

CHAPTER IX

FUTURE EXALTATION AND
MESSIANIC HOPE

XION, CENTER OF WORSHIP . . . Micah 4:1-5

RV . . . But in the latter days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, 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 out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem; and he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it. For all the peoples walk every one in the name of his God; and we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever and ever.

LXX . . . And at the last days the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, established on the tops of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and the peoples shall hasten to it. And many nations shall go, and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and they shall shew us his way, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth a law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many peoples, and shall rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares; and their spears into sickles; and nation shall no more lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn to war any more. And every one shall rest under his vine, and every one under his fig-tree; and there shall be none to alarm them: for the mouth of the Lord Almighty has spoken these words. For all other nations shall walk every one in his own way, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

COMMENTS

(Verse 1) "It will come to pass" gives us transport to the future

(from Micah's day). We leap the centuries far beyond the captivity to Messiah's day.

"In the latter days" is the English rendering of the phrase which fixes the time when it shall come to pass. The phrase is reminiscent of *Hebrews 1:2*. There we are told that God, having spoken to the fathers in the prophets has spoken to us in a Son. No more conclusive evidence is needed to connect Micah's prophecy with the Messianic age. The rabbis so understood this term. (The age was to be final and eternal. Nothing lies beyond it so far as earthly history is concerned. It is itself the final goal of history.) "Upon the last of the days" is the exact opposite of "in the beginning" of *Genesis 1:1* (LXX) and *John 1:1*. As Lange points out, it denotes "the completion of the world in contrast to its beginning."

John indicates that we are in this end time. (CF. *I John 2:18-f*)
 *(See my comment in *Hereby We Know*, College Press, pp. 59-ff)

In this end time, says Micah, the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on top of (or at the head of) the mountains. In the place of the literal mountain which is to be plowed as a field (*Micah 3:12*), the ideal of God will be established.

Those who would take Micah literally here see "the ultimate establishment of the kingdom with Jerusalem as the capital" (*The New Scofield Reference Bible*). This is, of course, not in keeping with Jesus' concept of true Jehovah worship. Just as Micah predicts that all peoples shall flow into God's exalted mountain, so Jesus said "Neither in these (Samaritan Gerazim and Ebal) mountains, nor in Jerusalem (Mt. Zion and Mt. Moriah) shall ye worship the Father . . . but the hour cometh *and now is* (italics mine) when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth . . . God is spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth."

The psalmist used this same metaphor in *Psalms 68:17* to indicate the eminence of Jehovah worship on Mt. Zion over the other high places. The emphasis upon and contrast of high places, or mountains, is set against the backdrop of the tension between Jehovah worship on Mt. Zion and Baal worship on the various surrounding high places. In the last times, or Messianic age, true worship is to be firmly and finally exalted above all else.

In verse 5, Micah says "all the peoples walk everyone in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God for

ever and ever." The coming of the Messianic age has not eliminated false religion. The very site of Jehovah's temple is now the second most holy spot in Islaam. But true Jehovah worship, *ie.* Christian worship, has been exalted above them all.

(Verse 2) "Many nations" here is not be understood in terms of political empires. *The people* in the Old Testament are generally all those in covenant relation to God while the *nations* are all those not in covenant relationship.

Many who in Micah's day were "seperate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise . . ." (*Ephesians 2:12*) are now "made nigh in the blood of Christ." (*Ephesians 2:13*)

Isaiah looked forward to this same glorious day (*Isaiah 2:2*) when the universal concern of God for all men would be realized.

Significantly, both Micah and Isaiah see the movement of Gentiles toward the exalted "mountain of Jehovah's house" as voluntary. The religion of the prophets is of such quality as makes it independant of nationality or election. As the Jews understood election, any interpretation of prophecy which overlooks this basic truth cannot be correct.

The statement ". . . out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem" is not to be understood as limited to or even indicative of the law of Moses. Rather it is the "law of the Spirit of life." (*Romans 8:1,2*) It is in keeping with Jesus' ascertainment that "thus it is written . . . that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (*Luke 24:45-47*) There is little doubt that such passages as this in Micah were in Jesus' mind when He taught the apostles to so read and understand the Old Testament.

(Verse 3-4) Men are at war with men because men are at war with God. In the Messianic age (our own time included) the ideal is peace based on His judgement. He will judge between peoples . . . He will decide concerning strong nations. When and if the leaders of nations seek His will together . . . when His judgement is taken seriously, there can be peace.

History has demonstrated in blood that this peace will not prevail so long as each nation believes God has only its own national interests at heart. When asked if he did not believe that God was on the side of the north, Abraham Lincoln answered that it was more important that we be on God's side than He on ours. This is the Messianic ideal.

Both in the matter of war as described in verse 3 and the relation

of races described in verse 2, the church, as Messiah's kingdom does not *have* the answer. The church *is* the answer. In the true church there is no Jew nor Greek, east nor west, male nor female. We are all one, and until we *are* all one, we are not truly the church!

The implements of war will be beaten into implements of peace, not by voting funds for welfare rather than warfare, but by seeking the will of God's Messiah in international relations.

The ideal described in verse 4 of every man in the security and plenty of his own vine and fig tree will come not by civil rights agitation and legislation but by seeking the will of God's Christ in human relations. God must become the ruler of our economy as well as our church doctrine!

(Verse 5) On this verse we noted above that all false religion would not be obliterated in the age of the Messiah. This is obvious to anyone with definite conviction concerning the "faith once for all delivered . . ." We would simply add here that this verse is evidence Micah is not describing the final "summing up of the ages" when all false religion will be forever wiped out. When Micah says ". . . all the peoples walk everyone in the name of his god, and (but) we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God . . ." he is not condoning false religion. He is describing an era of tolerance or religious freedom unknown in the ancient world. It is, after all, better to discuss religious differences than to kill over them, as in the great religious wars of western European history.

THE RESTORATION OF THE DIASPORA . . . Micah 4:6-8

RV . . . In that day, saith Jehovah, will I assemble that which is lame, and I will gather that which is driven away, and that which I have afflicted; and I will make that which was lame a remnant, and that which was cast far off a strong nation: and Jehovah will reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth even for ever. And thou, O tower of the flock, the hill of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, yea, the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.

LXX . . . In that day, saith the Lord, I will gather her that is bruised, and will receive her that is cast out, and those whom I rejected. And I will make her that was bruised a remnant, and her that was rejected a mighty nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, dark tower of the flock, daughter of Sion, on thee the dominion shall come and enter in, even the first kingdom from Babylon to the daughter of Jerusalem.

COMMENTS

(Verse 6-7) "In that day" refers us back to 4:1. What Micah is about to say is to take place during the same "last of the days" which, as we have seen, is the Messianic age.

(Verse 6) "That which is lame . . ." Micah uses here the image of the covenant people as God's flock. His sheep are pictured as limping or halting as the result of much wandering. These will be assembled. Part of the worship of Baal, the chief cause of their impending captivity, was a limping, halting dance about the altars of Baal in the high places. When God finished punishing them they will have real cause to limp!

HER THAT HALTED IS TO BECOME A REMNANT . . . v. 7

The covenant people are no longer identified with the race of Abraham's descendants nor the political commonwealth which was national Israel. From this point forward, true Israel is the faithful remnant. (See above on 2:12)

There is a distinction here between two groups. The one Micah calls "that which was lame" (LXX "bruised"). The other he styles "that which is driven away . . . afflicted . . . cast off."

The lame or bruised are the faithful obedient few. Although they will be bruised in the captivity and dispersion of the nation, God will make of them a remnant. Through them He will yet fulfill His covenant promise.

That which is cast off He will make a strong nation. Paul informs us emphatically (*Romans 11:1*) that God *has* not (from Micah's point of view, *will* not) cast off His people. His people are the remnant. Those whom He cast off are the rebellious majority.

Of both, the remnant and the strong nation composed of those cast off, Micah says, "Jehovah will reign over *them*."

TOWER OF THE FLOCK . . . v. 8

The flock is the remnant, God's faithful covenant people, Zion out of whom shall proceed the law of God to all people. (Cf. 4:2 above.) The tower of the flock . . . the hill of the *daughter* of Zion (not Zion herself) is the cast-off ones who shall become a strong nation. As the tower of the flock was a lookout post to guard the shepherd's flock, so the nation would shield within her the covenant remnant until the time of Messiah's coming.

The term "tower of the flock" is literally the "tower of Ophel."

Ophel is not Mt. Zion, but a precipitous slope on the south of the temple mount. This brings to sharper focus the distinction between Zion, the *remnant*, and the tower, the *nation*.

It is to the nation that "the former dominion" shall come. The remnant shall become the nucleus of the Christian church.

DISTRESS AND REDEMPTION . . . Micah 4:9-5:1

RV . . . Now why doest thou cry out aloud? Is there no king in thee, is thy counsellor perished, that pangs have taken hold of thee as of a woman in travail? Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail; for now shalt thou go forth out of the city; and shalt dwell in the field, and shalt come even unto Babylon: there shalt thou be rescued; there will Jehovah redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies. And now many nations are assembled against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye see our desire upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of Jehovah, neither understand they his counsel for he hath gathered them as the sheaves to the threshing-floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thy horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many peoples: and I will devote their gain unto Jehovah, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth. Now shalt thou 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.

LXX . . . And now, why hast thou known calamities? was there not a king to thee? or has thy counsel perished that pangs as of a woman in travail have seized upon thee? Be in pain, and strengthen thyself, and draw near, O daughter of Zion, as a woman in travail: for now thou shalt go forth out of the city, and shalt lodge in the plain, and shalt reach even to Babylon: thence shall the Lord thy God deliver thee, and thence shall he redeem thee out of the hand of thine enemies. And now have many nations gathered against thee, saying, We will rejoice, and our eyes shall look upon Zion. But they know not the thought of the Lord, and have not understood his counsel: for he has gathered them as sheaves of the floor. Arise, and thresh them, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horns iron, and I will make thine hoofs brass: and thou shalt utterly destroy many nations, and shalt consecrate their abundance to the Lord, and their strength to the Lord of all the earth. Now shall the daughter of Zion be completely hedged in: he has laid siege against us: they shall smite the tribes of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.

COMMENTS

WHY DOST THOU CRY ALOUD? . . . v. 9-10

The term "tower of the flock" (v. 8) appears also in *Genesis 35:16-ff.* There is the record of Rachel, beloved of Jacob, dying in childbirth as they journeyed from Bethel to Bethlehem.

Just as Rachel died in childbirth, so the nation of Israel would die at the hands of Titus (70 A.D.) and Hadrian (135 A.D.) in the height of her Messianic expectancy. First century Israel looked for a king, but could find none. Micah's question is pertinent, "Is there no king in thee?" The king would indeed be in her, but she would die in travail without seeing (recognizing) Him just as Rachel died.

The nation, even in Micah's time, in pain would go away into Babylon . . . there to be rescued. To all outward appearances the Hebrew nation was dead when they were led away into Babylon. In truth, however, it was there they were molded into a people who never again forgot God.

True, their national ambition blinded them to the Christ. He was recognized only by the *remnant*, not the *nation*.

Nevertheless, there is a real sense in which Micah can truly use the plural, both the remnant and the nation (v. 7) shall be ruled over by Jehovah.

In all this, Micah is looking beyond the Assyrian Dynasty to the supremacy of Babylon, and through Babylon to the Persians, and beyond Persia to the Messianic Age.

(Verse 11) It is the prophet's purpose in these verses to return to the warnings of 3:12. Before there can be a national restoration and a deliverance of the remnant there must be the captivity.

Having projected hope which lay nearly two centuries in the future in its first instance *ie.* the deliverance from Babylon, and some eight centuries in the future in its Messianic fulfillment, Micah returns in verse 11 to the situation immediately before him. Between the present and the blessed future was an array of enemies bent on Israel's destruction.

In Micah's own time the Assyrians dominated the international scene. They would wipe out the northern kingdom and in their turn be replaced by Babylon. Babylon would enslave the southern kingdom, only to be destroyed by the Persians.

The Medo-Persians would themselves yield to Alexander and the Greeks.

Against the oppression of the Greeks would rise a blood bath

known to history as "The Maccabean Period," including a Jewish civil war, to be ended only by Roman occupation.

(4:12-5:1 . . .) This array of foreign powers who, from the beginning of recorded history, have used the land of Israel as a military pawn and buffer state have reckoned without God's thought and counsel. *He has gathered them, ie. the nations arrayed against Israel, as sheaves to the threshing floor.* Jerusalem, "daughter of Zion," is called to arise and thresh. Jehovah will make her horn iron and her hoofs brass.

Thus, against the figure of oxen treading out grain, God promises power which will beat many people "in pieces."

Nothing in history to date, fully accords with the prediction. The only period of history since Micah in which Israel has had any military power was the Maccabean period of victory over Antiochus Epiphanes and that victory was on nothing like the scale indicated here in the threshing of many nations.

To find the fulfillment of this prophecy, we must look to more recent history. We have previously referred to *Romans 11* in reference to the first group here presented by Micah *ie. the true Israel, the covenant people called the remnant.* But what of the cast off ones who are to become a *strong nation* to whom the former dominion shall come?

It is concerning *them* that Paul writes "as touching the Gospel, they are enemies for your (Christians) sake, but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sake. For the gifts and calling of God are not repented of. For as ye in time past were disobedient to God, but now have obtained mercy by their disobedience, even so have these also now been disobedient, that by the mercy shown you they also may now obtain mercy." (*Romans 11:24-ff*) (See Don De-Welt, *Romans Realized*, p. 174-f)

The Jews are precious to Jehovah because of His past relations with them. There is little doubt that the Bible predicts another period of national life and prosperity. To recognize this ought, not, however, to engender in us such earthly, material and sordid hopes as proved their undoing in the rejection of Christ two thousand years ago. Whatever is in store for the Jewish nation in terms of earthly identity, it can in no way preclude the longing of God and His church to win them to Christ.

It is my opinion that in our day, which is called the latter days, the time of the Messiah (Cp. *Micah 4:1 & 6*), we are seeing the fulfillment of *Micah 4:9-5:1* in the present history of the Israeli nation.

As we have previously indicated, no time in the interval between Micah and the present has met the fullness of this passage. From Assyria to now many nations have been assembled against the Jews (*v.* 11). In all this historic desire to see these people defiled, the nations have not considered God's will nor known His counsel (*v.* 12). The present Arab-Russian-Chinese coalition against modern Israel certainly takes none of this into account.

Yet, in a strength unbelievable, reported by every news media of our time, this little postage stamp country has not once but four times in turn defied the strength of Britain and all the Arab world could hurl against her and has each time "threshed" them soundly (*v.* 12). In six days in June, 1967, Israel literally "*beat in pieces many people.*"

Micah promised this would come to pass *during the Christian era.* It ought be no great source of amazement that we are seeing it happen!

(5:1) But before the remnant shall be gathered by Messiah, before those cast off can become a strong nation, the inevitable must happen. The kingdoms will gather their armies together and attempt in vain to hold off the armies of Assyria and of Babylon. But it will be to no avail. The price of their apostacy must be paid.

FOCUS ON THE MESSIAH . . . Micah 5:2-6

RV . . . But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth; then the residue of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand, and shall feed his flock in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah his God: and they shall abide; for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be our 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. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: and he shall deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our border.

LXX . . . And thou, Bethlehem, house of Ephratha, art few in number to be reckoned among the thousands of Juda; yet out of thee shall one come forth to me, to be a ruler of Israel; and his goings forth were from the beginning, even from eternity. Therefore shall he appoint them to wait till the time of her that travaills: she shall bring forth,

and then the remnant of their brethren shall return to the children of Israel. And the Lord shall stand, and see, and feed his flock with power, and they shall dwell in the glory of the name of the Lord their God; for now shall they be magnified to the ends of the earth. And she shall have peace when Assur shall come into your land, and when he shall come up upon your country; and there shall be raised up against him seven shepherds, and eight attacks of men. And they shall tend the Assyrian with a sword, and the land of Nebrod with her trench: and he shall deliver you from the Assyrian, when he shall come upon your land, and when he shall invade your coasts.

COMMENTS

(Verse 2) In the Hebrew text this verse is the *first* verse in chapter five. In the Septuagint it appears, as in all subsequent texts as verse two of this chapter. Actually, 5:1 belongs with the last paragraph, beginning with verse nine, of chapter four.

When the bloodied-handed Herod sent to the rabbis to ask the place of Messiah's birth, he was pointed to Bethlehem. (*Matthew 2: 4-6*) It was on the strength of this passage (5:2-ff) of Micah's prophecy. No prophecy concerning His coming is more clear. No predictive Scripture is more universally agreed upon as to its meaning.

Having described the nature of the Messianic age (4:1-13) and having inserted a reminder of the punishment which must come first (5:1), Micah now focuses our attention on the birth and work of the Messiah Himself.

Bethlehem! Birthplace of David. Ancient Ephrath of the Gentiles. (*Genesis 35:16*) The entire race of men have an acute interest in what will happen there. To the Jew first but also to the Greek, there will be born in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.

As villages go, Bethlehem is no more nor less than average. Nestling on the eastern slopes of a ridge some five miles southwest of Jerusalem, this was, among other things, the traditional home of many whose trade was carpentry. Compared to many districts in Judea, the prophet calls Bethlehem little.

We might have expected the Son of God to be born in Jerusalem, or the King of Kings to be born in Rome, or some other center of power and influence. Instead, He came to a peaceful little Judean town, so insignificant in worldly eyes that Josephus doesn't bother to mention it. Nor for that matter, is it included in the catalogue of Joshua in late Hebrew manuscripts.

Jerome suggested Bethlehem was stricken from the later Hebrew texts to obscure the evidence of Jesus' Messiahship. In light of the fact that the Septuagint does include Bethlehem in the text of Joshua, Jerome may have been right.

In any event, the selection of this humble village of shepherds and carpenters as the birthplace of God's Messiah speaks volumes concerning the value of human status symbols and pride of ancestry. (*Luke 1:52*)

It is also not without significance that the sheep tended on the slopes of Bethlehem's hills were traditionally those intended for temple sacrifice. He who was born there was the lamb of God! The shadow of a cross fell across the manger bed.

So firmly fixed was Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah in the minds of the Jews that Hadrian would allow none of them to live in or near the town.

ONE . . . THAT IS TO BE RULER IN ISRAEL . . .

Perhaps no other single term in the Old Testament has been more grossly misunderstood or the subject of more theological controversy. To the post-exilic Jewish mind it conjured up dreams of one who would establish the Jewish nation as the final worldpower. Upon this dream was based most of the nationalistic pride, the religious narrowness and the racial bigotry which marked the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus.

It was this ambitious vision of world conquest and Gentile enslavement that brought about the death of Jesus (humanly speaking) for He would have no part of such an earthly kingdom. It was this same racio-nationalistic ambition that brought about the death of the first Christian martyr, and which hounded Paul across three continents.

It is this same materialistic concept of Messiah's kingdom which today preoccupies many Christians with eschatological charts and proof-texts whose time might more profitably be spent preaching the Gospel.

On the other hand, it is the failure of many to recognize the kingly office and authority of Jesus that has brought about the spiritual uncertainty of the modern church. It was a *king* who was to be born in Bethlehem, not merely a Galilean carpenter or a pale religious philosopher.

So aware was Jesus of His royal office that even He was tempted by Satan to fulfill the Jewish dream of power by setting up a worldly kingdom. This is the meaning of Jesus' temptations at the opening of His public ministry (*Luke 4:1-12*). His awareness of His kingship was so intense that His preaching is termed "the gospel of the kind-

dom." (*Mark 1:14-15*) (cp. *Luke 4:43*) It requires more than a little carnal imagination to force Jesus' Gospel of the kingdom into the rabbinical doctrine of an earthly kingdom. Regretably, since the advent of the Plymouth Brethren (1830), the teaching of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) and the publication of the Scofield Reference Bible, many preachers (particularly of the "faith only" persuasion) have spent a great deal of time and energy doing just that.

The real issue here is the assurance that, just as the return of the remnant will insure the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham to bless all the nations of the earth, so the one who shall rise out of Bethlehem shall assure the fulfillment of His promise to David. (Cf. *II Samuel 7:16*) Peter saw the fulfillment of this promise in the resurrection of Jesus. (*Acts 2:30-31, 34-36*)

He was to be "ruler in Israel." He was to rule over the house of Jacob forever. (*Luke 1:1-2*)

The Jews object that Jesus could not be Messiah because He was so far from being ruler in Israel that Israel ruled over Him . . . put Him to death. But He Himself answered this objection, and in doing so put the lie to all who would claim for Him a materialistic kingdom. He said, "My kingdom is not of this world." (*John 18:36*)

It is a spiritual Israel He reigns over, the children of the promise . . . all the followers of believing Abraham. (*Galatians 3:7*)

Concerning the One to be born in Bethlehem, Micah says His "goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." Literally the term means "from the days of ages."

There could scarcely be a more forceful statement of the pre-existence of Christ. It denotes His existence "in the form of God." (Cp. *Philippians 2:5-ff*) It is fitting such a term should be used in connection with a prediction of His birth. We will see the same words in *Habakkuk 1:12*.

Jesus laid claim to the truth of this designation when He claimed to have been before Abraham (*John 5:58*).

THEREFORE WILL HE GIVE THEM UP UNTIL THE TIME
THAT SHE WHO TRAVAILETH HATH BROUGHT FORTH

. . . v. 3

God will not fully vindicate His people and exalt them until, through suffering, Israel brings forth His Son.

"Then the remnant (residue) shall return unto the children of Israel." The covenant people, within the race and nation and without

. . . the genuine children of Israel in covenant with God . . . all believers shall all be incorporated into the Israel over which Messiah shall rule. And He shall not be ashamed to call them brethren. (Cp. *Hebrews 2:11*)

AND HE SHALL STAND AND SHALL FEED . . . v. 4

He shall be a glorious prince, but His relationship to His people is that of shepherd. (Cp. *John 10:11-ff*) It is no coincidence that the Twenty-third Psalm is the most dearly beloved Old Testament passage among Christians.

He shall do this, not as other men, but in the strength and majesty of Jehovah. It would be said concerning Him that He taught "as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The prophets prefaced their message with "thus saith the Lord," Messiah would say, "verily, verily I say unto you!"

"And they shall abide . . ." The nation of Israel was perishing. Soon the northern tribes would be disbursed so completely as to make them, in subsequent history, unidentifiable. The southern kingdom would endure longer . . . even be in a measure re-established following the captivity, but any hope of national honor related to God's covenant promise had gone up with the smoke of their sacrifices to Baal. But Messiah's flock would abide.

Jesus' own words re-affirm this, "and this is the will of Him that sent me, that of all that which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day."

It is most regrettable that those who teach the Calvinistic nonsense of "eternal security" should be allowed to so pervert this doctrine of assurance as to deprive God's people of its blessing.

". . . He shall be great unto the ends of the earth . . ." He *alone* is great. (Cp. *Joel 2:21*- and *Luke 1:32*) And His greatness shall be to the ends of the earth. Here is another of the myriad evidences in the Old Testament of God's universal concern for all men. The Messianic intent of God has ever been that "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed."

AND THIS MAN SHALL BE OUR PEACE . . . vs. 5-6

In the original here there is no word for man. It is simply and emphatically *this one* . . . He alone . . . who is our peace. The words "our peace" are reminiscent of *Ephesians 2:14*. It is only the Messiah who can bring peace . . . who can bring an end to the warfare between God's people and those who, before He came were "separate from

Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." (Cf. *Ephesians* 2:11-15)

Assyria, being Israel's most powerful enemy at the time of Micah's ministry is made here to represent all the enemies of God's people. When Messiah appears, He will destroy them. (Cf. *Ezekiel*, chapter 38)

"Seven shepherds . . . eight principal men." A strange array, it would seem, to send against the Assyrians. Micah is obviously using well understood figures to convey the truth of Messiah's conquest over the enemies of God's people.

"Seven" expresses perfection. We shall raise against (or depend upon) the Messiah . . . the perfect shepherd.

"Eight" is seven plus one. The Messiah plus those "principal men" or "anointed men," such as the twelve, (Cp. *Isaiah* 32:1) "shall lay waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrance thereof . . ." The Lord's strength is more than enough.

Lange points out that the terms "palace," "seven," and "eight" connect themselves with the threatening formula employed by Amos (*Amos*, chapters 1-2) to announce the approach of the destruction which was about to break. God's grace will be greater than the sin; hence, instead of three and four sins which make the judgement necessary (*Amos* 2:4) seven and eight heroes are named who shall drive away the enemies when Messiah has come.

Just as the Roman empire, *during Pax Romana*, in which period Jesus was born, enforced peace with the Roman sword, so Messiah and those who stand with Him will enforce His peace by subduing His enemies with the sword of the Spirit. (Cp. *Hebrews* 4:12, *Ephesians* 6:17) Those who stand against the Gospel of Christ, and continue in league with idolatries and witchcrafts, as did Assyria and Babylon of old, shall be consumed by it.

In our day, when tolerance of any and all false teaching has become a sacred cow and when unbelief is regarded as a normal reaction to God, it is difficult to think in these terms. There is, however, a "hard" side to the Gospel. The sword has a cutting edge. There is destruction for those who resist it. (Cp. *I Peter* 2:8)

THE GLORIOUS FUTURE OF THE REMNANT . . . Micah 5:7-15

RV . . . And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples as dew from Jehovah, as showers upon the grass, that tarry not for man, nor wait for the sons of men. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, as a lion

among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep; who, if he go through, treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and there is none to deliver. Let thy hand be lifted up above thine adversaries, and let all thine enemies be cut off. And it shall come to pass in that day; saith Jehovah, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and will destroy thy chariots: and I will cut off the cities of thy land, and will throw down all thy strongholds. And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thy hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers: and I will cut off thy graven images and thy pillars out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thy hands; and I will pluck up thine Asherim out of the midst of thee; and I will destroy thy cities. And I will execute vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations which hearkened not.

LXX . . . And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many peoples, as dew falling from the Lord, and as lambs on the grass; that none may assemble nor resist among the sons of men. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many nations, as a lion in the forest among cattle, and as a lion's whelp among flocks of sheep, even as when he goes through, and selects, and carries off his prey, and there is none to deliver. Thine hand shall be lifted up against them that afflict thee, and all thine enemies shall be utterly destroyed. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that I will utterly destroy the horses out of the midst of thee, and destroy thy chariots: and I will utterly destroy the cities of thy land, and demolish all thy strong-holds: and I will utterly destroy thy sorceries out of thine hands; and there shall be no soothsayers in thee. And I will utterly destroy thy graven images, and thy statues out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt never any more worship the works of thine hands. And I will cut off the groves out of the midst of thee, and I will abolish thy cities. And I will execute vengeance on the heathen in anger and wrath, because they hearkened not.

COMMENTS

Micah writes glorious things in this passage concerning the remnant. Israel according to the flesh dwelt alone until her destruction. The nearer destruction finally came, the more she dwelt alone, turned in upon herself the less certain it was God's Messiah would save her and make the Gentiles her slaves. Not so the remnant, the true Israel; she will be in the midst of many people . . . as the salt of the earth, or as seed sown upon the ground. (Cp. *Hosea* 2:23)

The remnant shall be as dew from the Lord, covering all as dew in a summer morning. (Cp. *Psalm 110:3*) They shall be pure and clear as dew drops, as the water of life. Dependant upon the Spirit, they shall "tarry not for man, nor wait upon the sons of man." They shall be a great blessing to those people among whom they live, just as the refreshing dew from heaven is a blessing to thirsty earth.

But the remnant shall not be tread upon as is the dew. They shall be "as a lion among the flocks of sheep" . . . as a lion "treadeth down and teareth in pieces and there is none to deliver."

Messiah's people shall be silent and gentle and bringers of blessings, as the dew, but they shall be as bold as lions. The forces which today threaten to destroy Christian civilization cannot stand against the power of the Gospel in the lives of committed people any more than a hyena can stand against a lion.

The strength of God's covenant people is that which derives from the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Israel of old had been instructed to not go to Egypt for horses (*Deuteronomy 17:16*) lest they depend upon chariots and cavalry rather than upon God. (*Psalm 20:7*) From Solomon on they would disregard this command (*1 Kings 10:26-28*). The new Israel has no such arms. She stands or falls upon her trust in Christ. So long as she is faithful nothing can stand against her. (Cp. *Romans 8:31-ff*)

Note those things against which His people are to prevail. *Verse 10* . . . horses and chariots are cut off and destroyed. *Verse 11* . . . Cities and strongholds will be thrown down. The temptation to trust worldly power are so to be eliminated. The church has been slow to relinquish these things, but the circumstances of our day now leave us no choice. Only the Gospel can stand against the armed atheism which threatens our existence.

Witchcrafts and soothsayers (*v. 12*) are also to be cut off. There is a revival of such evil in our day, but not in the hands of the church.

Graven images and pillars and the graven images which are the works of our hand (*v. 13*) are to be eliminated. Even the Roman church has recently "decommissioned" two hundred saints before whose idols thousands have prayed! In the New Testament church such things were an abomination.

Verse 15 must be almost unbelievable to the one today who thinks the God of the Old Testament was only a primitive fore-shadowing of the God of Love revealed in the new. Nevertheless, the prophet sees, IN THE AGE OF THE MESSIAH, God executing "vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations which hearken not."

The concept of a God Who does not bring vengeance against anyone is of very recent origin and completely foreign to the Christian God of the New Testament as well as the Old.

Chapter IX—Questions

Future Exaltation and Messianic Hope

1. Demonstrate that Micah's prophecy in Micah 4-5 has to do with the day of the Messiah, our own Messianic time.
2. What does John tell us about this end time? (*1 John 2:18-f*)
3. What is the meaning of "the mountain of Jehovah's house"?
4. Comment on "all peoples walk everyone in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever and ever." (*Micah 4:5*)
5. Discuss "many nations." (*Micah 4:2*)
6. Discuss ". . . out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem." (*Micah 4:2 cp. Luke 24:44-f*)
7. Men are at war with men because _____.
8. God must become ruler of our _____ as well as our church doctrine. (*Micah 4:4*)
9. "In that day" (*Micah 4:6-7*) refers us back to _____.
10. "That which is lame" is the image of _____.
11. Discuss "her that halted is become a remnant." (*Micah 4:7*)
12. Distinguish between "that which was lame" and "that which was driven away."
13. Discuss "I will make . . . that which was cast far off a strong nation" in *Micah 4:7* in light of *Romans 11:1*.
14. What is meant by "tower of the flock"? (*Micah 4:8*)
15. Discuss *Micah 4:11* in connection with *Micah 3:12*.
16. In Micah's own time the nation of _____ dominated the international scene.
17. _____ would wipe out the northern kingdom.
18. _____ would enslave the southern kingdom.
19. _____ would conquer the Medo-Persian empire.
20. The Maccabean revolt was against the rule of _____.
21. All these powers, and others since have used the land of _____ as a political pawn and a _____ state.
22. Discuss *Romans 11, Micah 4:11-13* in light of current events in the Middle East.
23. The Jews are precious to Jehovah because _____.

M I C A H

24. This does not imply _____.
25. What New Testament reference is made to *Micah 5:2-ff*?
26. What is the meaning of Ephratah? (*Micah 5:2*)
27. Bethlehem nestles on the _____ slopes of a ridge some _____ miles _____ of Jerusalem.
28. Discuss the conditions of Jesus birth in contrast to what might have been expected for the birth of a king.
29. The sheep tended on the slopes of Bethlehem were traditionally intended for _____.
30. Why did the Roman emperor Harian forbid Jews to live in or near Bethlehem?
31. Perhaps no other term in the Old Testament has been more grossly misunderstood than _____.
32. Humanly speaking, it was the Jews' ambitious vision of _____ that was responsible for the death of Jesus.
33. It is the failure of many to recognize the kingly office and authority of Jesus that has brought about the _____ in the modern church.
34. Discuss the temptation of Jesus (*Luke 4:1-12*) in relation to the Jewish dream of world power in the Messianic age.
35. The real issue in *Micah 2:6* is the assurance that _____.
36. Why do the Jews object that Jesus cannot be the Messiah?
37. Discuss the pre-existence of Christ in light of *Micah 5:2*.
38. God would not, Micah promised, fully vindicate His people and exalt them until _____.
39. The Messiah is to be a glorious prince, but His relationship to His people is that of a _____.
40. What is the significance of "His greatness shall be to the ends of the earth"?
41. Discuss "and this man shall be our peace . . ."
42. Discuss "seven shepherds . . . eight principal men." (*Micah 5:5-6*)
43. What is meant by "the remnant shall be as dew in a summer morning"?
44. Messiah's people are to be as bold as _____.
45. *Micah 5:15* must be almost unbelievable to _____.
46. The prophet sees in the age of _____ God executing "vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations which hearken not."