

MICAH

INTRODUCTION

1. Title. The book is named after the prophet whose message it bears. Micah (Heb. *Mikah*) is a shortened form of *Mikayah*, which means, “Who is like Yahweh?” In the Hebrew, as in the English, the book stands sixth in the order of the Minor Prophets. In the LXX it stands third, after Amos and Hosea, possibly because of its size.

2. Authorship. Micah was called a “Morasthite,” a term applied to one who came probably from the village of Moresheth-gath, believed to be in the southern part of Judah, toward Philistia. He must not be confused with Micaiah the son of Imlah, who prophesied in the days of Ahab (1 Kings 22:8–28). Nothing is known of the prophet except what is revealed in the book itself. The fact that his father’s name is not mentioned may suggest that he was a man of humble birth. He was doubtless a Judean, as may be deduced from the fact that he mentions only the kings of Judah (Micah 1:1). He was the younger contemporary of Isaiah and of Hosea, both of whom began their ministry in the reign of Uzziah, the predecessor of Jotham (Isa. 1:1; Hosea 1:1). Tradition says that he died peacefully in the place of his birth in the early part of Hezekiah’s reign before the fall of Samaria.

Micah’s language is poetical, rhythmical, and measured. His style might be taken to betray a peasant background, inasmuch as it is rugged, simple, and forthright. The prophet is noted for his frequent use of figures of speech and his play on words. He is bold, stern, and uncompromising in dealing with sin, yet tender of heart, regretfully sorrowful in spirit, loving, and sympathetic.

3. Historical Setting. Micah, as did Isaiah, carried on his prophetic ministry in the critical period of the latter half of the 8th century B.C., when Assyria was the dominant world power. In his own country Jotham, the king of Judah, when he began his prophetic ministry, “did that which was right in the sight of the Lord,” although the people of his kingdom “sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places” (2 Kings 15:34, 35). Ahaz, Jotham’s son and successor, went the full length of idolatry, even burning “his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen” (2 Chron. 28:3). He did not hesitate to rearrange and change the brazen altar of burnt offering, and the laver, and to place within the sacred Temple precincts an idolatrous altar which he saw at Damascus (2 Kings 16:10–12, 14–17). These and other iniquitous acts against the true worship of the Lord made Ahaz probably the most idolatrous king who had reigned over Judah.

During the time of this spiritual declension among the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah, Micah exercised his prophetic office. The contents of his book set forth the moral and religious conditions among the people during the reigns mentioned.

This idolatry was aggravated by the compromising attitude many took in observing outwardly the traditional forms of the worship of the Lord while pursuing their idolatrous worship and practices. The priests of the Lord were in an apostate condition. They countenanced heathenism to retain their popularity with the people, and instead of defending the poor against the predatory rich, they themselves were possessed of a covetous spirit. There were many false prophets who carried the favor of the people by assuring them that good times lay ahead, while scoffing at the threatened judgments that the true prophets of the Lord predicted would surely result from the nation’s multiplying transgressions. These false prophets further lulled the people into a deadly spiritual sleep

by calming their fears with the deceptive doctrine that because the descendants of Abraham were the special people of God, they could be certain that the Lord would never forsake them.

The nobles and leading class had given themselves over to lives of luxury. In their ardent desire for the good things of life, they became unscrupulous and cruel in their dealings with the peasants. Their greed ground down the poor by excessive exactions and deprived them of their legal rights.

As occasionally and gratifyingly happens, a bad ruler is followed by a son who becomes a good ruler. Hezekiah, who succeeded Ahaz, was as devoted to God as his father had been devoted to idols. "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him" (2 Kings 18:5). He resolutely set about to undo his father's apostasy, to reform the moral and spiritual conditions of Judah, to abolish idolatry, and to bring his people back to the true worship of the Lord. In this he was supported by Micah. The bitter struggle that the man of Moresheth-gath had during much of his life to plant the seeds of truth upon the well-nigh sterile soil of his people's heart began to yield fruit. Reformation characterized the reign of Hezekiah.

4. Theme. Two main themes predominate: (1) the condemnation of the sins of the people and the consequent chastisement in captivity, and (2) the deliverance of Israel and the glory and gladness of the Messianic kingdom. Throughout the book of Micah threatening and promise, judgment and mercy, alternate.

The prophecies of Micah and Isaiah have much in common. Inasmuch as the two prophets were contemporaries, and so had to deal with the same conditions and subjects, we can readily understand why their words and messages were so often similar.

Though in the opening words of his book Micah tells us what "he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem," his prophecy deals more with Judah than with Israel. Though the ten tribes had cut themselves off from Judah and from Jerusalem, the center of the worship of the Lord, they were still God's people, and God was seeking to restore their allegiance to Him.

5. Outline.

- I. National Guilt and Corruption, 1:1 to 3:12.
 - A. Introduction, 1:1–4.
 - B. Judgment on Israel and Judah, 1:5–16.
 - C. Threats upon princes and false prophets, 2:1 to 3:11.
 - D. The destruction of Zion and the Temple, 3:12.
- II. The Messianic Age and Its Blessings, 4:1 to 5:15.
 - A. Glory of the mountain of the Lord's house, 4:1–5.
 - B. Israel's restoration and revival, 4:6–10.
 - C. Zion's victory over her enemies, 4:11–13.
 - D. Messiah's birth and power, 5:1–4.
 - E. Victory over the adversaries, 5:5–9.
 - F. The abolition of idolatry, 5:10–15.
- III. Punishment for Sin and Hope in Repentance, 6:1 to 7:20.
 - A. God's controversy because of ingratitude, 6:1–5.
 - B. Obedience above sacrifice, 6:6–8.
 - C. Divine rebuke and threatened punishment, 6:9–16.

- D. Israel's penitence and confession of faith, 7:1–13.
- E. Prayer for restoration and God's assurance, 7:14–17.
- F. God's mercy and faithfulness praised, 7:18–20.

CHAPTER 1

1 *Micah sheweth the wrath of God against Jacob for idolatry.* 10 *He exhorteth to mourning.*

1. Word of the Lord. See on Jer. 46:1.

Morasthite. An inhabitant of Moreshethgath (v. 14), a village believed to be in the low country of Judah, about 21 1/2 mi. (34.4 km.) southwest of Jerusalem, now called *Tell ej-Judeideh*. The name Moreshethgath signifies “possession of Gath [or “vineyard”].”

In the days of Jotham. See p. 1011. Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos began to prophesy shortly before Micah, during the reign of Uzziah, the father of Jotham (Isa. 1:1; Hosea 1:1; Amos 1:1). The kings mentioned are those of Judah, doubtless because Micah's mission was particularly to the southern kingdom of Judah. However, like Amos (see p. 953), he also prophesied against the northern kingdom of Israel.

2. All ye people. The whole world is summoned to witness the divine judgments against Samaria and Jerusalem. In the fate of God's chosen people men may read the fate of all nations who refuse to follow the divine blueprint (see PK 364; see on Dan. 4:17).

His holy temple. Compare Hab. 2:20.

3. The Lord cometh. Verses 3, 4 present a grand and awful figurative description of the coming of the divine judgment upon Samaria and Jerusalem. Compare Isa. 26:21.

His place. That is, “his holy temple” (v. 2).

High places. Figuratively, God is represented as descending and walking upon the tops of the mountains and hills (see Amos 4:13).

4. Shall be molten. The coming of the Lord is frequently represented as accompanied by a convulsion of nature (see Judges 5:4, 5; Ps. 97:4, 5; see on Ps. 18:7, 8). A most fearful upheaval in the physical world will precede and accompany the second coming of Christ (Matt. 24:29; Rev. 16:18–21; GC 636, 637).

5. The transgression. Verses 5–7 describe the punishment to come upon the northern kingdom, Israel, for its sins.

Jacob. The name here stands for the ten tribes that made up “the house of Israel,” as is evident from the next sentence.

Samaria. As the capitals of Israel and Judah respectively, Samaria and Jerusalem had become the centers of idolatry and iniquity. Samaria had been built by wicked Omri; and his son, Ahab, who followed in his steps, erected in it a temple to Baal (see 1 Kings 16:23–33). For a description of Samaria see on 1 Kings 16:24.

High places. The LXX here reads, “What is the sin of the house of Judah?” This reading provides a better parallelism with the preceding line, “What is the transgression of Jacob?” If “high places” is to be retained, there is an obvious reference to the heathen shrines and sanctuaries erected upon eminences where the inhabitants of Judah practiced their idolatry (see 1 Kings 14:22–24; 15:9–15; 22:43; etc.). Hezekiah was the first of Judah's kings to thoroughly rid the land of these centers of idolatry (see on 2 Kings 18:4). Evidently Micah's present prophecy preceded this reformation.

6. I will make. The future tense indicates that the destruction of Samaria, which occurred in the 6th year of Hezekiah's reign, had not yet taken place (2 Kings 18:9–11).

Heap. Heb. *‘i*, “a heap of ruins.”

Plantings. Or, “planting places.” Samaria is to be destroyed so completely that on its site vines will be grown.

Pour down. Samaria stood on a flat-topped hill with steep sides (see on 1 Kings 16:24).

Discover. Literally, “uncover,” “reveal,” or “lay bare.”

7. Beaten to pieces. Compare 2 Chron. 34:3, 4, 7.

Hires. From the Heb. *’ethnan*, a word frequently used in connection with the hire of a harlot (see Deut. 23:18; Eze. 16:31, 34; Hosea 9:1). The meaning of this part of the verse is not clear.

She gathered. The object “it” is supplied. Perhaps “them,” that is, the graven images and the idols, should be substituted. They had been procured through “the hire of an harlot.” Prostitution was carried on in certain pagan temples as part of the worship of the goddess of fertility.

They shall return. The exact meaning of this clause is not clear. The language is highly poetic, and too-close literalism should probably be avoided. The general meaning of the passage seems clear. Samaria is to suffer loss of that in which she had trusted.

8. I will wail. That is, for the doom to come upon Samaria, the coming of which would pose a threat to Judah’s security as well.

Stripped. Heb. *shelal*, “barefooted.”

Naked. Heb. *’arom*, designating either complete nakedness or a half-clad condition. Micah represents himself not only as a mourner who removes his outer garments, but also as a captive who is completely stripped of clothing and is carried off naked and despoiled (see on Isa. 20:2, 3).

Dragons. Heb. *tannim*, “jackals.” The translation “dragons” seems to have arisen from a confusion of *tannim* with *tannin*, properly a “serpent,” or “monster.” The jackal is noted for its mournful call.

Owls. Heb. *benoth ya’anan*, believed to represent the ostrich. This bird emits a doleful, piteous call.

9. Her wound. Literally, “her wounds,” although the LXX and the Syriac employ the singular form.

Incurable. Samaria’s day of grace was gone. The nation had filled its cup of iniquity. The account was closed. It was time for the ministry of divine wrath (see PK 364).

Unto Judah. Judah, too, had been guilty (v. 5) and would receive its punishment.

10. Declare ye. Verses 10–16 constitute a dirge over the judgment to fall upon Judah. The opening clause is taken from David’s dirge over Saul (2 Sam. 1:20).

Gath. One of the five chief cities of the Philistines. Its location is uncertain. For suggested sites, see on 2 Kings 12:17. The ruin of Judah was not to be proclaimed in this enemy center. In Hebrew the word for Gath approximates in sound the word for “declare.” Many scholars believe there is here an intended play on words that may be reproduced as follows, “Tell it not in Tell-town.” Such plays on words are common in Hebrew poetry.

Weep ye not. Some suggest another play on words in this sentence, which they reproduce as follows, “Weep in Weep-town.” Such a reading can be obtained only by a

change of the Hebrew text. The Hebrew does not mention the name of a town, but since all the other clauses in the context do, some think one was intended here. Baca, or Bochim, from the root *bakah*, “to weep,” has been suggested.

House of Aphrah. Or, more fully transliterated, “Beth-le-aphrah,” perhaps *et-Taiyibeh* near Hebron. Aphrah is from a Hebrew root meaning “dust.” Scholars have suggested another play on words, which may be reproduced as follows, “Roll in the dust in Dust-town.”

11. Saphir. The name signifies “beautiful.” The location is uncertain. Some have suggested *Khirbet el-Kôm*, about 83/8 mi. (13.4 km.) from Hebron.

Zaanan. Perhaps identical with Zenan mentioned in Joshua 15:37, a town in the Shephelah of Judah.

In the mourning. The Hebrew of this passage is obscure. The RSV connects this phrase with what follows: “The wailing of Beth-ezel shall take away from you its standing place.” However, the meaning remains uncertain.

Beth-ezel. Possibly *Deir el-Aṣal* near Debir in southern Judah.

12. Maroth. Probably the same as Maarath (Joshua 15:59), near Hebron.

13. Lachish. A fortress city of Judah, about 27 mi. (43.2 km.) southwest of Jerusalem. The city fell to Sennacherib at the time of his invasion of Judah (see on 2 Kings 18:14). A bas-relief in the British Museum, brought from Assyria, depicts the siege of Lachish (see Vol. II, plate facing p. 64). The ruins of Lachish are now called *Tell ed-Duweir*.

Bind the chariot. That is, hitch the horses to the chariot so as to make a hasty flight. There is here another play on words, which has been reproduced as follows, “Harness the horses to the chariots, inhabitant of Horse-town.” The sound of the word for Lachish suggests the name “Horse-town.”

Beginning of the sin. It is not revealed how Lachish became the beginning of Judah’s sin.

14. Therefore. Judah is evidently here addressed.

Presents. Heb. *shilluchim*, “sending away gifts,” as a dowry to a daughter when she is married (see 1 Kings 9:16). The passage may mean that Judah is to surrender the possession of Moresheth-gath.

Moresheth-gath. See on v. 1.

Achzib. Heb. *ʾAkzib*, a town believed to have been in the Shephelah, or lowland, of Judah, near Adullam, perhaps to be identified with the modern *Tell el-Beidā* (see Joshua 15:44). Inasmuch as the word translated “lie” is *ʾakzab*, there is here another striking play on words, “The houses of Achzib [Lie-town] shall be *ʾakzab* [a lie].”

15. Mareshah. A town in the Shephelah of Judah (see Joshua 15:44; 2 Chron. 14:9) 23 1/2 mi. (37.5 km.) southwest of Jerusalem, now identified with *Tell Sandaḥannah*.

Because it is similar in sound to the Heb. *morashah*, a word meaning “inheritance,” there is probably another play on words, “Yet will I bring an inheritor who will claim your Heritage-town.”

He shall come. The sentence may be translated as in the RSV, “the glory of Israel shall come to Adullam.” However, the meaning is obscure. Some think the reference is to the nobility of Israel, who would seek refuge in places like the cave of Adullam, where David hid (1 Sam. 22:1, 2).

16. Make thee bald. A symbol of mourning (see Amos 8:10). Jerusalem is called upon to mourn for her children who are taken away into exile.

Poll. Heb. *gazaz*, “to cut the hair.” The clause is parallel with “make thee bald.”

Eagle. Heb. *nesher*, which is used to designate both an eagle and a vulture. Here a bald-headed vulture is probably intended.

CHAPTER 2

1 *Against oppression.* 4 *A lamentation.* 7 *A reproof of injustice and idolatry.* 12 *A promise of restoring Jacob.*

1. Woe to them. In vs. 1, 2 Micah condemns the injustice toward and oppression of the poor.

Upon their beds. That is, at nighttime they devise the plan they hope to execute the following day (see Job 4:13; Ps. 4:4; 36:4). So intent were these evildoers upon accomplishing their purpose that as soon as “the morning” became “light” they carried it out.

In the power. They operated on the wicked principle that “might makes right.” When men take advantage of their power, they are almost certain to abuse it. The LXX reading, “for they have not lifted up their hands to God,” is probably due to a misunderstanding of the Hebrew idiom here employed. The word here translated “power” is *’el*, a word frequently translated “God.” However, in this idiomatic expression it seems clearly to have the meaning “power.” For other occurrences of the idiom see Gen. 31:29; Deut. 28:32; Neh. 5:5; Prov. 3:27.

2. Covet fields. So grasping and rapacious were they for earthly possessions that their covetous designs were executed through violence (see 1 Kings 21; Isa. 5:8; Hosea 5:10; Amos 4:1). Anciently, land sold was to revert to the original owner in the year of jubilee (Lev. 25:10, 28). Estates were not to be transferred from tribe to tribe (Num. 36:7).

3. Do I devise. Sin had brought about a disregard for family relationships. God would bring judgment “against this family” of the whole nation. As they devised iniquity so God would “devise an evil.”

Remove your necks. Their chastisement would be as a heavy, galling yoke, which they would not be able to throw off.

Go haughtily. That is, with uplifted head. The pride of the oppressors would be humbled.

Is evil. Or, “will be evil.” The prophet is speaking of the future judgment God will bring upon His people.

4. A parable. Heb. *mashal*, here probably in the sense of “a taunting song.” “In that day,” the evil time mentioned in the preceding verse, the enemy shall employ the words Israel used to lament her calamity as a taunt against her (see Hab. 2:6). Mockingly representing themselves as the afflicted Jews, the enemy bewail the fact that Israel, once prosperous, is now “utterly spoiled,” reduced to ruin and desolation; and that their inheritance, “the portion of my people,” is now “changed” and “removed.” In other words, the land of Canaan that God promised to the descendants of Abraham (see Gen.

13:14, 15) would be transferred to their enemies. No mockery hurts and stings more than the repetition in jest by another of words used to bemoan oneself.

Turning away. Heb. *shobeb*, “a backturning,” or “an apostate.” The latter meaning makes the clause read, “to an apostate he divides our fields.” By a change in the Hebrew text the RSV reads, “Among our captors he divides our fields.”

5. Cast a cord. It is not entirely clear by whom this is spoken and to whom. The sentence does not follow the poetic structure of v. 4, and so is evidently not a continuation of the taunt. It is probably an address by Micah to an impenitent member of the tyrannical, oppressive upper class mentioned in vs. 1, 2, or to the group as a whole. Micah informs the oppressor that because he has dealt unjustly with his neighbor’s land he will have no more an inheritance in Israel. The cord was the measuring line used in dividing land (see Amos 7:17).

6. Prophecy ye not. The meaning of this verse is obscure, and many interpretations have been offered. The verse reads literally, “Prophecy ye not, they prophecy, do not prophecy concerning these things. Insults shall not turn back.” The words seem to be a protest on the part of those rebuked by Micah.

7. Thou that art named. Heb. *’amur*, from the root *’amar*, “to speak,” hence “something spoken,” or “someone called.” Since the Hebrew has the interrogative prefix, the clause may be translated, “Should this be said, O house of Jacob?” (RSV). Micah chides the speakers (v. 6) for expressing thoughts foreign to the spirit of God.

Straitened. Literally, “shortened.” Used in connection with “spirit,” the word signifies “to be [or, become] impatient.” Here, the prophet chides those who accuse the Lord of being impatient because He gives way to threatening His people. This is not so, for God has ever been long-suffering in His dealings with Israel. However, when men sin they must expect to reap the results of their evil-doing (Ex. 34:6, 7).

His doings. These chastisements and judgments do not come because God would have it so (Ps. 103:8–14; Eze. 18:25–32). He is a God of love and delights in mercy. Punishment is to Him a “strange work,” a “strange act,” for it is foreign to His nature (Isa. 28:21; Jer. 31:20; Lam. 3:32, 33; 1 John 4:7, 8). Micah affirms that our chastisements are our own “doings,” not God’s (Eze. 33:11). The sinner is in this sense his own punisher (see GC 36, 37). As the sun cannot be held responsible for the shadow cast by an opaque object, so God cannot be held responsible for the sinner’s iniquity (see James 1:13–15).

Do good. The Word of God is good, and freighted with blessing for those who obey it (Deut. 7:9–11; Ps. 18:25, 26; 25:10; 103:17, 18; Rom. 7:12; 11:22).

8. Even of late. Literally, “yesterday.” The meaning of the clause thus introduced is obscure. By a change in the Hebrew the RSV reads, “But you rise against my people as an enemy.”

As an enemy. An accusation against those of the upper class, who treat the common people “as an enemy,” by robbery and plunder. Though they were apostate and sinful, God, out of His abiding love, still calls Israel “my people” (see Isa. 49:14–16; John 1:11).

The robe. Heb. *śalmah*, the outer mantle used also for covering the body during sleep. The creditor was not permitted to keep the *śalmah* from the debtor during the night (see on Ex. 22:26).

Averse from war. Those of the upper class seized these garments from the peaceful common people.

9. The women. Probably the widows who should have been defended (see Isa. 10:2).

Cast out. Heb. *garash*, which, in the form here found, conveys the meaning of forcible expulsion. The same form of the verb appears in Gen. 3:24.

My glory. Children would be stripped of their blessings, probably through want and ignorance, or through being sold into slavery, and so deprived of their God-given freedom.

10. Depart. The oppressors are to be expelled from their land, even as they had banished others.

Your rest. That is, the land of Canaan (Deut. 12:9; Ps. 95:10, 11).

Polluted. Because of their iniquities (see Lev. 18:25, 27).

Shall destroy you. This clause is obscure in the Hebrew. It is either the land that destroys by casting out its inhabitants or the uncleanness that destroys those polluted with it.

11. If a man. Because of their iniquities the sinners among God's people did not like those who rebuked and condemned their transgressions. Those who winked at evil, took an attitude of easy indifference toward sin, and prophesied pleasing lies, were the popular prophets (see Jer. 14:13–15; 23:25–27; Eze. 13:1–7).

Spirit. Heb. *ruach*, signifying also “wind.” Hence the translation, “If a man should go about and utter wind and lies” (RSV).

I will prophesy. There is nothing that so misleads trusting souls as clothing false teachings in the apparel of God's Word (Matt. 7:15; cf. ch. 15:7–9).

Wine. These spurious seers were promising material prosperity and sensual pleasures.

12. Surely assemble. Micah turns his attention from the majority of his people, who have gone the way of evil, to the minority, the remnant, who will enter into the promise of restoration and deliverance after the Captivity. Thus Micah denied the repeated charge of the false prophets that he was an incurable foreteller of gloom and distress. He affirmed with long-range prophetic optimism that there would be, after the Exile, a future of joy and gladness for those who serve the Lord.

All of thee. That is, all of the remnant. Although God would have all His professed people “to be saved” (1 Tim. 2:3, 4; cf. Titus 2:11; 2 Peter 3:9), only the few, “the remnant,” who sincerely turn from their sins and walk in the way of righteousness, will be saved (see Isa. 10:20–22; Jer. 31:7, 8; Eze. 34:11–16; Zeph. 3:12, 13). By God's grace “many are called,” but because of the perverse iniquity of the human heart, unfortunately, “few are chosen” (Matt. 22:14; cf. Matt. 7:13, 14).

Bozrah. A city in Edom bore this name (Gen. 36:33; cf. Isa. 63:1); also there was a city in Moab so named (Jer. 48:24). Neither city seems to fit the sense of the passage. A change in vowel pointing (see Vol. I, pp. 25, 26) gives the reading “in the fold,” which appropriately fits into the context of Hebrew parallelism.

Fold. A change in vowel pointing gives the reading “pasture.”

Great noise. Showing that the remnant would be a great multitude.

13. Breaker. From the Heb. *paraš*, “to make a breach,” “to break through.” The parallelism of the verse points to Jehovah, here shown breaking down all opposition before His people.

Broken up. Better, “broken through.” The captives follow their leader. Their passing “through the gates” shows their removal from the land of their exile.

Their king. The same Lord that led His people out of Egyptian bondage, and later delivered them from captivity, will in the near future free the redeemed from the bondage and captivity of this world of sin.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

7 1T 261

10 COL 205; PK 319

CHAPTER 3

1 *The cruelty of the princes.* 5 *The falsehood of the prophets.* 8 *The security of them both.*

1. Heads of Jacob. Micah now denounces the injustice and oppression of the rulers and the false prophets.

Is it not for you? Surely these chief men of the state should have known what is just and right, and should have practiced it. However, as is so often the case, the possessors of power abused their authority. The more prominent a man is among his fellows, and the more important his work, the wider is the range of his influence. He may use that influence for good, or he may use his prominence and authority to encourage evil.

2. Who hate the good. See Amos 5:14, 15; John 3:20; Rom. 1:28–32.

Pluck off. Instead of being the shepherds of the flock to guide and protect the sheep, these leaders were butchers of the flock, living on them (see Eze. 34:2–6).

3. Eat the flesh. In this striking metaphorical fashion the prophet emphasizes the utterly selfish greed and rapaciousness of the rulers in their dealings with the common people (see Ps. 14:4; Amos 8:4).

4. He will not hear. When divine mercy is persistently rejected and the account is finally closed, it will be useless for men to plead for a removal of the judgments. Men have had their day of opportunity, and even if given another chance, would continue their willful course.

5. The prophets. In vs. 5–8 Micah denounces the sins of the false prophets, who deceived the people, and pronounces God’s judgment upon them. He shows that they thought only of themselves and of their living. In siding with the rich they closed their eyes to the social condition of the people. They did not attack the sins of the time.

Bite with their teeth. A comparison with the next clause suggests that the prophet may here be referring to eating. The expression would then signify that the prophets, when bribed with food, foretold the well-being of the people. However, because the word here translated “bite” (*nashak*) is always used elsewhere in the OT of the bite of a serpent (Gen. 49:17; Num. 21:6–9; Prov. 23:32; Eccl. 10:8, 11; Jer. 8:17), some think that the reference here is to the venom ejected by the false prophets when they prophesied, “Peace; and there was no peace” (Eze. 13:9, 10; cf. Jer. 8:11; 14:13, 14). Such spurious comfort only injected into the deceived soul the poison of disaster and death.

Into their mouths. These false prophets become hostile to those who do not bribe them.

6. Therefore night. These words of threatened calamity are addressed either to the false prophets or to the rulers. Micah informs them that in the time of their trouble no prophecy will come to guide them (see 1 Sam. 28:6; Lam. 2:9).

Go down. The day of judgment would reveal the falsity of the predictions of peace. The sun of their prosperity and influence would set.

7. Be ashamed. Because their predictions of peace had turned out to be deceptive. **Lips.** Or, “mustache.” The covering was a sign of mourning and shame (see Lev. 13:45; Eze. 24:17, 22).

8. Full of power. In contrast with the false prophets who followed “their own spirit” (Eze. 13:3), Micah was directed “by the spirit of the Lord” (see 2 Sam. 23:2; 1 Peter 1:10, 11; 2 Peter 1:20, 21). We may analyze his threefold endowment thus: He was filled with (1) *power* so to proclaim the divine message that it fell with force upon the hearers (see Luke 1:17; Acts 1:8); (2) *judgment* and a knowledge of the justice and righteousness of God, that made his words right and fair; (3) *might*, and courage to deliver the divine communications against any and all opposition (see Isa. 50:7–9; Jer. 1:8, 17–19; 15:20; 2 Tim. 1:7). How opposite was Micah’s ministry from that of the self-appointed, deceitful, fawning, and timeserving false prophets, who called “evil good, and good evil” (Isa. 5:20).

9. Ye heads. Verses 9–12 briefly review the iniquity of the rulers, priests, and prophets and announce the coming destruction of Zion and its Temple. The prophet fearlessly condemns those who ought to be leaders in righteousness, for their rejection of “judgment” and their perversion of “all equity.” Those who should have been examples of purity, and the protectors and guardians of justice and fairness, were making a mockery of the laws of God and man.

10. With blood. Through extortion, rapaciousness, and judicial murders (see 1 Kings 21; Jer. 22:13–15; Amos 5:11).

11. For reward. Instead of dispensing impartial justice the judges accepted bribes for favorable decisions against the defenseless poor (see Isa. 1:23; Eze. 22:12), a practice strictly prohibited by the Law (see Ex. 23:8; Deut. 16:18–20).

For hire. The money-mad priests received gifts beyond their regular support (Num. 18:20–24) and doubtless provided instruction favorable to the generous inquirer. Thus these apostate priests corrupted their sacred office by making it a means of securing gain. Likewise the prophets, “for money,” provided suitable “revelations” for those willing to pay for them. They were afflicted with the spirit of Balaam, “who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Peter 2:15; cf. Jude 11).

They lean. While engaged in this wickedness the magistrates, priests, and false prophets claimed to be worshipers of Jehovah. Theirs was a formal religion that was satisfied to substitute external conformity for inner righteousness and truth. They deceived themselves into thinking that because they had the Temple of Jerusalem they had the guarantee of the divine presence and favor and a defense against harm (see Isa. 48:1, 2; Jer. 7:1–15).

12. Zion. Originally the name of the Jebusite stronghold (2 Chron. 5:2; cf. 2 Sam. 5:7), but later applied to the whole eastern ridge, and poetically to the entire city of Jerusalem (see on Ps. 48:2).

Plowed. Figurative of its total destruction. According to Jer. 26:17–19 the prophecy was given in the days of Hezekiah. The prediction was literally fulfilled in 586 B.C.

Heaps. Compare Neh. 2:17; 4:2; Jer. 9:11.

High places. Or, “wooded heights.” The once-thronged height of Moriah would become as desolate as the top of a mountain.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

9–11 GC 26
10 GC 27
10, 11 PK 322
12 GC 27

CHAPTER 4

1 *The glory, 3 peace, 8 kingdom, 11 and victory of the church.*

1. In the last days. Micah 4:1–3 is practically identical with Isa. 2:2–4 (see comments there). The differences are insignificant, such as the transposition of the terms “people” and “nations” and the addition in Micah of the phrase “afar off” and of the word “strong.” Some of the word order and verbal changes in the KJV represent simply differences of translation, the Hebrew text in these instances being the same. For example, the readings “come” (Micah 4:2) and “go” (Isa. 2:3) translate the identical Hebrew word, *halak*.

Halak means both “to come” and “to go,” and the choice of meaning depends upon the translator’s understanding of the context.

It cannot be determined whether Micah quoted Isaiah or Isaiah Micah, whether both quoted an earlier inspired source, or whether each was directly and independently inspired as he wrote this passage. The two were contemporaries (Micah 1:1; Isa. 1:1).

After the pronouncement of doom upon Zion (Micah 3:12), Micah turns abruptly to promises of restoration. This passage belongs to those OT statements that “contain great encouragement” (CT 455, 456) for the church today, as they did for the people to whom they were originally addressed.

4. Under his vine. A figure of plenty and security (see 1 Kings 4:25; Isa. 65:17–25).

Hath spoken. The glorious promise was thus confirmed. It was certain by virtue of the fact that God’s reputation was its guarantee.

5. His god. At this stage of the restoration the heathen are as yet unconverted. Later, according to the divine plan, many would be won to the worship of the God of Israel (see p. 29).

6. Halteth. Heb. *šalaʿ*, “to limp,” “to be lame.” Israel in exile is compared to a scattered flock of sheep. Verses 6, 7 picture God’s plan for the remnant of Israel. It was hoped that a religious revival would sweep the ranks of the exiles and that the Israelites at long last would accept their divine destiny. Micah is forecasting the glorious results of such a revival. Unfortunately the failure of the Jews made impossible the fulfillment of these events with respect to literal Israel. The purposes of Heaven will now be accomplished through the spiritual seed, the Christian church (Gal. 3:7, 9, 29). Converts from all nations will be gathered into the spiritual kingdom of grace, which, at the second coming of Christ, will become the kingdom of glory (see pp. 28–30).

8. Tower of the flock. Heb. *migdal-‘eder*. The name appears in Gen. 35:21 as “tower of Edar,” an unknown site where Jacob camped in his journey from Padan-aram to Hebron. Watchtowers from which shepherds guarded their flocks were common (2 Kings 18:8; 2 Chron. 26:10). The prophet may have had in mind the figure of Jerusalem as the watchtower from which Yahweh stood guard over His people. For the Messianic import see on Jer. 4:7.

Strong hold. Heb. *'ophel*, literally, “a swelling,” “a knoll.” The name *'ophel* was applied to the northern part of the southeastern hill of Jerusalem (2 Chron. 27:3; 33:14; Neh. 3:26, 27).

The first dominion. Or, “the former dominion.” Probably an allusion primarily to the glory that was under David and Solomon. In a larger sense and in the manner in which this prediction will be fulfilled, the passage refers to the regaining of “the first dominion” that was temporarily lost as a result of Adam’s transgression (see on Micah 4:6; Ps. 8:6; see pp. 26–30).

9. Why dost thou cry? Before the enjoyment of the blessings forecast in vs. 1–8 would come the anguish of the Captivity. Before the crown there would be the cross; before smiles, tears.

No king. This was fulfilled when Jehoiachin and Zedekiah were taken captive (2 Kings 24; 25).

Counsellor. Here used synonymously with “king.” The root of the Hebrew word for king, *malak*, in its Akkadian form, *malāku*, means “to counsel,” “to advise.”

Travail. The figure of labor pains is used in the Scriptures to describe sorrow, anguish, and surprise (Isa. 13:8; Jer. 6:24; 50:43; Hosea 13:13; 1 Thess. 5:3).

10. Be in pain. In view of the coming captivity.

Go forth. An announcement of the approaching captivity. The Jews would be compelled to leave Jerusalem, live in the open country, “in the field,” while on the way to Babylon. Isaiah, Micah’s contemporary, also predicted Babylon’s conquest of Judah (see Isa. 39:3–8).

Delivered. A partial fulfillment of this prediction took place evidently in 536 B.C. under Cyrus (see Ezra 1:1–4; Jer. 29:10) and subsequently under Artaxerxes. However, the returnees were not the spiritually revived people that the discipline of the Exile and the instruction of the prophets were designed to produce. Consequently the glorious prospect pictured in Micah 4:1–8 was not realized by those who returned to the land of Judah after the Babylonian Exile (see on v. 6).

11. Many nations. If the nation of the returned exiles had enjoyed the prosperity pictured in vs. 1–8, opposition would have been aroused. Surrounding nations would have sought to crush the thriving nation, but God would have intervened to deliver His people (see on Eze. 38:1; Joel 3:1).

12. They know not. In their blind self-deception they do not realize that they are working out, not Zion’s destruction, but their own.

Floor. That is, threshing floor, a common figure (Isa. 41:15; Jer. 51:33; Hab. 3:12; see on Joel 3:14 for the possibility of translating “valley of decision” as “valley of threshing”; cf. Rev. 14:17–20).

13. Arise. God’s people are represented under the figure of the oxen when they tread out the corn (see Deut. 25:4; cf. Isa. 41:13–16).

Thine horn iron. Probably an additional symbol of destruction. As the ox gores its victims, so Israel would destroy her foes.

Hoofs. Grain was threshed by the oxen trampling upon the sheaves on a threshing floor. At times a weighted sled was dragged behind the oxen. Metal hoofs would greatly facilitate the threshing process.

I will consecrate. The LXX and the Targums read, “You shall consecrate.” The gains of warfare were not to be used for personal aggrandizement but were to be devoted to the Lord and to be used for the advancement of His kingdom.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 CT 455

8 AH 540; GC 484, 674; PK 682; PP 67; SR 430

10–12 Ed 181; PK 538

CHAPTER 5

1 *The birth of Christ.* 4 *His kingdom.* 8 *His conquest.*

1. Gather thyself. Jerusalem is charged to summon its armies in view of the approaching danger. She is called the “daughter of troops” probably because of the concentration of troops there assembled. The LXX renders the first part of the verse, “Now shall the daughter of Ephraim be completely hedged in,” which reading is largely followed by the RSV, “Now you are walled about with a wall.”

Upon the cheek. One of the greatest of insults (see 1 Kings 22:24; Job 16:10; Matt. 26:67, 68). The prophecy is Messianic and forecasts the treatment Messiah was to receive at the hands of His enemies. In Hebrew this verse is attached to ch. 4.

2. Beth-lehem. For the meaning see on Gen. 35:19. A town 5 1/4 mi. (8.4 km.) south of Jerusalem, the modern *Beit Lahm*. The town was also called Ephrath (Gen. 35:19; cf. Ruth 4:11) and Bethlehem-judah, doubtless to distinguish it from Bethlehem in Zebulun (Joshua 19:15, 16). Bethlehem was the birthplace of David (1 Sam. 16:1, 4; cf. Luke 2:11).

Thousands. Heb. *’alaphim*, which may define tribes, or clans, from a numerical point of view. Hence the translation “clans” (RSV). “Little” may thus refer either to the clan represented by the inhabitants of Bethlehem or possibly to the town itself, which never assumed very great importance.

Shall he come forth. The Jews recognized this prophecy as Messianic, and in response to Herod’s request as to where the Messiah was to be born, they quoted this passage in Micah (Matt. 2:3–6; cf. John 7:42).

Goings forth. Heb. *moša’oth*, the plural of *mosa’ah*, from the root *yaša’*, “to go out.” It is not entirely clear just what is referred to by this term. Since the Messiah is here represented as a king, some have thought that the reference is to a king going forth in kingly function. Others see a reference to the various OT appearances of Christ, such as to Abraham (Gen. 18) and Jacob (Gen. 32:24–32).

From everlasting. Micah clearly sets forth the pre-existence of the One who was to be born in Bethlehem. The “goings forth” of Christ reach to eternity in the past. “In the beginning was the Word” (see on John 1:1–3). “From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father” (DA 19; cf. DA 530; Ev 615).

Instead of *moša’oth* (see above on “goings forth”), the RSV reads “origin.” This is the only place in that version where *moša’oth*, or its corresponding masculine form *mosa’*, is so translated. If “origin” be construed as signifying that there was a time when Christ did not exist, then this translation is misleading (see *Problems in Bible Translation*, pp. 188–190).

3. *She which travaileth.* Some commentators find in this verse a reference to the suffering and affliction that Israel would undergo until their deliverance from captivity. In other words, that God would “give them up” until that time. Others see a reference to the birth of the Messiah (see Isa. 7:14).

4. *Stand.* As “the good shepherd,” the Messiah, Christ, would “stand” firm in the care and defense of His sheep.

Feed. The LXX adds “his flock.”

Unto the ends. The Messiah’s dominion would be universal (see Ps. 2:7, 8; 72:8; Luke 1:30–33).

5. *The peace.* The clause reads literally, “and this shall be peace.” If “man” be correctly understood and the reference is to the Messiah, this clause may be compared with the title “Prince of Peace” given the Messiah by Micah’s contemporary (Isa. 9:6). Jesus will not only rule in peace but is Himself the author and source of peace (see John 14:27; 16:33; Eph. 2:13, 14).

The Assyrian. At the time of Micah’s prophecy Assyria was Israel’s principal foe, a sinister threat to her existence (2 Kings 18; 2 Kings 19). Inasmuch as the Messianic age is under discussion here, Assyria doubtless represents those nations that would have opposed the thriving nation of restored Israel (see on Micah 4:11; see p. 30).

Seven shepherds. The numbers here given, “seven” and “eight,” although signifying an indefinite number, show that Israel would have adequate leadership against foreign aggression.

6. *Waste.* Heb. *ra’ah*, “to shepherd,” “to tend,” “to feed,” in an adapted sense “to rule” (see RSV). Israel was to “rule” its enemies with the “sword.”

Nimrod. Here used as a synonym for Assyria. Nimrod comes from the root *marad*, “to rebel.” On Nimrod see on Gen. 10:8–10.

7. *As a dew.* According to God’s plan for ancient Israel, victory over enemy opposition would have been followed by an intensive program of evangelism. The men of Israel were to enlighten the whole world with a knowledge of God (see pp. 26–30; cf. DA 27). The figures of dew and rain were most appropriate in a land where from about May to October there was, for practical purposes, no rainfall (see Vol. II, p. 110).

8. *As a lion.* A figure of conquering power. It was God’s plan that His people be the “head” and not the “tail” (Deut. 28:13).

9. *Shall be cut off.* Complete victory was assured (see Isa. 60:12). This might have been Israel’s privilege following the Exile. However, the people failed, and God is now accomplishing His program of world evangelism through the Christian church (see pp. 35, 36).

10. *Cut off.* Verses 10, 11 describe the cutting off of those devices of war in which Israel had trusted, when it should have trusted in the Lord. The multiplication of horses was forbidden (Deut. 17:16; see on 1 Kings 4:26).

11. *The cities.* The fortified cities and strongholds, being sources of human reliance, would be removed.

12. *Witchcrafts.* Or, “sorceries.” Sorcery, or necromancy—consulting the dead—was common in ancient times (see on Dan. 1:20; 2:2). The Israelites were forbidden to practice sorcery and soothsaying (Deut. 18:9–12).

13. Graven images. Heb. *pesilim*, from *pasal*, “to cut,” “to hew.” The Ugaritic *psl* means “stonecutter.” Ancient images (also designated *pesel*) were cut from stone, formed of clay, carved out of wood, or poured with molten metal. Since earliest times Israel had shown a tendency toward idolatry. The second commandment of the Decalogue forbade the manufacture and worship of a *pesel* (Ex. 20:4).

Standing images. Heb. *maššebot*, “pillars” (see on Deut. 16:22; 1 Kings 14:23). There is also today a deceptive trust in the material and secular, the work of men’s hands, instead of a trust and faith in the God who has given men “richly all things to enjoy” (1 Tim. 6:17). In their idolatrous devotion to the things that are made, men have forgotten the One who is the Creator of all things (see Deut. 8:17–20).

14. Groves. Heb. *’asherim* (see on Deut. 16:21; 2 Kings 17:10).

15. Such as. The clause thus introduced may also be translated “who have not heard,” or “who have not hearkened.” “If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (1 Peter 4:18).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 AA 225

2 AA 224; DA 44, 470; GC 313; PK 697; PP 34

7 DA 27; MB 28; MH 404

CHAPTER 6

1 *God’s controversy for unkindness, 6 for ignorance, 10 for injustice, 16 and for idolatry.*

1. Contend. Micah is called upon to plead for his people before inanimate nature, the “mountains” and the “hills,” which have been silent witnesses of God’s gracious dealings with the Israelites and of their ingratitude.

2. O mountains. These were to act the part, as it were, of the jury.

3. What have I done? Compare Isa. 5:3, 4; Jer. 2:5, 21; John 10:32.

4. I brought thee. God defends His case by calling to mind some of the outstanding benefits He had bestowed upon His people. The Exodus was one of the signal evidences of His loving interest and care for His people (see Isa. 63:11–13; Amos 2:10).

Moses. The Lord provided specially qualified and inspired leadership for His people (Ps. 77:20; Hosea 12:13).

5. Consulted. Heb. *ya’as*, “to advise.” Balaam answered Balak’s request for a curse by pronouncing a blessing. For the narrative of Balak and Balaam see Num. 22–24.

From Shittim. It appears that a new clause is here introduced which may be indicated by preceding the phrase “from Shittim” by such words as “consider your passing over.” Shittim was the last stopping place of the Israelites before they crossed the Jordan (Joshua 3:1), and Gilgal the first encampment in the land of Canaan (Joshua 4:19). In their travel from Shittim to Gilgal the Israelites had crossed the Jordan, and had seen the marvelous interposition of God in their behalf (Joshua 3; 4).

6. Wherewith? Either a new section begins or the series of questions in vs. 6, 7 represents the people’s response to a revelation of their ingratitude. Opinions vary as to whether in the latter case the words were spoken in a spirit of self-righteousness or in a spirit of humility, with an acknowledgment of sin, accompanied by a sincere desire to know the necessary steps in propitiation. In any case they revealed a lack of understanding of the nature of God and of the only kind of service He accepts.

The high God. Literally, “the God of the height.” Compare Isa. 33:5; Isa. 57:15; 66:1.

Burn offerings. The ritual service provided for offerings of various types. These were designed to be illustrative of the various features of the plan of salvation. Of themselves, when not accompanied by a true spirit on the part of the offerer, the sacrifices were valueless and ritual an abomination (see on Isa. 1:11).

A year old. Heb. “sons of a year,” rendered in Lev. 9:3; Num. 7:17 “of the first year,” i.e., born in that year (see on Ex. 12:5), at least a week old (Lev. 22:27).

7. Thousands. As though such a large number would be sure to secure the greater favor of God, and so a greater disposition on His part to forgive sin.

Oil. Used in connection with meat (meal) offerings (Lev. 2:1, 4–7; Lev. 7:10–12; Num. 15:4).

Firstborn. Reference is here made to a pagan custom common in ancient times, which was forbidden to the Israelites, but was nevertheless practiced by some of their kings (Lev. 18:21; 20:2; 2 Kings 3:27; 16:3; 23:10; Ps. 106:37, 38; Jer. 7:31). The custom seems to have been based on the idea that God should receive man’s dearest and best, and that the value Heaven placed upon an offering was reckoned according to its cost. In spite of the declared sanctity of human life (Gen. 9:6), and the practice of redeeming the first-born son (Ex. 13:13), the influence of heathenism prevailed. The question here raised is rhetorical and, like the others, demands a negative answer.

8. Hath shewed thee. The answer Micah gave was not a new revelation and did not represent a change in the divine requirements. The objective of the plan of salvation, namely, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God, had been clearly revealed to Adam and a knowledge concerning this objective had been passed on to succeeding generations. This knowledge was confirmed through the personal testimony of the Spirit (see Rom. 8:16) and amplified through subsequent revelations of the prophets. The men of Micah’s day had the Pentateuch in writing, and doubtless other portions of the Bible, as well as the testimony of contemporary prophets such as Isaiah and Hosea (see Isa. 1:1; Hosea 1:1; cf. Micah 1:1).

However, the people seemed to have forgotten that outward observances are valueless without true godliness. One of the chief functions of the prophets was to teach the people that mere external religious practice could not substitute for internal character and obedience (1 Sam. 15:22; Ps. 51:16, 17; Isa. 1:11–17; Hosea 6:6; cf. Jer. 6:20; 7:3–7; John 4:23, 24). God desired not their substance but their spirit; not alone their worship but their will; not alone their service but their soul.

Justly. Heb. *mishpat* from the root *shaphat*, “to judge.” The plural form, *mishpatim*, generally translated “judgments,” is used of the additional precepts giving minute instructions as to how the Decalogue was to be kept (Ex. 21:1; see PP 364). To do *mishpat* is to order one’s life according to the “judgments” of God.

Mercy. Heb. *chesed*, a word describing a wide range of qualities as indicated by its various translations, such as “goodness,” “kindness,” “loving-kindness,” “merciful kindness,” “mercy.” For a discussion of *chesed* see Additional Note on Psalm 36.

To walk. When men walk with God (see Gen. 5:22; 6:9) they order their lives in harmony with the divine will.

Humbly. From the Heb. *šana'*, which in the form here found occurs only once. A suggested meaning besides "humbly" is "circumspectly," "with caution," "carefully."

The objective of true religion is character development. Outward ceremony is of value only as it contributes to such development. But because it is often easier to render outward service than to change the evil propensities of the heart, men have ever been more ready to render external worship than to cultivate the graces of the soul. Thus it was with the scribes and Pharisees whom Jesus rebuked. They scrupulously guarded any infringement in the matter of tithing but neglected the "weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith" (Matt. 23:23).

"To do justly, and to love mercy" is to act with justice and kindness. These are manward virtues and sum up the intent of the second table of the Decalogue (see on Matt. 22:39, 40). "To walk humbly with thy God" is to live in harmony with the principles of the first table of the Decalogue (see on Matt. 22:37, 38). This is Godward virtue. Love expressed in action with respect to God and to our fellow men is "good"; it is all that God requires, for "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10).

9. Unto the city. Jerusalem is presumably meant. Verses 9–16 list the sins of Israel and the consequent judgments to fall upon the people.

Man of wisdom. The meaning of this clause is not clear. Various changes in the Hebrew have been suggested in an endeavor to remove the ambiguity. The LXX renders the clause, "He shall save those that fear his name."

Rod. Heb. *matteh*, a word that describes a staff, or rod (Ex. 4:2, 4; etc.). If "staff" is meant, then the Assyrians whose "staff" was God's "indignation" (Isa. 10:5) may be referred to; if "tribe," then the dwellers of Jerusalem are addressed (see RSV).

10. Treasures of wickedness. Ill-gotten wealth (see Amos 8:5).

11. Wicked balances. See on Deut. 25:13, 15; see Amos 8:5.

12. Rich men. Whereas the rich are condemned for their violence, all alike are charged with dishonesty and deceit. Given a chance, the downtrodden would probably be as cruel as their oppressors.

13. Make thee sick. The LXX here reads, "I will begin to smite thee." Verses 13–15 describe the punishment to come upon the people for their flagrant transgressions and their callousness of heart.

14. Eat. See Lev. 26:26; Hosea 4:10; Haggai 1:6.

Casting down. Heb. *yeshach*, a word occurring only here and whose meaning is obscure. Hebrew parallelism suggests the possible meaning, "emptiness," or "hunger" (see RSV).

Take hold. Heb. *sug*, here probably used in the sense of "remove." The people would vainly seek to save their valuables by carrying them away.

15. Not reap. See Deut. 28:38–40; Haggai 1:6.

16. Statutes of Omri. No special "statutes" of this king of Israel are mentioned in the Bible. There is a probable reference to the idolatrous rules of worship that Omri instituted (see 1 Kings 16:25, 26). Omri was the founder of the iniquitous dynasty that produced Ahab and Athaliah (see 1 Kings 16:29–33; 2 Kings 8:26; 11:1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 8T 275
 4 PP 382
 6, 7 DA 469
 6–8COL 210; MB 54; PK 326; 5T 630
 8 AH 184, 309; CH 33; CM 154; CS 138; CW 161; TM 281, 459, 462; 3T 187, 201, 269,
 539; 4T 337, 621; 5T 502, 559; 6T 149; 7T 180, 262; 8T 68, 123, 137
 10, 11 CS 77
 11 TM 372; 4T 310
 12 TM 373
 13 CS 78

CHAPTER 7

1 *The church, complaining of her small number, 3 and the general corruption, 5 putteth her confidence not in man, but in God. 8 She triumpheth over her enemies. 14 God comforteth her by promises, 16 by confusion of the enemies, 18 and by his mercies.*

1. Woe is me! Israel, or Zion, seems to be the speaker, or probably the repentant part of Israel.

Summer fruits. The application of the figure may be suggested by v. 2. As after the fruit is harvested none of it is to be found in the field, so after the harvest of evil no righteous man is to be found in Israel. Or Zion may be represented as the one who comes seeking fruit after the harvest has been gathered, and finds none.

2. Is perished. Compare Jer. 5:1.

3. With both hands. The Hebrew of the opening clause is obscure. The LXX reads, “They prepare their hands for mischief.”

A reward. Bribery, an ancient vice, is here condemned (see Isa. 1:23).

They wrap it up. The Hebrew of the clause thus translated is obscure. The verb occurs only here and the meaning is therefore uncertain.

4. Brier. Heb. *chedeq*, translated “thorns” in Prov. 15:19. Thorns are hard, piercing, injuring all who go by.

5. Trust ye not. Verses 5, 6 describe the moral conditions as so grievous that a friend, a neighbor, a man’s wife who lay in his “bosom,” or any member of the immediate family could not be trusted.

6. Dishonoureth. Jesus quoted the words of this verse to describe moral conditions in the Christian age (Matt. 10:21, 35, 36).

7. Therefore. Speaking for Israel, the prophet expresses faith in God despite chastisement and looks forward in confidence to promised restoration.

8. Rejoice not. So assured is Israel of her ultimate salvation that she sounds the note of triumph over the enemy whom God employed to punish His people.

9. I will bear. This is the language of the truly penitent. He realizes that his only hope is in God. He asks for no mitigation of punishment. He knows that whatever God does will be for his good.

10. Where is the Lord? Compare Isa. 37:10–13; Joel 2:17.

As the mire. See Isa. 10:6; Zech. 10:5.

11. In the day. Literally, “a day.” An assurance of restoration.

Decree. Heb. *choq*, which, although frequently used of a decree, may also mean boundary, or limit. If so intended here, there is a prediction of the extension of Israel's boundaries.

12. He shall come. Probably "they shall come" in harmony with several manuscripts of the LXX.

Fortified. Heb. *mašor*, which may also be translated "Egypt." Assyria and Egypt had held God's people in captivity and in slavery.

Fortress. Heb. *mašor*, which may be translated "Egypt" as above.

River. The Euphrates.

Sea to sea. It is not certain which seas are meant. The expression indicates wide extent. The same is true of the expression, "from mountain to mountain."

13. Desolate. The land of the heathen seems here to be indicated. As a result of the judgments of God in the deliverance of Israel, many areas would become largely depopulated.

14. Feed thy people. The prophecy of Micah ends with a prayer that God will fulfill His promises toward His people. Yahweh is represented as the divine Shepherd (see Ps. 23:1), who, with His staff, or "rod" (see Ps. 23:4), will lead His people, "the flock of thine heritage" (see Ps. 28:9; 95:7), to good pasture (see Eze. 34:11–15).

Dwell solitarily. Compare Num. 23:9.

Carmel. The name means "garden land." Possibly luxuriant pastureland in general is referred to instead of the range of hills forming the southwestern boundary of the plain of Esdraelon.

Bashan. Bashan and Gilead are referred to, possibly because of their rich pastures, possibly also from the point of view that these territories to the east of the Jordan, which had been lost to Assyria (see on 1 Chron. 5:26), would be restored.

15. Egypt. God promises to match the "marvellous" wonders that accompanied the Exodus.

16. Shall see. The enemy had formerly boasted, "Where is the Lord thy God?" (v. 10). Now the tables would be turned and the heathen would acknowledge the power of Yahweh and be ashamed of all their boasted might.

17. Lick the dust. A figure describing the utmost humiliation (see on Ps. 72:9; see also Isa. 49:23).

Their holes. The fastnesses into which the wicked had gone in terror because of the Lord.

18. Who is a God? Micah closes his prophecy with a note of praise for God's mercy and faithfulness. Compare similar expressions in Ex. 15:11; Ps. 71:19.

Pardoneth iniquity. Compare Ex. 34:7; Isa. 55:7.

Retaineth not. Compare Ps. 103:9.

19. Subdue our iniquities. Israel's iniquities, which it had been Micah's sad lot to expose, would be freely forgiven. Though here not particularly pointed out, pardon was only on the basis of thorough repentance and reformation. The discipline of the Captivity was designed to effect such a spiritual revival. This was not achieved on a national scale, and so the glorious promises with which Micah closes his prophecies were never realized by the nation of Israel. Individuals, of course, experienced the saving grace of God and obtained the pardon here promised. The blessings may also be claimed by the Christian.

Through the merits of the grace of Christ his sins may be perfectly forgiven. If he endures till the end, his sins will never be mentioned against him again. Should he apostatize and be lost, all his sins will face him on the judgment day (see on Eze. 18:21–24).

20. *Thou wilt perform.* See Gen. 17:1–9; 22:16–18; 28:13–15; cf. Heb. 6:13–18.

These promises, which should have met a glorious fulfillment in the literal seed of Israel, will now be fulfilled in the Christian church, which is the spiritual seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:7, 9, 29; see pp. 35, 36).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2, 4 PK 324

7, 8 MH 182

7–9PK 334

8, 9 GC 346; MH 166; PK 377; PP 738

18 DA 241, 582; COL 186; MB 116; SC 10; 6T 149

18, 19 8T 278

19 DA 162, 806; MH 182

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