV has, “As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt I will show them marvelous things.” God’s deliverance of Israel from Gog will be so marvelous and miraculous that He likens it to the miracles done on the Israelites’ behalf when they left Egypt in the Exodus. Just as the ten plagues wrought a mighty deliverance, along with the dividing of the Red Sea, so at the end of the age, the Lord’s deliverance of His people will be accompanied by supernatural phenomena.

Micah 7:16 The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf.

“The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might” (RSV). The nations will react emotionally. Just as intense anger can cause temporary partial blindness, so great and intense astonishment can cause temporary partial deafness.

Micah 7:17 They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee.

There is no denying that Israel will be honored in the future. When the Gentiles witness the marvelous deliverance, they will grovel in the ground, pleading for mercy from the Lord. Not only will Israel be mightily ashamed that they crucified their own Savior, but the Gentiles will be mightily humiliated when they see that they have to go to the Jew for salvation. That will be a real galling pill for some! But the Israelites will be a changed people—thoroughly converted and humbled.

Micah 7:18 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.

Micah 7:19 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.

Micah 7:20 Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

For part of verse 18, the RSV reads, “Who is a God like thee, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance?” The mention of “the remnant” pinpoints the fulfillment of these verses as being at the end of the age. The RSV continues, “He does not retain his anger for ever because he delights in steadfast love [mercy]. He will again have compassion upon us, he will tread our iniquities under foot. Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old.” This commentary is like a chorus of different ones speaking. The Jews will appreciate God’s mercy in delivering them, even though they crucified their Savior. The Gentiles will recognize what has happened and will appreciate the mercy that is extended to them. And God’s faithful promises will be realized. The Almighty God will not hold a grudge.