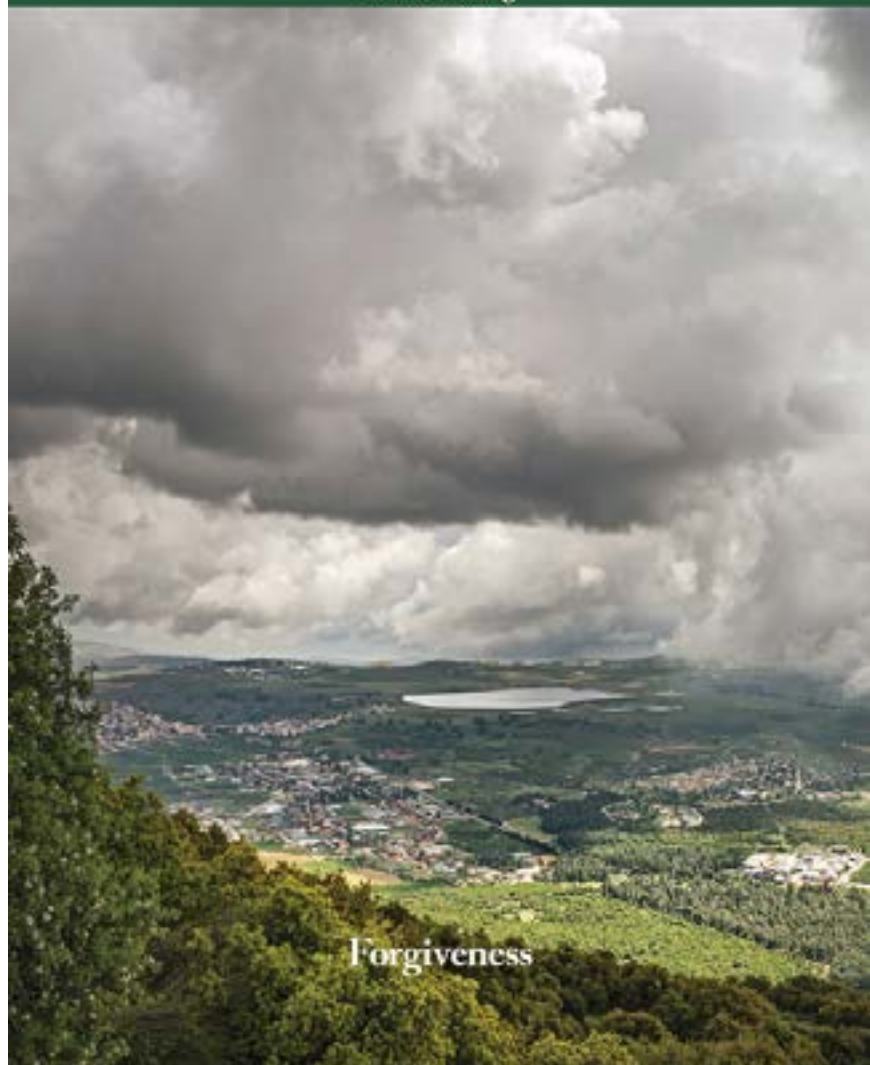


Micah Explained & Applied 33

Ger de Koning



Forgiveness

The Book of Micah

The Book of Micah

Forgiveness

Ger de Koning

Dutch version:

Micha – Nahum – Habakuk – Zefanja – Toegelicht en toegepast 33 t/m 36

© 2019 Uitgeverij Daniël, Zwolle, NL, ISBN 978-90-79718-71-9 (hardcover)

Web shop: www.uitgeverijdaniel.nl

© 2019 by Ger de Koning. All rights preserved.

No part of this publication may be – other than for personal use – reproduced in any form without written permission of the author.

New American Standard Bible Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation La Habra, Calif.

All rights reserved. For Permission to Quote Information visit <http://www.lockman.org>.

Contents

Abbreviations of the Names of the Books of the Bible	9
Old Testament	9
New Testament	10
Explanation of General Format	11
The Book of Micah	12
Introduction	12
Micah 1	17
Mic 1:1 The Word of the LORD Comes to Micah	17
Mic 1:2 The Judge Comes	18
Mic 1:3 The LORD Comes Forth From His Place	19
Mic 1:4 Consequences of His Coming	20
Mic 1:5 Reason for the Coming of the LORD	20
Mic 1:6 Samaria Will Be Destroyed	22
Mic 1:7 Idols Smashed	22
Mic 1:8 Lament and Wail	23
Mic 1:9 The Wound Is Incurable	24
Mic 1:10 Gath and Beth-le-aphrah	25
Mic 1:11 Shaphir, Zaanan and Beth-ezel	27
Mic 1:12 Maroth	27
Mic 1:13 Lachish, the Beginning of Israel's Sin	28
Mic 1:14 Moresbeth-gath and Achzib	28
Mic 1:15 Mareshah and Adullam	29
Mic 1:16 Signs of Mourning Because of Exile	30
Micah 2	31
Mic 2:1 Scheme and Work Out Evil	31
Mic 2:2 Covetousness, Robbery and Oppression	32
Mic 2:3 The Calamity That the LORD Plans	33
Mic 2:4 A Taunt	34
Mic 2:5 Therefore ...	35
Mic 2:6 Do Not Speak Out	36

Mic 2:7 Deceiving and Walking Uprightly	37
Mic 2:8 The People Have Arisen as an Enemy	37
Mic 2:9 Exploitation of the Vulnerable	38
Mic 2:10 This Is No Place of Rest	39
Mic 2:11 A Spokesman the People Love	40
Mic 2:12 The Remnant of Israel Gathered	41
Mic 2:13 The Breaker	42
Micah 3	44
Introduction	44
Mic 3:1 Knowing Justice	44
Mic 3:2 Hating the Good and Loving the Evil	45
Mic 3:3 Cannibalism	46
Mic 3:4 The LORD Does Not Answer Them	46
Mic 3:5 Again Against the False Prophets	47
Mic 3:6 Night and Darkness for the False Prophets	48
Mic 3:7 Seers and Diviners Ashamed	48
Mic 3:8 Filled With Power to Preach	49
Mic 3:9-10 Justice Abhorred and Twisted	50
Mic 3:11 Haughty Boasting	51
Mic 3:12 On Account of the False Priests and Prophets	53
Micah 4	55
Mic 4:1 The House of the LORD Is Raised	55
Mic 4:2 From Zion Will Go Forth the Law	56
Mic 4:3 No More War	57
Mic 4:4 The Realm of Peace Has Come	58
Mic 4:5 Walking in the Name of the LORD	59
Mic 4:6 Assembled and Gathered	59
Mic 4:7 A Remnant Becomes a Strong Nation	60
Mic 4:8 Restoration of Former Dominion	60
Mic 4:9 Cry Out Loudly	61
Mic 4:10 First to Babylon and Then Rescued	61
Mic 4:11 Many Nations Assemble Against Zion	62
Mic 4:12 The LORD Gathers the Nations to Judgment	63
Mic 4:13 Zion Pulverizes the Peoples	63
Micah 5	66
Mic 5:1 The Judge of Israel Smitten on the Cheek	66

Mic 5:2 A Ruler From the Days of Eternity	66
Mic 5:3 The Remainder of His Brethren	69
Mic 5:4 He Will Shepherd Them and Be Great	70
Mic 5:5 He Will Be Peace	71
Mic 5:6 He Delivers From the Enemy	72
Mic 5:7 The Remnant Like Dew and Showers	72
Mic 5:8 The Remnant Is Like a Lion	73
Mic 5:9 Lifted up Against the Adversaries	74
Mic 5:10-14 Everything Taken Away That Man Relies On	74
Mic 5:15 God's Vengeance on Those Who Will Not Obey	76
Micah 6	77
Introduction	77
Mic 6:1-2 The Indictment of the LORD	77
Mic 6:3 Call to Testify Against the LORD	78
Mic 6:4 The Care of the LORD for His People	79
Mic 6:5 The Righteous Acts of the LORD	79
Mic 6:6-7 With What Come to the LORD?	80
Mic 6:8 What the LORD Has Told	82
Mic 6:9 Hear the Rod	83
Mic 6:10-11 A Short Measure and False Weighing Instruments	84
Mic 6:12 The Iniquity of the People	85
Mic 6:13 The Discipline of the LORD	85
Mic 6:14-15 Much Done, No Result	86
Mic 6:16 The Cause of the Reproach of God's People	87
Micah 7	89
Introduction	89
Mic 7:1 There Is Nothing Left to Eat	89
Mic 7:2 There Are No More God-Fearing People	90
Mic 7:3-4 A Cord of Three Strands of Injustice	90
Mic 7:5-6 No One Can Be Trusted	92
Mic 7:7 Watch Expectantly for the LORD	92
Mic 7:8-9 From Darkness Into Light	94
Mic 7:10 The Enemies Judged	95
Mic 7:11-13 Restoration of Israel	95
Mic 7:14 Prayer to Shepherd the People	96
Mic 7:15 Answer to Prayer	97

Contents

Mic 7:16-17 Consequences for the Nations	97
Mic 7:18-19 Who Is a God Like You?	98
Mic 7:20 God Fulfills His Promises	99
Other Publications	101

Abbreviations of the Names of the Books of the Bible

Old Testament

Gen – Genesis

Exo – Exodus

Lev – Leviticus

Num – Numbers

Deu – Deuteronomy

Jos – Joshua

Jdg – Judges

Rth – Ruth

1Sam – First Samuel

2Sam – Second Samuel

1Kgs – First Kings

2Kgs – Second Kings

1Chr – First Chronicles

2Chr – Second Chronicles

Ezra – Ezra

Neh – Nehemiah

Est – Esther

Job – Job

Psa – Psalms

Pro – Proverbs

Ecc – Ecclesiastes

Song – Song of Songs

Isa – Isaiah

Jer – Jeremiah

Lam – Lamentations

Eze – Ezekiel

Dan – Daniel

Hos – Hosea

Joel – Joel

Amos – Amos

Oba – Obadiah

Jona – Jonah

Mic – Micah
Nah – Nahum
Hab – Habakkuk
Zep – Zephaniah
Hag – Haggai
Zec – Zechariah
Mal – Malachi

New Testament

Mt – Gospel of Matthew
Mk – Gospel of Mark
Lk – Gospel of Luke
Jn – Gospel of John
Acts – Acts of the Apostles
Rom – Letter to the Romans
1Cor – First Letter to the Corinthians
2Cor – Second Letter to the Corinthians
Gal – Letter to the Galatians
Eph – Letter to the Ephesians
Phil – Letter to the Philippians
Col – Letter to the Colossians
1Thes – First Letter to the Thessalonians
2Thes – Second Letter to the Thessalonians
1Tim – First Letter to Timothy
2Tim – Second Letter to Timothy
Tit – Letter to Titus
Phlm – Letter to Philemon
Heb – Letter to the Hebrews
Jam – Letter of James
1Pet – First Letter of Peter
2Pet – Second Letter of Peter
1Jn – First Letter of John
2Jn – Second Letter of John
3Jn – Third Letter of John
Jude – Letter of Jude
Rev – Revelation

Explanation of General Format

PERSONAL PRONOUNS are capitalized when pertaining to Deity.

BRACKETS [] are used in this commentary in the Bible text to indicate words which are not found in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek but implied by it.

SHARP BRACKETS < > are used in this commentary in the Bible text to indicate words possibly not in the original writings.

When **ASTERISKS** * are used in New Testament quotations, it is to mark verbs that are historical presents in the Greek which have been translated with an English past tense in order to conform to modern usage. The translators recognized that in some contexts the present tense seems more unexpected and unjustified to the English reader than a past tense would have been. But Greek authors frequently used the present tense for the sake of heightened vividness, thereby transporting their readers in imagination to the actual scene at the time of occurrence. However, the translators felt that it would be wise to change these historical presents to English past tenses.

ALL CAPS in the New Testament quotations are used in the text to indicate Old Testament quotations or obvious references to Old Testament texts.

The Book of Micah

Introduction

Micah means ‘who is like *Yahweh*? He lives up to his name. In his book he presents the LORD – Hebrew *Yahweh* – as the righteous Judge and the faithful Shepherd of Israel. He shows that God hates sin, lawlessness, idolatry and religious formalism. Because of these iniquities, God must judge His people as the righteous Judge. But God is also the God who cannot be compared to anyone. Who is like Him (Mic 7:18)? As a God of forgiveness, He is willing to give His people a glorious time of peace under the rule of the Messiah.

We learn from the book of Micah that God values faith that is actually practiced and lived out. Anyone as a mere creature who takes the place that best suits him before God, the Creator, will come to know God as a wonderful God of forgiveness.

As said, the name Micah means ‘who is like *Yahweh*?’ When Micah’s mother called her little boy by his name to enter, a loud testimony shouted through the streets of Moresheth that the LORD – our translation of the word *Yahweh* – cannot be compared to anyone.

If this testimony sounded that way through the city, it may have reminded the pious Israelite of the song that Moses and the Israelites sang after their redemption from Egypt. The same testimony sounds in that song (Exo 15:11). Unfortunately, this memory will only have been present in a few people. The masses of the people no longer think of the LORD, of His redemption and His purpose with it. They live for themselves and do injustice to their neighbors.

That is why more is needed than the testimony of his name when his mother called him or when he later introduced himself as ‘Micah’. His name will gain substance through a powerful preaching to break with sin and do what the LORD asks (Mic 6:8). He concludes that preaching with a powerful testimony of the meaning of his name: “Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity?” (Mic 7:18a).

The Micah of this Bible Book can be found only in Jeremiah 26 (Jer 26:18). There, as here (Mic 1:1), he is called “Micah from Moresheth. This clearly distinguishes him from all the other Micah’s (or: Micaiah) mentioned in the Bible, of whom we often read no more than the name of their father. There are two namesakes of whom we read more.

One is “Micaiah, the son of Imlah” (1Kgs 22:8-22). In this son of Imlah, Micah of Moresheth has an inspiring forerunner. The son of Imlah was fearless in bringing God’s Word to kings and prophets who did not take God into account. This man was not impressed by the splendor of the kings and the threatening language of the false prophets. Indeed, beyond these high-ranking persons he has seen the majesty of the LORD, in which all earthly glory fades and loses its threat. Micah from Moresheth will prove to be a worthy namesake, because he brings his message equally fearlessly.

The other Micah stands in stark contrast to both of these faithful, devoted Micah’s. We meet him in Judges 17-18. This man has had his very own idea of how he wanted to serve God. His idolatry has led a whole tribe to follow him in his idolatry (Jdg 17:1-13; 18:1-6,27,30-31).

Moresheth, the town where the Micah of this Bible Book comes from, is a small town southwest of Jerusalem that borders directly on the Philistine region. The addition of ‘Gath’ further on in Micah 1 indicates this (Mic 1:14). It is an ordinary rural town in the province. Just like Amos, who lived a few decades before him, he is someone from the countryside. That is not to say that he lived in isolation to whom all the world news passes by. He lived on the road that runs from the Philistines to the Judean mountains. That road is an access road to the country. Micah lived in a place where he was informed about everything by the passers-by. He is no stranger to the world in which he lives and is therefore able to give an appropriate testimony.

As far as his origins are concerned, there is similarity with Amos. As far as the content of his message is concerned, there is clear similarity with Isaiah, of whom he is a contemporary. They have both spoken a lot about the Messiah. Micah is also sometimes called ‘the little Isaiah’. That there is similarity with Isaiah is also shown by the number of similar passages of both prophets:

Mic 1:9-16 – Isa 10:28-32

Mic 2:1-2 – Isa 5:8

Mic 2:6,11 – Isa 30:10-11

Mic 2:12 – Isa 10:20-23

Mic 3:5-7 – Isa 29:9-12

Mic 3:12 – Isa 32:14

Mic 4:1 – Isa 2:2

Mic 4:4 – Isa 1:19

Mic 4:7 – Isa 9:7

Mic 4:10 – Isa 39:6

Mic 5:2-4 – Isa 7:14

Mic 5:6 – Isa 14:25

Mic 6:6-8 – Isa 43:6-7

Mic 7:7 – Isa 8:17

Mic 7:12 – Isa 11:11

The fact that there is clear similarity between Micah and Isaiah does not mean that Micah is a copy of Isaiah. He is not a copycat of Isaiah. What he says, he does not 'borrow' from Isaiah, but is ordered by the LORD. The people who hear Isaiah hear the same things from Micah. One prophet therefore underscores what the other has said. Thus the testimony which the LORD has given is confirmed. By the way, God never lets contradictory sounds be heard. His messengers are always in harmony with one another because His Spirit guides them. Each messenger's own style is always preserved.

Compared to Isaiah, Micah is a little prophet. We regularly see Isaiah at the king's court, while Micah is more the man of the people. Such a position can mean a special exercise of faith. After all, it is not easy to stand in the shadow of a great prophet. Yet Micah did not think: 'Isaiah does all the work. I don't have to do anything.' He knows himself personally called to his task by the LORD and therefore fulfills it with devotion.

The application to today, for the church, is easy to make. Every gift is important, even the in our eyes 'small' gift. Every 'small' gift should not think: 'The great gifts will do it.' This is also an often used argument in the church today not to be engaged in God's kingdom. Not that it is always said out loud, but practice proves it.

Paul shows that such a view in fact stems from jealousy. For this he uses the picture of a human body: "If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not [a part] of the body," it is not for this reason any the less [a part] of the body" (1Cor 12:15). Here we see that dissatisfaction with one's own place in the church, seen as a body, stems from jealousy at someone else's place. This attitude leads to the foolish notion of not belonging to it, of not having a task.

In any case, Micah does not use the excuse: 'Because I am not Isaiah, I am not a prophet.' It does not bother him to carry out his 'small' task too. Again, God has assigned a task to each of His children. If each of the many so-called small gifts becomes more aware of this, there will be much more fruit for God in the church and much less struggle and division.

Like the prophecies of Hosea and Amos, the prophecy of Micah deals with the spiritual state of the people of the Jews, the two tribes. He also clearly denounces the social wrongs. Samaria is also mentioned, the ten tribes, so it is about the whole of Israel. He prophesied about ten years before the fall of Samaria, caused by the Assyrians in 722 BC, an event about which he also prophesied (Mic 1:6-7).

Because of all the wrongs in the relations that have arisen in Israel, the people have become ripe for the sickle of the Assyrians. These wrongs are summarized in 2 Kings 17 (2Kgs 17:6-23). The judgment that Micah had to announce was not given by him with dry eyes. It was close to his heart (Mic 1:8-9).

It has already been pointed out that in Jeremiah 26 (Jer 26:18) what Micah announced is quoted in Micah 3 (Mic 3:12). In the days of Jeremiah one remembers Micah's words. That is more than a century later, after he spoke them. The priests and prophets want to kill Jeremiah because he proclaims the judgment to them if they remain disobedient. But the princes quote the prophecy of Micah and how Hezekiah reacted to it.

For Jeremiah, this reminder means that the threat of killing him is removed. There is a great deal of reverence for Hezekiah. After all, this God-fearing king did not let Micah be killed for his words. If they did kill Jeremiah for his words, it would be tantamount to condemning the God-fearing Hezekiah, as if he had let Micah live unjustly.

It is also interesting to see that Micah is quoted several times in the Bible.

1. The first quotation, which has already been mentioned before (Jer 26:11-19), takes place one hundred years after his performance.
2. After that there is a reference to Micah in the time of the Lord Jesus. Thus an appeal is made to Micah to bring the sages from the East to the place of the birth of the Messiah (Mic 5:1 – Mt 2:5-6).
3. The Lord Jesus Himself uses Micah when He sends out the seventy. On that occasion, the Lord Himself tells His messengers that the prophecy of Micah will be fulfilled in their preaching (Mic 7:6 – Mt 10:21,35-36).
4. When Christ presents Himself as the good Shepherd, this is also something we find in Micah (Mic 2:12-13 – Jn 10:9,11,14).

Division of the book

The book can be divided into three parts, with each part starting with 'hear':

1. Admonition of sin (Micah 1-2)
2. Announcement of the verdict (Micah 3-5)
3. Promise of blessing by the Messiah (Micah 6-7)

Micah 1

Mic 1:1 | The Word of the LORD Comes to Micah

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

Micah has heard “the word of the LORD”. The origin of his message lies in God. What Micah must speak, are words that God has given him. He has also seen the effect of the words of God in what is happening with Samaria and Jerusalem. God never speaks empty words. When He speaks, something happens that is perceptible to faith.

The time of His prophecy falls in the time of three kings of Judah. Although his prophecy is also about Samaria, only the kings of Judah are mentioned because they are in the line of David. Because of this we also know that Micah prophesied within a range of forty to fifty years. God has only let him write down of his words what is of lasting significance for the coming generations and also for us.

“Jotham” reigns from ca. 758-742 BC and is a king after God’s heart (2Kgs 15:32-38). “Ahaz” reigns from ca. 742-727 BC and is an ungodly king (2Kgs 16:1-20). “Hezekiah” reigns from ca. 727-698 BC and is a God-fearing king (2Kgs 18-20). He restores what Ahaz has corrupted. These three kings show the different circumstances under which prophets must speak the words of God. God has a fitting word for every time, without any adaptation of His Word to that time.

In Jotham we can see a picture of Israel’s blessed position in the past. Ahaz is a despiser of the service of the LORD (2Kgs 16:3,10-15). He is a picture of the antichrist and the apostasy in the end times. Hezekiah is a type of Christ and represents the restoration of a remnant in connection with Him in the end times.

Promises and threats are mixed up in this book. We hear how Micah, under the reign of wicked rulers, preaches comfort to the faithful. To the righteous in that period he says that they are going to be all right. In the time

of the pious rulers he acts as a preacher of repentance for the unfaithful members of God's people. He says to them that they are going to have a bad time. For even though times change, the Word of the LORD remains the same.

The book of Micah is about the two realms, that is to say, the northern ten tribes realm and the southern two tribes realm. The message of Micah applies to all the inhabitants of both realms. However, he does not mention the realms, but the names of their capitals. This will be because the leaders of these influential centers are mainly responsible for social injustice (Mic 1:5-7; 3:9-12). Jerusalem is emphasized in his prophecy. For with this city it is not only about the corruption of the leaders, but also about the future glory that will be the part of Jerusalem.

Mic 1:2 | The Judge Comes

*2 Hear, O peoples, all of you;
Listen, O earth and all it contains,
And let the Lord GOD be a witness against you,
The Lord from His holy temple.*

Micah presents without further introduction of the LORD as the coming Judge. The peoples are called as witnesses, as observers, in this process (cf. 1Kgs 22:28). The judgment that affects God's people is a harbinger of the judgment that will affect the people at large. The judgment about the cities of Samaria (Mic 1:6) and Jerusalem (Mic 3:12) contains education for the peoples. Therefore, the earth is called to listen.

The purpose of this general call is to emphasize its great weight (cf. Deu 32:1; Isa 1:2; Jer 6:19). Micah sees, just like Isaiah, that the fate of the nations depends entirely on the fate of God's people. The song of Moses and the book of the law were once set by God as witnesses of the sins of the Israelites (Deu 31:19-21,26). They testify to the judgment that will strike them if they transgress His covenant.

In the same way, the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem testifies to the nations how God hates sin. It warns them not to think that He will spare them, the nations, if "the Lord GOD" (*Adonai Yahweh*) acts so with His own people (1Pet 4:17). He Himself acts as a Witness, because His people, who

should have witnessed to His Name, have abandoned Him and started to serve other gods.

The Lord, *Adonai*, that is the Commander, the Sovereign, comes in majesty from the place where His throne stands (Psa 11:4). His coming out of His holy place strengthens the impression of His majesty. Micah speaks of “His holy temple”. With this he emphasizes the enormous contrast with the sinful earth, where the atmosphere breathes one and all unholiness and impurity. Fortunately, God will first come out of His sanctuary in Christ and appear on earth to give men the opportunity to be reconciled with Him (2Cor 5:20), before He will appear as Judge, as is suggested here.

When He must judge, He goes out of His place (Isa 26:21). If He postpones judgment and thereby shows mercy, He remains in His place (Hos 5:15). If He has to judge, He does it briefly, it is the work of a moment (Isa 54:7-8). His actual work is to prove grace and mercy (Joel 2:13).

Mic 1:3 | The LORD Comes Forth From His Place

3 For behold, the LORD is coming forth from His place.

He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth.

Here the day of the LORD has dawned. He appears. Until now He has hidden Himself (Isa 45:15), but now He is going to create order on earth, where sins have risen to a climax (cf. Gen 18:21). His steps “on the high places of the earth” show that He is the unlimited Ruler of the world (Amos 4:13; Job 9:8; Deu 32:13). This expression also implies that He judges the arrogant ones (Isa 2:11-19). High places are also places of idolatry.

He deals with everything that is high with people in a way that shows the nullity of that high. His performance emphasizes His majesty. What seems high and mighty, what impresses people, is for God less than what the dust is for people who step on it.

In this performance of the LORD we see that God is above the world created by Him. He is not part of His creation. Creation was created by Him, by His word of power, and exists in Him (Col 1:17). He is also able to intervene at any moment in history to carry out His will.

If in Christ He participates “in flesh and blood” (Heb 2:14), it does not mean that He becomes a creature and as such becomes part of His creation. Even as a Man on earth, He is God, for He was conceived by God the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:35). He is the One “Who was revealed in the flesh” (1Tim 3:16), the incarnate Word (Jn 1:14). Only of Him can it be said that He “has come in the flesh” (1Jn 4:2). This cannot be said of anyone else. As the only Man, He has come into the world from a place outside of creation.

Mic 1:4 | Consequences of His Coming

*4 The mountains will melt under Him
And the valleys will be split,
Like wax before the fire,
Like water poured down a steep place.*

When He steps on the earth, the consequences become immediately noticeable. When He touches the mountains, they become like wax before the fire. His majesty is a consuming fire. The valleys diverge, they lose all cohesion and have no firmness anymore, like water flowing down a steep place.

Micah uses visual language here. Now the world does not perish through fire, which will literally happen in the end times (2Pet 3:7,10,12). The judgment of God that Micah announces seems to change the earth into chaos. The events that will bring about this in the short term are the imminent destruction of the northern ten tribes realm by Assyria led by Shalmaneser and the subsequent invasion by the Babylonians led by Nebuchadnezzar of the southern two tribes realm. What Micah says here finds its final fulfillment at the return of the Lord Jesus, when “He is coming to judge the earth” (Psa 96:13).

There is also a comforting application of this verse. We can see in the mountains the great difficulties for which we are sometimes placed. If we cannot look over them, we can look up to Christ. He is able to let these difficulties melt like wax in order to make them a passable path for us (cf. Isa 49:11).

Mic 1:5 | Reason for the Coming of the LORD

5 All this is for the rebellion of Jacob

And for the sins of the house of Israel.

What is the rebellion of Jacob?

Is it not Samaria?

What is the high place of Judah?

Is it not Jerusalem?

“All this” refers back to the awesome appearance of God as Judge in the previous verses and what the consequences are. The reason for God’s action lies in the transgression and sins of the people. The seat of corruption is located in the capital of each empire: Samaria and Jerusalem. By mentioning these names separately, the ten and the two tribes are seen as objects of God’s judgment.

The fact that Samaria is “the rebellion of Jacob” means that all the sins of the ten tribes are found concentrated in the capital. It does not mean that they are found only in Samaria, but what is found in Samaria is an outburst of the sins that are present everywhere. People from all over the country go there to express their sinful desires in the most awful way. There the pus of the sin of the whole country comes to a stinking outburst. In the same way Jerusalem is called “the high places of Judah”. The sin of Judah is here more specifically referred to as the high places, i.e. places where idolatry is committed (Jer 32:35a). High places here are places on mountains and hills where altars have been erected to sacrifice to the idols. These places are an abomination to God. He has His temple in Jerusalem as the only place of worship. That the people have made other places of worship to worship other gods, God cannot let go unpunished.

In the capital the government is seated. That is where policy is determined. That is to bless or to corrupt. The capital can be seen as the beating heart of the people. Today the city is also the center where people go to have a good time. There is a wide range of options for meeting sinful desires. Of course, there are also places in the countryside where that is possible, but the city has a special attraction when people are looking for entertainment. We hear that also when Peter speaks about the “cities of Sodom and Gomorrah” (2Pet 2:6), where people have lived ungodly and as a result have been judged by God.

Mic 1:6 | Samaria Will Be Destroyed

*6 For I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the open country,
Planting places for a vineyard.
I will pour her stones down into the valley
And will lay bare her foundations.*

Here the destruction of Samaria by the Assyrians is described. Only a heap of ruins will remain of the beautiful city, there is nothing left that reminds you of a city. Of Samaria, only a heap of ruins will be visible in the open country. It has become arable land, vineyards can be planted. The laying bare of her foundations mean that the city will be destroyed to the ground (cf. Psa 137:7).

Yet this thorough judgment also contains an element of hope. After Samaria has been made a heap of ruins and its full strength has broken down and collapsed, it can serve as “planting places for a vineyard”. Since wine is a picture of joy, we can note in this description that after the exercise of judgment, new joy can arise.

This also applies spiritually. If we judge the wrong thing in ourselves, it clears the way for us to be happy in the Lord. That is why the foundations have to be laid bare. We have to see what the cause of the wrong is. We have to find out on what certain deeds of our lives are based. For that purpose God sometimes breaks down things we have built ourselves. That is with the purpose of giving joy in its place.

Mic 1:7 | Idols Smashed

*7 All of her idols will be smashed,
All of her earnings will be burned with fire
And all of her images I will make desolate,
For she collected [them] from a harlot's earnings,
And to the earnings of a harlot they will return.*

Here we find a more detailed explanation of the devastation. Not only the city is being demolished, but also elements that have entered God's land and service and that the people have used in their idolatry are being dealt with. Micah says what will happen to them.

He points to the images. This handiwork, to which God's people bow down, will be smashed. In this way everything that has taken the place of God can and must be dealt with as it is worthless and empty. What foolishness to put his trust in such things.

God speaks of smashing the idols as a work that He Himself takes in hand. Although He uses the Assyrians, it is His personal interference in the irreparable destruction of all idols. He wants to convince His people that any support outside of Him will turn out to be a support on air.

By "harlot's earnings" are meant the gifts of the idolaters. These gifts become a harlot's earnings again when they are taken by the conquerors and used for their own idols and for the payment of their idolatrous feasts.

In a spiritual sense, harlotry is the unauthorized unification of what belongs and what does not belong to God (Exo 34:15; Jdg 2:17; Eze 23:30). Here it refers to all the riches Samaria has gained from illicit connections with heathen nations by taking over their gods. All this will perish through the fire of God's judgment. Nothing will remain of it.

If we think that idolatry is an evil found only in uncivilized parts of the world, it is a serious misconception that urgently needs to be corrected. Idolatry is everything that takes our eye away from the Lord Jesus as the center of our lives. It is not for nothing that John concludes his first letter, which is full of the Lord Jesus as eternal life, with the words: "Little children, guard yourselves from idols" (1Jn 5:21).

This is in line with what Paul says: "greed, which amounts to idolatry" (Col 3:5). In the light of this, does anyone still dare to maintain that idolatry does not play a role with us? If we agree with that, it should not stop at this conclusion. Then we must remove everything from our lives to which we are greedily attached. If we do not do that, God will take it away from us in judgment.

Mic 1:8 | Lament and Wail

*8 Because of this I must lament and wail,
I must go barefoot and naked;
I must make a lament like the jackals
And a mourning like the ostriches.*

Until verse 7, Micah is the voice of the LORD to men. In verses 8-9 he is the voice of the people, that is, of a God-fearing remnant who still has an understanding of the sins committed by the masses of the people. It is a remnant that shares and expresses God's feelings about the condition of the people. We may ask ourselves: To what extent is this awareness present with us regarding the condition of God's people now?

With the word "because of this" Micah means the foretold downfall of Samaria. But he does not limit his lament to Samaria. The following verse shows that he thinks mainly of Jerusalem. He knows that the judgment on Samaria is a harbinger of the judgment on Jerusalem. That is Micah's city, the judgment about it touches him personally. Partly because of this his grief is not superficial, but deeply felt and noisy. The cries he makes in the process are reminiscent of those of the jackal and ostrich (cf. Job 30:29).

In any case, he is not ashamed. He does not hold back (cf. Jer 9:1). His expressions of sorrow show that he feels closely connected with these people. For him, the prophecy of the coming of the LORD does not mean the mechanical delivery of a message. Nor is there any trace of gloating with him, as if he would rejoice in the fact that this unfaithful people are in trouble. He is intensely concerned with the impending doom that threatens the people.

Micah is not only audibly affected about what will affect the people, it can also be seen in him. The disasters that will affect the people have touched him in such a way that he is putting off everything that could give the impression that he is having a good time. "Naked" is to be understood in the sense of undressed, that is without the upper garment (2Sam 15:30; Isa 20:2; Jn 21:7). It gives the appearance of misery and sorrow.

From this we can learn the necessary things in view of the judgment that awaits the world. What does it do to us when we think about it? Judging by the luxury with which we surround ourselves, we are not really impressed by the calamity that awaits the world. We participate in enjoying all the wealth and prosperity as much as possible. If we really realize what God is about to do with the world, it will lead us to a sober lifestyle.

Mic 1:9 | The Wound Is Incurable

*9 For her wound is incurable,
For it has come to Judah;
It has reached the gate of my people,
[Even] to Jerusalem.*

Micah gives two reasons for the loud, powerful exclamations of his sorrow. First, is because the judgment of Samaria is so radical. The wounds resulting from the plagues with which God strikes it are “incurable”. There is no way out anymore. God’s patience is finished. The armies of Assyria will destroy the city and take the population with them.

The second reason for his great sorrow is that he sees in his vision how the Assyrians invaded Judah. This is probably the first invasion (2Kgs 18:13). The enemy has set his foot on his land, his home. This is unbearable for him. God’s land is his land, God’s people are his people. It cannot be the case that others are entitled to it. That God allows it is because of the sins of the people. Micah acknowledges this, but that does not take away the fact that bringing the enemy into God’s land causes him great sorrow.

Yet Jerusalem is not conquered. The conqueror stops at the gate of Jerusalem. He may reach the gate, reach Jerusalem. That he does not come into Jerusalem is the result of the intercession of Hezekiah (Isa 37:14-20) . By this the LORD grants Jerusalem a delay of one hundred and twenty-four years.

Mic 1:10 | Gath and Beth-le-aphrah

*10 Tell it not in Gath,
Weep not at all.
At Beth-le-aphrah roll yourself in the dust.*

From verse 10 the invasion of the Assyrians and their siege of Jerusalem is described. Also in Isaiah this march is described (Isa 10:28-32). But there is a difference. Isaiah lists more the different places as stops on the march of the Assyrians. The description of Micah is more mixed, with the causes of the different cities being affected by this judgment.

In verses 10-15 different places are mentioned that will be the scene of misery. Most of the places are known to be in the vicinity of Micah's birthplace. The prophet thus sees a terrible doom coming over his place of birth and its immediate surroundings.

Ten cities are mentioned. Ten is the number of responsibility. That is where Israel and Judah have failed and as a result of that now comes the judgment of them. The first cities mentioned are located in the hilly country of Judah on the route of the enemy from Samaria to Jerusalem. The next cities are near Jerusalem. The cities of Judah that have experienced its scourge are listed, each in terms that show a play on words with the name of the city.

The list is divided by verse 12, where again the gate of Jerusalem is mentioned. Two times, five disparate cities on each occasion are mentioned. This has given rise to the suspicion that the first five cities are located to the north and the next five to the south of Jerusalem, with which Micah at the same time indicates that the judgment takes place from the north.

The section of verses 10-15 begins with words reminiscent of David's grief over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan (2Sam 1:20). The section ends with the name of the cave where David hid from Saul (1Sam 22:1). These dark moments in David's life form as it were, the backdrop for the description of the fall of the cities Micah speaks of. The fall of Saul symbolizes the fall of the entire kingdom of Israel. In the cave we see that during times of judgment there is a refuge for those who acknowledge God's judgment as justified. There is and hides the glory of Israel (verse 15).

The first thing Micah does is to warn the people that this message will not be passed on to Gath of the Philistines. The prophet fears the vengeful cheers of these enemies of God's people (cf. 2Sam 1:20). They should not even show any expression of sadness there.

It also determines that they have to carry the judgment in their own city. They are not allowed to seek support from others. The full weight of it must enter them. It is also a warning that they should not seek pity in the wrong places, with the wrong persons. If they do, it will only make their pain worse.

The first city in Judah is “Beth-le-aphrah”, which means “house of the dust”. Micah’s call to this city to roll themselves in the dust is a play on words. It is a call to behave according to the meaning of the name of their city. To roll themselves in the dust is a sign of mourning (Jos 7:6; Job 16:15; Isa 47:1). God always wants to work with His judgment, that man humbles himself before Him and acknowledges the righteousness of His judgment.

Mic 1:11 | Shaphir, Zaanan and Beth-ezel

11 Go on your way, inhabitant of Shaphir, in shameful nakedness.

The inhabitant of Zaanan does not escape.

The lamentation of Beth-ezel: “He will take from you its support.”

The play on words applies to all the places mentioned by Micah. For each city, Micah has a call that matches the meaning of its name. “Shaphir” means “clean”. Micah speaks of the shame to which Shaphir will be abandoned. Of her beauty nothing remains. The city will experience the opposite of the meaning of her name: she will undergo a humiliating treatment.

“Zaanan’ means ‘place of crowds’ or ‘that has gone out’. With a crowd we can think of strength to fight the enemy. But no one will leave the gate. For fear of the enemy they will stay inside the gates. There is no question of any heroism. Micah mentions that they will not venture out to escape.

“Beth-ezel” means house of the neighbor’. But they will not be able to give help to their neighbors. The city will not be a place where refugees can stay because the city itself is full of misery. The misery into which the enemy has plunged the city will make it impossible to serve as a stop place for those who have been driven away. They are powerless to be a support for their loved ones because the LORD takes His support away from them. He takes His support away from them because they do not rely on Him.

Mic 1:12 | Maroth

12 For the inhabitant of Maroth

Becomes weak waiting for good,

Because a calamity has come down from the LORD

To the gate of Jerusalem.

“Maroth” means ‘bitterness’. The inhabitant looks forward to the good, but it does not come. If bitterness is the hallmark of the city, there is no connection with the good and looking forward to it is unfounded and in vain. Because the city has left the LORD, it has left the source of the good. Judgment is imminent. That will mean the loss of all the good that is still there. The good can only be looked forward to with joy from the relationship with Him.

In the center of the description of the conquest of the Assyrians, Micah reminds that all the doom that the enemy brings comes down from the LORD. It is He Who punishes His people for their sins. Assyria is the rod with which He punishes His people for their persistence in deviating from Him (Isa 10:5-6). Micah also indicates the boundary which the LORD has set for His discipling rod and therefore will not be crossed by the enemy. It is “to the gate of Jerusalem” and not through it into the city (cf. verse 9).

Mic 1:13 | Lachish, the Beginning of Israel’s Sin

*13 Harness the chariot to the team of horses,
O inhabitant of Lachish—
She was the beginning of sin
To the daughter of Zion—
Because in you were found
The rebellious acts of Israel.*

Lachish means, among other things, ‘invincible’. But Lachish is called upon to flee from the approaching enemy and to do so as quickly as possible. Horses, which are an example of fearless strength in warfare (Job 38:24-25), are commended by Micah as the means for a quick and defamatory retreat. After Sennacherib has taken Lachish, he establishes his headquarters there and receives there the envoys of Hezekiah (2Kgs 18:14,17; Isa 36:2).

In Lachish is the “beginning of sin” of Judah. The beginning of sin is where sin started and in which she also revealed her full strength. It will mean that in Lachish, as the first city in Judah, idolatry was ‘imported’ from Israel and from there spread further into Judah. The sins of Israel did not stop at the border of Judah. Lachish opened the gate for it and brought sin in.

Mic 1:14 | Moresheth-gath and Achzib

*14 Therefore you will give parting gifts
On behalf of Moresheth-gath;
The houses of Achzib [will] become a deception
To the kings of Israel.*

Also “Moresheth-gath” will fall into enemy hands. Moresheth-gath means ‘possession or inheritance of Gath’. The city will have to give up its inheritance. It will become the property of the enemy, while its inhabitants will go into exile. In view of this, Micah says that a parting gift should be given to that city. It is like a gift that a father gives to his daughter at her wedding, when she leaves the house. It means that this city will also be lost to the realm.

“Achzib” means ‘lie’, ‘deceit’. The city will disappoint the kings who have placed their hopes in it. The *achzabim* in the Old Testament are brooks or wadi’s that are dry in summer and thus deceitful for the thirsty traveler (cf. Job 6:15; Jer 15:18b). “The houses of Achzib” are named because they can be compared to the brook bed that deceives. There cannot be confidence in it, no counting on, they offer no protection whatsoever.

The kings of Judah are here called “the kings of Israel” because they are not inferior to the kings of Israel in anger. They will embrace the greatest deception if they accept the Antichrist. They will think that they have in him their deliverer. But how deceived they will come out with that. This man will “become a deception”. He will turn out to be an unparalleled ‘brook of lies’.

Mic 1:15 | Mareshah and Adullam

*15 Moreover, I will bring on you
The one who takes possession,
O inhabitant of Mareshah.
The glory of Israel will enter Adullam.*

Mareshah means ‘possession’ or ‘conquest’. Once conquered by the Israelites, now it is about to be conquered by their enemies. All their possessions will fall into the hands of the Assyrians, “one who takes possession”. Here

Micah emphasizes once more that the LORD is the Processor of their doom (cf. verse 12).

All distinguished people, people of standing, will flee to Adullam, the cave for chased peoples (1 Sam 22:1). “The glory of Israel” is the nobility (Isa 5:13), but can also mean the whole people, those who have no right to exist (Hos 9:11-13). Because this place is so reminiscent of the flight of David and all who have joined him, it may also be that God designates this cave as a refuge for all faithful believers.

Mic 1:16 | Signs of Mourning Because of Exile

*16 Make yourself bald and cut off your hair,
Because of the children of your delight;
Extend your baldness like the eagle,
For they will go from you into exile.*

Micah returns to his mourning, which he started in verse 8 in connection with the deportation of the people, which he described in the verses that follow. Here, he no longer addresses a particular city, but makes a general appeal to the whole land. It can be about the deportation by the Assyrians (2Kgs 18:13-19) as well as about the deportation to Babel (Mic 4:10).

By talking about “the children of your delight”, Zion (verse 13) is addressed as the mother of her people. The members of the people are the children of her delight. They are the children about whom she has rejoiced so much as a mother. Now that her children are gone into exile, her joy over them turns into great sorrow.

Micah calls to express that sorrow. He wants them to make themselves bald and cut their hair as a sign of mourning (Job 1:20; Eze 27:31; Amos 8:10). Bald and cut off the hair are two words for the same act, they are synonyms. By using both expressions the thought of mourning is strengthened. This amplified thought is reinforced by connecting the baldness spot to the eagle or the vulture. An external characteristic of the vulture is that it is bald on the head and in the neck. With the mention of the eagle or the vulture the aspect of judgment is emphasized even more (Mt 24:28).

Micah 2

Mic 2:1 | Scheme and Work Out Evil

*1 Woe to those who scheme iniquity,
Who work out evil on their beds!
When morning comes, they do it,
For it is in the power of their hands.*

In Micah 1, Micah has listed the sins against God. In Micah 2 it is about the sins against one's neighbor. Micah turns to those in power, the people with money and influence, who are only interested in self-enrichment, and in doing so, stop at nothing. With a "woe" he announces God's judgment on them. The "woe" he pronounces on these people is reminiscent of the six fold "woe" Isaiah pronounces (Isa 5:8-30). Just like Isaiah, Micah then also pronounces a 'woe' over himself (Mic 7:1; Isa 6:5). Announcement of judgment to others cannot be made without judging ourselves.

The people Micah is speaking to here are purebred criminals. Evil does not attack them, they devote themselves to it. They have well considered their plans for self-enrichment. They have done so in the night, when people are supposed to be asleep. And when it gets light, they start to carry out their nefarious plans. They are so shameless that they do not shy away from the light, but rather carry out their sinful business in the light. Their entire existence is devoted to it. They can think of nothing else.

These wicked people use the night to plot evil (Psa 36:4). This is in stark contrast to what occupies the heart of the God-fearing David. When he is in the wilderness, on the run from Saul, he does not lie down at night thinking about how to eliminate Saul. He thinks of the LORD, of Who He is (Psa 63:6). And when he thinks of the iniquity that surrounds and is done to him, he wants to surrender everything in his heart to the LORD and not avenge himself (Psa 4:4).

Led by God's Spirit, Micah reveals the wicked reason for their actions. They reason: 'We have the power and therefore the right to act as we wish.' The sentence "for it is in the power of their hands" reads literally: 'Their

hand is to them their god.’ That is to say, the power they have applies to them as god; they recognize no higher power than their hand (cf. Hab 1:11). They have the power to do what they want (cf. Gen 31:29; Pro 3:27).

It is the fault of many, often the rich and strong, but also people with intellectual power, that they believe they are allowed to do what they are able to do. It is the kind of people who have no sense of goodness, in whom there is no fear of God (Rom 3:18). There is no inner or outer limitation, nothing that prevents them from carrying out their nefarious plans. They think and do.

An application for today can be seen in many writers, makers of films or inventors of computer games. They keep coming up with new methods to sin. They sell them in their latest editions. The readers, viewers and buyers are the victims who willingly allow their money to be disposed of by investing it in a purchase of the products of these inventors of evil. As they take in the fruit of these people’s thinking, their moral awareness, without being aware of it, is increasingly degraded. The evil that comes out of this is a society that becomes more and more hardened and turns more and more against God and His authority and, as a result, also more and more against his neighbor.

Mic 2:2 | Covetousness, Robbery and Oppression

*2 They covet fields and then seize [them],
And houses, and take [them] away.
They rob a man and his house,
A man and his inheritance.*

Their evil practices, conceived in the night, consist of robbing and oppressing. They result from their coveting of what belongs to their neighbor. When the rights of God are violated, the rights of one’s neighbor are also violated. It is already forbidden to covet something that belongs to someone else. It is a violation of the tenth commandment of the law (Exo 20:17). It declares the coveting of what belongs to someone else to be a sinful act (Rom 7:7). Paul states that greed is idolatry (Col 3:5), because it is putting your heart on something other than God.

But it does not stop at coveting. First they sin in their hearts. Then they sin in practice. And it seems that they are successful in their evil intentions. What they do is aptly illustrated in the history of Ahab who wants Naboth's vineyard (1Kgs 21:1-2). Ahab shows his complete indifference to the fact that the land belongs to God (Lev 25:23). God has given His land as a hereditary possession to the families of His people.

Naboth appreciates what God has given him and under no circumstances wants to get rid of his land (1Kgs 21:3). He is aware that Ahab's covetousness does not only concern his own house, but his ancestral house and also the house that will be of the next generation. But Ahab does not care about that. He takes possession of Naboth's inheritance by placing the business in the hands of his still more wicked wife Jezebel. She sees to it that Naboth is murdered and the vineyard comes into Ahab's possession (1Kgs 21:4-15).

The people Micah has in mind are all little Ahabs. They do what Ahab did. It is not flattering, but it is a clear comparison. Isaiah also denounced and punished these practices (Isa 5:8). The history of Ahab and Naboth is therefore not merely an incident, but happens repeatedly and takes place wherever covetousness prevails. The characteristic of covetousness is that you never have enough. That is how it is with these people. In our twenty-first century, criminal trials against directors of large companies bring to light the same behavior.

The prophet speaks of 'robbing', but they will certainly have denied that. They will have acted in such a way that they can defend themselves against these kinds of accusations. They will present it so that they have appropriated the possession of the other in a 'neat' way. But they are people who move the boundaries to their own advantage (Hos 5:10) in order to take possession of another person's inheritance. They do not care about the boundaries of others.

Mic 2:3 | The Calamity That the LORD Plans

*3 Therefore thus says the LORD,
"Behold, I am planning against this family a calamity
From which you cannot remove your necks;*

*And you will not walk haughtily,
For it will be an evil time.*

The word “therefore” with which this verse begins indicates that the previous list of sins is the basis for the disaster that Micah is about to announce. It is a word of the LORD, a decision taken by Him. If they consider evil (verse 1), He will also consider evil. We see His government in this, which means that the evil we do will affect us. It is the law that we will reap what we sow (Gal 6:7).

There is similarity between what we sow and what we reap. When we sow evil, we should not think that we will reap goodness. If we think that it means mocking God, be warned God will not be mocked, His government is proof of that.

The righteous God warns His people that He is planning a calamity. They are plotting to satisfy their greed through violence. That is why God also makes plans to meet them with His judgments. He exercises these judgments through the Assyrians. He speaks about “this family”, in which we hear a certain contempt. Because of their sins, God will impose a yoke on them. This yoke is the enemy whom He will send on their necks, from whom they will not be able to free themselves and to whom they will have to bow down.

The proud, haughty attitude with which they look down on the wretched will turn into a bowed head because of the misery that comes over them. This will bring a dramatic turn in their time of prosperity. They will be humiliated personally, but also as a nation. Of all their pride, nothing will remain. Opposite the peoples around them they will stand with bowed heads.

The “evil time”, that is the time of their imprisonment, will come. In Amos 5, where this expression also occurs, it is about the evil behavior of the people (Amos 5:13). Here it is about the loss of everything to which they have attached themselves. They will lose their own inheritance as punishment, as well as the robbed inheritance, of course.

Mic 2:4 | A Taunt

| 4 *“On that day they will take up against you a taunt*

*And utter a bitter lamentation [and] say,
 'We are completely destroyed!
 He exchanges the portion of my people;
 How He removes it from me!*

To the disgrace of imprisonment is added mockery, in which the enemy will mockingly use their own words. The words of the lamentation are known to the enemy. Therefore, they can represent them as a taunt.

“We are completely destroyed” is an exclamation of despair. As soon as they have enriched themselves, that wealth will be taken away from them again. Destruction always comes suddenly. People who imagine themselves to be rich know that it can suddenly disappear from them. Yet that does not bring them to humility. They will do anything to secure their wealth.

With all their calculations, however, they do not take God into account. Yes, they do think of Him, but as Someone Who will be very satisfied with them. After all, they are regularly present in a religious meeting and occasionally offer a sacrifice. God shouldn't make a problem of it if sometimes there is something wrong with that.

The undertone we listen to is therefore: ‘How can God do such a thing to us? Why does this evil affect us who faithfully fulfill our religious duties? He takes it away from me, that's terrible. But as if that were not bad enough, He also gives it to apostates! This is unacceptable, isn't it?’ It does not bring them to repent for their sins, but only to a bitter lamentation about what they have lost.

Mic 2:5 | Therefore ...

*5 “Therefore you will have no one stretching a measuring line
 For you by lot in the assembly of the LORD.*

The word “therefore” is the introduction of the logical conclusion of the foregoing. Because of the sins of verses 1-2 the people will be deported, as announced in verses 3-4. As a result, no inheritance will be given to anyone.

The use of “the measuring line” can be seen in the division of the land under Joshua (Jos 13:6; cf. Psa 16:6). The division of the land will now be done by Israel’s enemies and not by themselves; among them there will be no one who has that authority. They will be completely at the mercy of the enemy. Nor will there be any residents to whom the land can be allotted.

Mic 2:6 | Do Not Speak Out

*6 ‘Do not speak out,’ [so] they speak out.
[But if] they do not speak out concerning these things,
Reproaches will not be turned back.*

The part of verses 6-11 is about the false prophets. In verse 6 and verse 11 they are speaking. In the intermediate verses, Micah shows the consequences of their false imaginations. He also shows how the LORD judges their actions and what His answer to that is.

Micah is forbidden by the false prophets with the command “do not speak out” to raise his voice any longer. These false prophets are the friends of the scrawny great landowners whom Micah addressed earlier in verses 1-2. They do not want their social vices to be denounced by Micah. They do not want to hear of a condemnation of their evil practices. His sharp accusations and serious threats do not enter the minds of corrupt magnates.

It is the general feeling of people today in Christianity. They only want to hear pleasant things, happy things (Isa 30:10; Amos 2:12; 7:16; 2Tim 4:3). People are looking for a church where everyone is allowed to do what they want, where it is easy, where there are no Micah’s. As long as you have fun. A meeting should most of all be funny and amusing.

But Micah knows that the judgment comes when things in Israel and Judah don’t change. It is not proof of love if you are silent about it. Pointing out evil, denouncing it, has to be done. Its purpose is to confess sin, because then the way is free for God to start blessing again.

To the seekers of pleasure his message is completely irrelevant. They think: ‘As long as he does not speak out, as long as he keeps his mouth shut, the judgment will not come either.’ It is the kind of thinking that if you shoot the doctor who tells you that you have a deadly disease, you no longer have the deadly disease. This is the way the false prophets react to Micah’s

preaching. They think he keeps whining endlessly about the things that they like and that he taunts and calls sin. They are tired of that.

Mic 2:7 | Deceiving and Walking Uprightly

*7 "Is it being said, O house of Jacob:
'Is the Spirit of the LORD impatient?
Are these His doings?'
Do not My words do good
To the one walking uprightly?"*

It seems that in the first part of this verse we still hear the false prophets speaking to the people. By addressing the people as the "house of Jacob," they confirm the impression that they really are the covenant people of the LORD. That is also what the people are boasting of. They claim to be the people of God, denying it with their deeds (Isa 48:1; Jn 8:33,39).

From that hypocritical attitude they say that Micah gives a very wrong idea of God. Do the people really believe that the Spirit of the LORD speaks through Micah, a man who only imposes limitations on them? Surely God is not God with shortcomings, is He? They don't know Him that way. He is always so good to them. They only know Him as that 'dear God' who will never deal harshly with His people and gives them everything they need. Does Micah really think that God acts in such a way, that these are "His deeds", that He is only out to punish? Is He so short-tempered, as Micah pretends? They know better.

The answer, or rather the rebuttal, to the claims of the false prophets comes in the second part of this verse. Here Micah introduces the LORD speaking. The LORD takes the floor. When the punishment comes, it is not because of His lack of patience or His failure to bless them, but because of their sins. His good words are for "the one walking uprightly" and not for the unrighteous of walking as they are. The upright has nothing to fear, but is encouraged by Him. The good words of the LORD contain strength for the upright to continue to please the LORD in his walk.

Mic 2:8 | The People Have Arisen as an Enemy

8 "Recently My people have arisen as an enemy—

*You strip the robe off the garment
From unsuspecting passers-by,
[From] those returned from war.*

In Israel, the upright of walk mentioned in the previous verse is not to be seen. The word “recently”, or yesterday, is connected with an action that occurs again and again, even just recently. The people behave hostile toward the LORD by acting hostile toward their own people. Their victims are unsuspecting passers-by, people who are not out to fight, who are peaceful themselves (Psa 120:7). While they feel safe, they are robbed of their garments by their greedy companions.

A garment can serve as pledge when an Israelite is so impoverished that he has to borrow (Exo 22:26). The LORD has determined in His grace that the garment must be returned to him before night (Exo 22:27). These robbers have no sense of grace. The LORD observes their deeds and records them. They will not escape their righteous punishment.

This performance as an enemy of the LORD is the result of listening to the false prophets. False prophets are people who have left the righteous way and have strayed and come to “the way of Balaam” and follow that way (2Pet 2:15). The “way of Balaam” is the way of people who are guided by money in religious matters. They do not care if they speak truth. They are empty word producers who present the lie as truth as long as it brings in money.

Mic 2:9 | Exploitation of the Vulnerable

*9 “The women of My people you evict,
Each [one] from her pleasant house.
From her children you take My splendor forever.*

The women we are talking about here will be widows. Deprived of their husbands, they are unprotected, outlawed. This makes them easy prey for the impudent and merciless scrapers who consider nothing sacred. While God’s special care goes out to these vulnerable, they see only an increase in their wealth.

Heartlessly they evict the widows from their homes. In this way they tear up the precious memories of the happiness these widows once knew. Nor

do they feel sorry for their children. They deprive the women of their most precious possessions.

By depriving these women of their small children, they are depriving the LORD of His jewels. Precisely children and infants are a precious jewel to Him. From their mouths He receives honor (Mt 21:16). This they take away from the LORD. It may be that they not only claim these children as slaves for themselves (cf. 2Kgs 4:1), but even sell them abroad as slaves. Everything is taken away from them. There is no end to this heartless act.

It is done by those who profess to be the people of God and occupy a place of prestige in them. On the one hand, they boast of their meticulous walk. On the other hand, they trample the rights of the defenseless. It is the spirit of Phariseeism (Mk 12:38-40). That spirit was not only active at that time, we also see it now. Men who precede and preach about God's Word and grace and at the same time violate that Word by leaving their wife and children for someone else.

Satan is out to destroy families. He does this in many ways. One of them is that he separates the children from the parents. Father and mother must both be able to work. The children can go to all kinds of shelters. The government subsidizes this and stimulates this separation. In those shelters they come into the hands of professionals, while they still need the love, warmth and security of the mother so much.

Mic 2:10 | This Is No Place of Rest

*10 "Arise and go,
For this is no place of rest
Because of the uncleanness that brings on destruction,
A painful destruction.*

"Arise and go" are the words with which those who have the power to evict others from their inheritance in order to take possession of it. God now uses these words against them. Those who let others arise and plunder their possessions will have to arise and leave from what has been given to them. Here we see again the law of reaping what one sows. Arising and departing is also God's judgment that fits in with their actions of rising up against and departing from God.

The trespassers of iniquity have made the land unclean through their sins (Lev 18:25,28). For the evildoers there is no longer a resting place in the land of the LORD, which it has been in times of obedience (Deu 12:9-10; 1Kgs 8:56). They will no longer be at rest in the land and will be carried away into exile.

With this call there is also a calling voice of the LORD to all who have ears to hear, to separate themselves from all this iniquity. How can the saints of the LORD rest in such a state of affairs? How can a land where such abject iniquity takes place be a place of rest?

The land is unclean through violence and idolatry (Eze 36:17-18; Jer 2:7). The evil actions of people lay over the land a haze of uncleanness, as it were. That atmosphere causes everyone who enters it to be corrupted by it. As a result, corruption increases and proliferates. With the departure of the evildoers there will also come an end to the rampant corruption.

Mic 2:11 | A Spokesman the People Love

11 *"If a man walking after wind and falsehood
Had told lies [and said],
'I will speak out to you concerning wine and liquor,'
He would be spokesman to this people.*

With this ironic depiction of how a false prophet works, Micah rounds off his speech about the false prophets. The false prophet is popular because he speaks what the people like to hear (2Tim 4:3-4). False prophets proclaim that the people are allowed to indulge in earthly pleasures. Their religion is one of drinking and making fun.

They can even abuse statements from the Bible which they simply take out of context for that purpose (Lev 26:4; Deu 28:4; Joel 2:24). In this way they ignore the sins of the people that make the coming of these blessings as blessings from God impossible. That is why they are loved by the greedy rich, because they never speak of judgment, but always of prosperity, even though their lives are still so contrary to God's law.

The people are so far removed from God and their spiritual discernment is so blunted that they joyfully embrace the message of these deceivers. It escapes them that by following false prophets they are in fact following

wind. To follow the wind is to let what is only wind determine the direction of one's path, that is, vain, empty, through deceitful dreams (Eze 13:3). The rise of false prophets is the result of the unpopular message of the true prophets. Who is following a real prophet? After all, he preaches only depressing sadness, doesn't he? Then it is better to follow a false prophet. He at least lets pleasant words 'flow', which is the literal meaning of the words 'speak out' here, as well as in verse 6 (cf. Deu 32:2; Eze 20:46; 21:3; Amos 7:16; Job 29:22). It really makes you feel cheerful. How great the sobering will be when they discover how great the deception is that they have embraced!

Mic 2:12 | The Remnant of Israel Gathered

*12 "I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob,
I will surely gather the remnant of Israel.
I will put them together like sheep in the fold;
Like a flock in the midst of its pasture
They will be noisy with men.*

Verses 12-13 finalize the first part of the book. It is a promise of blessing and deliverance after the powerful accusations against the people. The emphasis is on what the LORD is going to do. Here He is the One Who acts, as before in judgment, now in blessing. He makes known what that blessing means. Judgment is not the last word God has for His people.

In these verses Micah sees the people as a people over whom the announced judgment has been executed. The people have been taken away. But that is not the end of the people. The LORD pronounces here that He has not given up the people, in spite of so much iniquity, and that He will bless them.

After Micah has pointed out so much that is wrong, it is surprising that he suddenly starts talking about a promise of future blessing and restoration. This only refers to a remnant in the end times, while the unbelieving masses will be struck by the announced judgment. That remnant will be "all Israel" (Rom 11:26) or, as Micah says here, "all of you, Jacob". The prophets always distinguish between the unbelieving, apostate mass of Israel and the believing, faithful remnant.

This also makes it clear that the salvation that Micah proclaims here lies on a different basis than the announcements of the salvation of the false prophets. Micah does not pass judgment. “Assemble” and “gather” presupposes the preceding scattering among the nations (Jer 31:10). Restoration takes place from the judgment that has been executed. And when the people are restored, they will also be greatly multiplied (Isa 54:1-3), “they will be noisy with men” (cf. Eze 34:31; 36:38). This will be the wonderful result of God’s actions.

The LORD here is the Shepherd. Thus He is seen more often in the Old Testament. For example in Psalm 78 where it is said about Him that He led His people as a flock out of the slavery of Egypt (Psa 78:51-52; 80:1). The LORD is the same as the Lord Jesus in the New Testament, where He is called the good Shepherd (Jn 10:11). With Him there is safety, protection and food.

The Lord Jesus has given to the church shepherds who represent Him (Eph 4:11; 1Pet 5:1-4). These shepherds have the task to make sure that the flock gets food, safety and protection. Therefore they teach the foundations of faith. They also provide guidance and direction on the way the sheep must go and protection against the dangers of wrong doctrine (Tit 1:9).

Mic 2:13 | The Breaker

13 *“The breaker goes up before them;
They break out, pass through the gate and go out by it.
So their king goes on before them,
And the LORD at their head.”*

This verse shows how the result of the previous verse is achieved. It is not about gathering, as in the previous verse, but about deliverance. Here the redemption of Israel from exile is painted under the picture of the release from a prison.

Further on, Micah compares Egypt, where the people were once imprisoned, with a house of slavery (Mic 6:4; Exo 20:2). Here he compares the exile with a prison with walls and gates that have to be broken through. The Breaker clears the way for all who follow Him and removes obstacles. This Breaker is none other than the LORD, the Messiah (Isa 42:7; 59:20, 21;

Rom 11:26; Hos 1:11; 3:5). He goes before them (Isa 52:12), just as He went before them as the Angel of the LORD in the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire (Exo 13:21).

He will lead His people out of the gates of the cities where they were imprisoned. He goes before them as the Breaker, King and LORD. The three verb forms 'break out', 'pass through' and 'go out' express a progress that cannot be stopped by any power.

As has been mentioned before, the LORD is the Lord Jesus. He is the good Shepherd Who leads His own sheep out and brings them into freedom and cares for them. His resurrection also shows Him in a wonderful way as the Breaker. After all, the Lord Jesus breaks open the prison of death and grave, He breaks through the guards and all the hatred of the devil and his instruments, the godless leaders of God's people. Thus, in the resurrection, He went out before His redeemed ones who follow Him (1Cor 15:23). They too break through the gate, after Him.

The 'gate' is first and foremost that of Jerusalem. In the end time Jerusalem will be captured by the king of the north. But then the Lord Jesus will appear in Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives. From there He will rescue the remnant that is in distress in Jerusalem. He is the Savior who will come "from Zion" – not to Zion (Rom 11:26; Psa 14:7), which means that He first came to Zion (Isa 59:20).

The Lord Jesus is also the Breaker for every new situation or period of time. He is always there to go out before us and break any opposition that opposes or limits us. Then He goes out before us and sets us in space. We have to go close behind Him, just as the armor-bearer stays close to Jonathan (1Sam 14:13).

Micah 3

Introduction

This chapter can be divided into three equal parts. Each of the three parts begins with an accusation against the responsible leaders and ends with a condemnation:

1. Verses 1-4 are addressed to the heads and leaders,
2. verses 5-8 to the false prophets and
3. verses 9-12 to the two preceding categories, to which the priests are added.

The keyword is the word 'justice' (verses 1,8,9).

Mic 3:1 | Knowing Justice

*1 And I said,
"Hear now, heads of Jacob
And rulers of the house of Israel.
Is it not for you to know justice?"*

Micah addresses "Jacob" and "Israel" again. He did so in the blessing at the end of the previous chapter (Mic 2:12). There, it is about a faithful remnant while here, it is about the unfaithful leaders. The "heads" and "rulers" are judges and governors, the civil authorities.

Micah asks them a penetrating question that must touch their conscience. They, who know more than anyone what justice is and judge others, do the worst injustice. In a terrible way they are twisting the law that they have to maintain and that is laid down in the law of Moses. With this they dishonor above all the LORD, for He is the Lawgiver.

In many ways they resemble the Pharisees and scribes in the days of the Lord Jesus. The Lord denounces the pious behavior of these people and their exploitation of the socially weak (Mk 12:38-40). These law enforcers look down on the 'ignorant' people with contempt (Jn 7:49). Blinded by

the pursuit of their own interests, they are always out to kill Him Who has given the law (Jn 5:18; 11:53).

Mic 3:2 | Hating the Good and Loving the Evil

*2 “You who hate good and love evil,
Who tear off their skin from them
And their flesh from their bones,*

Hating and loving relate to their mindset and show the corrupt basic attitude of these people. Not only do they not do the good they ought, but they loathe it, they hate it. It is already sin if someone does not love the good, let alone if he hates it. It is the same with evil. They do evil, but not only that, they like it, they love it. It is already wrong if someone doesn't flee from evil, let alone if he loves it.

These people are not shepherds, but butchers, or even worse, cannibals. Instead of healing what is broken, they break what is whole. Instead of feeding the flock, they feast on it. They don't shear the sheep, but tear off their skin. Instead of protecting the flock from wild animals, they behave like wild animals among the flock.

In John 10, the Lord Jesus uses three terms for these people: thieves, hired hand and wolves (Jn 10:10-13).

1. The thief comes secretly and sees the sheep as a source of profit. In order to obtain optimal profit he is prepared not only to steal, but also to kill and even to destroy.
2. A hired hand thinks only of his own safety. As soon as there is danger for himself, he abandons the sheep and flees.
3. The wolf acts according to its own nature. It does not think of profit or danger, but tears and robs, frightens and sows confusion.

Tearing off the skin corresponds with our saying 'bleed someone dry', or 'rip someone off'. It means robbing them of everything that makes life somewhat livable for them. They take all their means of existence away from them. 'Tearing off the skin' can mean taking off their clothes and 'flesh from their bones' can mean their territory.

Mic 3:3 | Cannibalism

*3 Who eat the flesh of my people,
Strip off their skin from them,
Break their bones
And chop [them] up as for the pot
And as meat in a kettle."*

When God speaks of "My people" here, this means in particular the believing part of it. They are especially the target of these unscrupulous people. In plain language, the prophet tells the judges their beastly conduct. They not only rob the people, but they also eat them up, they treat them like cattle for slaughter.

In his description, Micah shows that these people leave no means, no matter how atrocious, untried to feast at the expense of others and to rob their fellow citizens of their possessions. What a contrast these leaders form with the Shepherd of Micah 2 (Mic 2:12). We also see this contrast in Ezekiel 34 (Eze 34:1-10,23-24).

The apostle Paul shows a totally different mind than these corrupt leaders. Opposite to the savage wolves of which he knows they will sneak into the church after his departure, not sparing the flock (Acts 20:29), he shows his mind when he says: "I do not seek what is yours, but you" (2Cor 12:14).

Mic 3:4 | The LORD Does Not Answer Them

*4 Then they will cry out to the LORD,
But He will not answer them.
Instead, He will hide His face from them at that time
Because they have practiced evil deeds.*

After the accusation follows the sentence. There is no mercy for those who do not show mercy (Jam 2:13a). They do not listen to their victims when they beg for mercy. If these unfaithful, ruthless leaders will cry out to the LORD in the misery that will come upon them, He will not listen to them either (Deu 31:17; 1Sam 28:6; Isa 1:15; Jer 11:11; Pro 1:28; 21:13). After all, they will only cry out to be set free from misery and not because of repentance for their sins and iniquity.

That God hides His face from someone is the worst thing that can happen to anyone (Psa 22:2; 69:17). God does that here with His people. This is the result of their sins (Isa 54:8). It means that He withholds His mercy from them (Jam 2:13a). It is ultimately the horror of hell. As blessed as the grace of God is, so horrible is His wrath. God has always answered (Psa 22:5), but when the time of grace is over, the evil ones will not get an answer.

Mic 3:5 | Again Against the False Prophets

*5 Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who lead my people astray;
When they have [something] to bite with their teeth,
They cry, "Peace,"
But against him who puts nothing in their mouths
They declare holy war.*

After Micah has spoken about the leaders in the previous verses, he speaks about the false prophets in verses 5-8. A prophet is supposed to pass on God's words and thereby lead God's people on the right path. But instead of leading the people, these prophets seduce the people. Opposite the false prophets in verse 8, Micah places the true prophet. He speaks here in a sarcastic way.

The leaders rule by power. The false prophets exercise power by twisting the words of God. In this way they are in the process of leading God's people, "My people", astray. In this way the prophets support the judges in their malice. Today there are powerful leaders, governors, and also people with a captivating charisma, who promise prosperity and healing, which deceives many. Often these are also people who thereby exercise power. What they have in common is that they do not serve the Lord Jesus but their own belly (Phil 3:19; Rom 16:18).

The false prophets are people who predict peace and happiness for a bite of bread and some money. To serve their own bellies they deceive the people instead of telling them their sin and preaching penance. They rock the people of God to sleep by flattering and encouraging them in their sins.

And if they get nothing, they foretell doom. The content of their preaching depends on the amount of money they receive. They let themselves be influenced in their preaching by the money or gifts they receive. They only

preach for the rich and they promise them only prosperity. The degree of prosperity they predict depends on the amount of money or the gift. The poor are told that they will experience even more misery, because they have nothing to buy a good message with.

Mic 3:6 | Night and Darkness for the False Prophets

*6 Therefore [it will be] night for you —without vision,
And darkness for you —without divination.
The sun will go down on the prophets,
And the day will become dark over them.*

Prophets are supposed to spread light for God's people. These false prophets pretend to have 'the light'. They pretend to be enlightened people who know more than the ordinary members of God's people. But false prophets draw from dark sources. Therefore, darkness will be their destiny.

Because these false prophets have violated the consecrated ministry of prophet so much, the LORD pronounces a fourfold judgment on them, all in connection with darkness. The first judgment is in short, in Hebrew: "Night for you!" They will see no more visions from the realm of darkness; there will be no more occult apparitions. The darkness with which they are connected will completely surround them. Their divination will be over. They will no longer have a message from the abyss for anyone.

They will never see the sun again (Amos 8:9; Jer 15:9), it will never be day again for them. The setting of the sun aptly indicates that these prophets have no connection with the Lord Jesus, the Sun of righteousness. They have led others into the darkness, while presenting the light to them. Because they present themselves as divinely enlightened persons who promise daylight to those who ask their counsel, they will end up in darkness.

Mic 3:7 | Seers and Diviners Ashamed

*7 The seers will be ashamed
And the diviners will be embarrassed.
Indeed, they will all cover [their] mouths
Because there is no answer from God.*

“The seers” and “the diviners” belong to the false prophets. Their shame will be revealed because there will be no answer from God. There will come a time when they will stand exposed, tongue-tied, because all their prophecies will be denounced as lies. It will become clear that they have spoken without the LORD having sent them. Their shame will be seen when none of all their beautiful promises will turn out to be true.

Covering the mouth, literally mustache, seems to be a sign of sadness and here also of shame (cf. Lev 13:45).

Mic 3:8 | Filled With Power to Preach

*8 On the other hand I am filled with power—
With the Spirit of the LORD—
And with justice and courage
To make known to Jacob his rebellious act,
Even to Israel his sin.*

In contrast to the false prophets, Micah now speaks about himself and gives the characteristics of the true messenger of God. He knows of himself that he speaks through the Spirit. This is not pride, but an awareness of God’s presence.

Every part of this verse is of great significance. It shows the preparation and equipping of the prophet of God. He speaks with power through the Holy Spirit (2Tim 1:7), while the false prophets speak only from their own spirit (Eze 13:3). He is full of holy courage to make known to the people their sins, despite what the people desire (Mic 2:6).

If there is such a clear difference between the false prophet and the true prophet, how come the people fail to distinguish between counterfeit and real? The cause of this is their luxurious, opulent life and their low moral condition. As a result, they have a complete lack of interest in the things of God. Materialism has blinded their eyes and flattened their feelings, leaving them without any interest in these essential things.

And if they want to satisfy their religious feelings, they are happy to pay a false prophet with part of their wealth. In return, he gives them a sermon that soothes their conscience and makes them revel in their lust. The same applies to contemporary Christianity. One chooses and pays a preacher

who weighs his words so cautiously that he bypasses and prevents any stimulation of conscience (2Tim 4:1-4).

These kinds of preachers are false prophets who believe that the gift of God can be obtained for money (2Pet 2:15; Acts 8:18; Jude 1:11). True prophets are not out to please people, but they please God Who examines the heart (1Thes 2:4; Gal 1:10). They do not let themselves be bribed to say what people like to hear. Because Micah is free from the crimes of his contemporaries, he can address his adversaries with the power of a clear conscience. Fearless, he can testify against the sins of the house of Israel.

Such a message is not received with enthusiasm. Teeth gnawing, he is listened to. Only a few will let themselves be addressed by it. Those who are called by the LORD to rebuke therefore need a lot of courage to persevere.

For this service and the perseverance therein it is necessary to be filled with the Spirit. Filling with the Spirit is a command for every believer (Eph 5:18), how much more than for those who present God's Word to others. On Pentecost all believers are filled with the Spirit, but it also happens later (Acts 13:52). The fullness of the Spirit is only limited by our ability to receive. If there are elements in our lives that prevent this, we must first get rid of them. It's not that we get more of the Spirit, but the Spirit gets more of us.

Mic 3:9-10 | Justice Abhorred and Twisted

*9 Now hear this, heads of the house of Jacob
And rulers of the house of Israel,
Who abhor justice
And twist everything that is straight,
10 Who build Zion with bloodshed
And Jerusalem with violent injustice.*

The fact that Micah is a true prophet is shown once more by these and the following verses. He does not mince his words. Filled with the Spirit and power, he presents the leaders of the people their sins (verse 9). In powerful language, which the leaders must have experienced as very shocking, he denounces their corrupt inner life and their wicked actions. Their abhorrence of justice is their reluctance to be honest. Amos also speaks about

people who abhor the law (Amos 5:10). Twisting what is right is deliberately misrepresenting things.

“Build ... with bloodshed” (verse 10) means that their beautiful buildings have been built through gruesome extortion. We can also think of judicial murders, as Ahab committed them (1Kgs 21:1-15) and later Jehoiakim (Jer 22:13-17; cf. Hab 2:12). In this way they think they can get a firmer hold of Zion and come to a higher esteem. They consider themselves capable governors. Anyone who stands in the way of their plans is expropriated through the courts. This judicial method is set up in such a way, that it fits in with their plans. In this way Jerusalem is built “with violent injustice”. Any resistance against it is useless.

In truth, however, they are not building the city with it, but preparing it for its destruction, as it says in verse 12. Before Micah says that, he summarizes the sins of the various leaders in verse 11.

Mic 3:11 | Haughty Boasting

*11 Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe,
Her priests instruct for a price
And her prophets divine for money.
Yet they lean on the LORD saying,
“Is not the LORD in our midst?
Calamity will not come upon us.”*

The whole legal system is fundamentally corrupt. All those who have a place of prestige and authority are out for their own benefit (Jer 6:13). “Their leaders”, the civil authorities, enforcers of civil law, must ensure fair justice. But they let themselves be bribed (Exo 23:8). In the licensing policy, for example, the big businessmen get the licenses by giving bribes. The one-man businesses do not get a chance and go bankrupt.

“Her priests” have the task to teach the people in the things of God. They receive the reward for this from the LORD (Num 18:20; Deu 17:8-11; 18:2; 21:5; Lev 10:11; Eze 44:23-24; Mal 2:7). But these priests only teach if they are paid for it. Their tongues are for hire. They are ‘worthy’ successors of Balaam, who loved the wages of iniquity (2Pet 2:15).

The website rentapriest.nl shows that this is topical. On this website, ministers offer themselves for e.g. baptisms of children and full-grown and marriage/blessing relationships both heterosexual and homosexual. On the website it says: 'All Rent a Priest's ministers are academically educated, so they are all truly professional ministers! Very unique is that the team of Rent a Priest Netherlands consists of both priests and pastors. All are ecumenically minded, open-minded ministers!'

I once heard from a couple that had hired such a 'clergyman' via internet for their wedding service. The rates run – in 2020 – from €60,00 (for an intake interview) to €495,00 (for weddings and funeral services).

Once I heard from a couple that had hired such a 'clergyman' via internet for their wedding service. The foolishness spoken out during the service can be guessed.

It should come as no surprise that on such an occasion people claim the presence of God. So did the Israelites in the days of Micah. In their blindness, they use the alleged presence of the LORD as a kind of mascot who protects against possible doom. They trust that no harm will befall them. But the wrath of the LORD about this attitude is great (Jer 7:4,8-11).

The prophets are also mentioned again by Micah. Once again he speaks in clear words about the fact that these people are diviners. They are not in connection with God, but with Mammon, the god of money.

Of all these leaders it is true that they make the LORD a cover for their sins. It fills the measure of their sins. Never let the LORD connect himself with sins. Wherever that suggestion is awakened, He will judge.

It is particularly repugnant to the LORD that those who have the name to be His people exalt themselves on the privilege of His presence. It is utterly reprehensible to Him that they use this presumption for self-glorification and to justify evil, daring also to claim Divine favors and help.

In their vain imagination and carnal confidence they lean on the LORD. He who builds on the LORD in faith may count on Him as the rocky ground of his existence. But he who leans on Him, while using Him only to achieve his own goal, will perish hopelessly.

Pretentious, they proclaim it: “Is not the LORD in our midst?” In doing so they point to His temple. But if there is no living and humble relationship with Him, it sounds like a magician’s charm. Then it is like the wicked sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, taking the ark of the LORD with them in the battle against the Philistines, as if they could use God for their evil plans (1Sam 4:3). The result is a humiliating defeat and their death.

Mic 3:12 | On Account of the False Priests and Prophets

*12 Therefore, on account of you
Zion will be plowed as a field,
Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins,
And the mountain of the temple [will become] high places of a forest.*

What happened to Hophni and Phinehas, the wicked sons of Eli, will also happen to Zion and Jerusalem. Zion is the district with the royal castle, Jerusalem is the rest of the city. Separately, “the mountain of the temple, the Temple Mount, is mentioned, because the people boast that the LORD is in their midst, in the temple.

All their boasting and self-deception will result in the destruction of their religious center. As a result, they will be deprived of the opportunity to bind the name of the LORD even longer to their self-willed religion.

In the same way, the professing Christian system of Babylon will be put to an end in one hour. It will become an object of horror for all those who have conspired with it (Rev 18:15-19).

About a hundred years later, some elders of Jerusalem quote this verse to save Jeremiah from a death sentence. Jeremiah is threatened with death because he fearlessly announces that Jerusalem will be destroyed if its inhabitants do not repent (Jer 26:4-6). Then the people imprison him under the guidance of the priests and prophets. All of them agree that he should die (Jer 26:7-9). They go with their indictment to the princes (Jer 26:11).

When Jeremiah has defended himself (Jer 26:12-15), some elders remind the people of what Micah said (Jer 26:18). They also point out that Hezekiah did not deal with Micah, as they now want to do with Jeremiah (Jer 26:19). Hezekiah has not charged what Micah says here as evil, but has

accepted this verdict. The prophecy has also been fulfilled literally (Neh 2:17; 4:2; Lam 5:18).

The quotation of this verse by the elders in Jeremiah 26 (Jer 26:18) proves how the word of God echoes through the years. It still does. It will always remain true and everything will be fulfilled. Herein lies a great consolation and hope for everyone who wants to hear it (Rom 15:4). Through Scripture, faith looks forward to the great final salvation that will surely take place.

Micah 4

Mic 4:1 | The House of the LORD Is Raised

*1 And it will come about in the last days
That the mountain of the house of the LORD
Will be established as the chief of the mountains.
It will be raised above the hills,
And the peoples will stream to it.*

From the deepest humiliation, shown in the last verse of the previous chapter (Mic 3:12), Zion will be raised to the highest glory in the future. God's last word is not judgment. In fact, glory can only come after the judgment of sin. That is the miracle of the cross. Every blessing is based on the work of Christ on the cross, including the future blessing of Israel.

It is striking that the three opening verses (verses 1-3) are almost word-for-word similar to some of the verses in the beginning of Isaiah 2 (Isa 2:2-4). A discussion about who has copied from the other is useless. Both have written by the Holy Spirit. And He has found it good that both have included the same scene in the same words in their prophecy.

The expression "in the last days" or "in latter days" is used more often by the prophets (Jer 49:39; Dan 2:28; 10:14; Hos 3:5). They refer to the time when the Messiah takes over the government of (the restored) Israel and the world. Then the time of blessing for Israel will come. Also the nations will share in the blessing by coming to the center of this blessing, the house of the LORD in Jerusalem. In the present time the messengers of the Lord go out to the nations, but then the nations will come from everywhere to Zion.

The mountain of the house of the LORD is the temple mountain, Mount Moriah. If we look at that mountain now, it is not literally "the chief of the mountains". Spiritually seen, that mountain will be the chief. What makes it the chief or most valued mountain is the temple that stands there. It cannot be excluded that in the future the temple mountain will also literally be the highest mountain. This can be God's work. In the time of the great

tribulation there will be enormous natural disasters (Rev 16:18). It is possible that because of this the landscapes will undergo great changes and for example the temple mountain will be raised above the hills.

There is also a spiritual significance for the church today. The church is now the house of God (1Tim 3:15). God has placed the church on earth to hold and uphold the truth as the pillar and support of the truth. When believers faithfully serve the Lord Jesus in obedience to His Word, they fulfill God's purpose with the church. Their lives then stand out morally far above the lives of people who do not take God into account. The result may be that unbelievers are attracted to get to know that God.

Mic 4:2 | From Zion Will Go Forth the Law

*2 Many nations will come and say,
"Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD
And to the house of the God of Jacob,
That He may teach us about His ways
And that we may walk in His paths."
For from Zion will go forth the law,
Even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

Because on that chief of the mountains stands the house of the God of Jacob, the nations will go there. Then they will come from Washington, Brussels and Moscow and all the other cities where now the policy of the world is being made, to learn from "the God of Jacob". Instead of going up to fight against Jerusalem (verse 11), they come because they want to learn from God how He wants them to walk (cf. Zec 8:20-23).

The teaching is "about His ways", the ways of the LORD, how He does things. Studying them will teach them how to walk themselves. These paths are ways that God has gone and is going in His relation to people and on which He leads them. With the exhortation "come" they will encourage each other to follow this teaching.

The words "for from Zion" and so on are again words of the prophet and not of the nations. They indicate the reason why the nations are so zealous for the mountain of the LORD. Zion is the source of the law, the constitution of the kingdom. From it the nations derive education for a walk in the

ways of God. With the knowledge of the law they have gained and accepted there, they go back to their homeland. There they pass on the received teaching of the law, so that their people will walk in accordance with it.

The order is important: first teaching, then practice. Only when we have learned from the Lord can we walk in His way. The Christian who lives in peace with God will have the same longing in his heart as the nations of the future. With him there is no contradiction between practice and the teaching of Scripture. There will be no contempt for studying Scripture as if it comes down only to practical Christendom. How can there be practice if we have not learned what to practice?

Mic 4:3 | No More War

*3 And He will judge between many peoples
And render decisions for mighty, distant nations.
Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation will not lift up sword against nation,
And never again will they train for war.*

Coming to the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, to be taught by Him, is not without result. If mutual disputes are resolved, it is the fruit of listening to the law and the words of the LORD.

Now the nations are still marching against Israel, but then the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, will rule Himself. He will be King and Teacher (Joel 2:23), but also Judge in all disputes between nations to the farthest corners of the earth. In that time it will not be necessary to take up arms, for the LORD will reign in peace. All weapons made to destroy will be forged into tools that promote the common good. This is the opposite of the situation where the nations gather against Israel for the last great battle (Joel 3:9-10a), to be defeated by Christ.

Military academies are closed, they have had their time. This time of peace is not the result of the efforts of human organizations such as the United Nations or alliances. They hardly ever agree among themselves because they always pursue their own interests. How, then, could they create a situation of general peace? Never will a human being or an alliance, however

benevolent, achieve this result. The foolish pursuit of a world without war is the same as striving to collect water in a sieve. Only through the Lord Jesus, the Prince of peace, will war be abolished and lasting peace will come.

Where peace is not yet present on earth as a whole, it is found already in the hearts and lives of believers (Rom 14:17). People who first hated each other become people who love each other through conversion to God and faith in the Lord Jesus (Tit 3:2-3). Fierce, passionate people, who are wild and rough in their sinful nature, become meek and humble. Those who before their conversion offended everyone and could not endure anyone, can endure every insult after their conversion and do no harm to anyone.

Mic 4:4 | The Realm of Peace Has Come

*4 Each of them will sit under his vine
And under his fig tree,
With no one to make [them] afraid,
For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.*

This verse, which is not in Isaiah 2, is a continuation of the description of the realm of peace. After the application of peace we see here the enjoyment of peace. "Sitting" indicates an attitude of peace. From this scene radiates the certainty of complete safety, undisturbed peace and continuous joy.

We know this scene from the reign of Solomon (1Kgs 4:25). Solomon is a beautiful example of the Lord Jesus as the Prince of Peace. The name Solomon means 'peace'. The LORD says of him to David: "Who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days" (1Chr 22:9).

The vine is the symbol of joy and the fig tree of righteousness. There is joy in a way that corresponds to God's righteousness. Joy follows the exercise of God's righteous judgments. As a result, the Israelites enjoy all these blessings, which they will also share with each other, making the joy only greater (Zec 3:10).

What we see here is a picture of peace apart from the usual places of residence. Also in the open field there is security and joy. There is no poverty,

no one will stretch out his hand to the possession of another, there is no fear of war and loss of possession, no fear of disturbing the harmonious life (Lev 26:6). This is not utopia, but will become reality. God has said it and that is why it will happen.

Mic 4:5 | Walking in the Name of the LORD

*5 Though all the peoples walk
Each in the name of his god,
As for us, we will walk
In the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.*

The first part of the verse does not refer to the future, but to the situation now. After all, in the realm of peace no one walks in the name of his own god. Micah declares that the nations now walk each in the name of his own god. But Israel, in the time of blessing and peace just described, will walk in the power and strength of his God and will worship Him.

Only through His Name comes and remains peace (Zec 10:12), while all the names of the gods of the nations can accomplish nothing, let alone maintain something. Numerous peoples walk in the name of the pope, or of Buddha, or of Mohammed. They have brought no solution to the world's problems and certainly not to the question of sin. All their efforts have only increased the apostasy from God.

Walking in the Name of the LORD means more than just sticking to the religious requirements connected with God. It means living in trust in the power of God. Thereby becomes manifest Who He is. Walking in the name of an idol is finite. Walking in trust in the LORD our God is "forever and ever", or endless. Forever His people and everyone connected with Him will experience His power.

Mic 4:6 | Assembled and Gathered

*6 "In that day," declares the LORD,
"I will assemble the lame
And gather the outcasts,
Even those whom I have afflicted.*

Before Israel can enjoy the glories and blessings under the reign of the Messiah, it must first be gathered from the worldwide scattering and brought back into its own country. The LORD Himself will do the same, Micah says.

“In that day” indicates the same period as “the last days” in verse 1. Bringing together those who have been driven out is the same picture as in Micah 2 (Mic 2:12-13). There it concerns “all of you, Jacob”, the two realms, on the way to peace. Here it is about those who have been scattered and are now represented as having reached peace. In both cases – “the lame” and the “outcast” – it is about a leftover, a remnant.

Mic 4:7 | A Remnant Becomes a Strong Nation

7 *“I will make the lame a remnant
And the outcasts a strong nation,
And the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion
From now on and forever.*

The sheep are in a bad condition. They will acknowledge that this is the result of their sins and that the LORD had to punish them for it. By this acknowledgment He will not exterminate them further, but will make them a remnant. Then He will increase their numbers and make them strong (Isa 60:22). He will reign over them “in Mount Zion,” the mountain that speaks of God’s grace (Heb 12:22). There is no end to His benevolent reign (Dan 2:44).

Mic 4:8 | Restoration of Former Dominion

8 *“As for you, tower of the flock,
Hill of the daughter of Zion,
To you it will come—
Even the former dominion will come,
The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.*

Migdal-Eder - here translated as “tower of the flock” - lies between Bethlehem and Hebron (Gen 35:21). There Ruben committed the grave sin of having fellowship with Bilha, his father’s concubine. Because of this he has forfeited his birthright (Gen 49:4; 1Chr 5:1). “Hill” or “Ophel” is the

southeastern slope of the temple mountain. To this “the former dominion” is connected. This refers back to the time of the reign of Israel by David and Solomon. Their reign is a picture of the reign of the true David. When Christ reigns as the Son of David, “the daughter of Jerusalem”, that is the inhabitants of Jerusalem, will reign with Him. The dominion of the nations over Jerusalem will then have definitively come to an end.

Mic 4:9 | Cry Out Loudly

9 *“Now, why do you cry out loudly?
Is there no king among you,
Or has your counselor perished,
That agony has gripped you like a woman in childbirth?”*

From the glorious vision of the distant future in the previous verses, we are suddenly put back into the present crisis. The prophet goes back to the dark time of the near future that is about to start for the people. Although it will take another century, Micah speaks in emotional terms of the siege by the king of Babylon and his invasion of Judah. The exile to Babylon is imminent. This will cause great sorrow. The agony they will have because of the loss of their national sovereignty is compared to the agony of a woman in childbirth (Jer 6:24).

The prophet asks them why they are not going to their king and counselor now. These are ironic questions, asked to a people who do not take the threat so seriously. Their king, whom they trust, will not be there in those distressing times. Their counselor, who has so often given useful advice, will be untraceable.

If the words King and Counselor should be written with a capital letter, it is a reference to the LORD. Then the questions are not ironic, but reproachful.

Mic 4:10 | First to Babylon and Then Rescued

10 *“Writhe and labor to give birth,
Daughter of Zion,
Like a woman in childbirth;
For now you will go out of the city,*

*Dwell in the field,
And go to Babylon.
There you will be rescued;
There the LORD will redeem you
From the hand of your enemies.*

In this one verse, Micah first speaks of the fall of Jerusalem and the exile to Babylon and then, as it were, without breathing, of deliverance. This way of speaking is not meant to diminish the responsibility of Israel even in the slightest. The people will go into exile because of their sins. But just as surely the people will be redeemed as a result of God's promises which He has made in grace without any obligation on the part of the people.

A first fulfillment of that promise took place under Cyrus (Ezra 1:1; Isa 43:14; 44:28; 45:1-4; 48:20). Babylon has been the scourge in God's hand to discipline His people, but Babylon himself will be judged by Cyrus.

The message of this verse is: You will have to suffer, but this suffering will end in joy. Agony because of childbirth is great, but there is joy after birth (Jn 16:21).

Mic 4:11 | Many Nations Assemble Against Zion

*11 "And now many nations have been assembled against you
Who say, 'Let her be polluted,
And let our eyes gloat over Zion.'*

Between verse 10 and verse 11 lies a great period that Micah does not mention. From the upcoming siege by Nebuchadnezzar the prophet goes to the siege in the last days. Then the last great attack on Jerusalem by the assembled nations will take place. We read about this in Joel 3 and Zechariah 12 and 14.

In verse 2 we have also seen the nations go up, but there with the desire to be taught. Before that, the nations come up with the intention of destroying definitively the city and the people of God. They want to desecrate the city by destroying all holy places, especially the temple. They are annoyed by its holiness, they cannot bear that this city is dedicated to God.

The enemies rejoice at the pain they will inflict on the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Their deepest reason for the attack is their hatred of God's King. Against Him they resist. Just as they rejected Him when He was on earth, so they will want to do it again later. They don't tolerate Him because He is thwarting their plans.

Mic 4:12 | The LORD Gathers the Nations to Judgment

*12 "But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD,
And they do not understand His purpose;
For He has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor.*

But the heathen nations do not know the love, wisdom, and grace of God toward His people. Nor do they realize that all their planning will bring them exactly where God wants them. When the enemies gather before Zion to deal with them, the LORD decides to deal with them. He gathers them like sheaves to the threshing floor to defeat them completely (Jer 51:33).

The king of Assyria is a rod in God's hand to chasten his people. God wants to bring them to repentance through that chastening. But that is not the thought the king of Assyria has when he goes up against God's people (Isa 10:7). God uses the selfish thoughts of people and nations to fulfill His own plans. It is the same here. The nations are gathered against Zion as warriors in the field, but God gathers them like sheaves to the threshing floor (cf. Rev 16:14,16) to be smashed to pieces.

They could not be so easily and completely destroyed if they were not assembled against Zion. In the same way, the plans of the enemies against the church also turn out to be the means to their own destruction. They work their own destruction when their foot is caught in the net they have hidden for others.

Mic 4:13 | Zion Pulverizes the Peoples

*13 "Arise and thresh, daughter of Zion,
For your horn I will make iron
And your hoofs I will make bronze,
That you may pulverize many peoples,*

*That you may devote to the LORD their unjust gain
And their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.*

He will leave the threshing, that is to say the judging, of the wicked nations to the oppressed inhabitants of Jerusalem. He will make them strong to do so. This judgment is not a vengeful expression of insult, but will be made for the honor of God. The spoils of war will be consecrated to the LORD through the ban (Lev 27:28). This can happen, for example, by decorating the temple with it. In any case it will serve for the glory of His kingdom.

“The LORD”, *Yahweh*, the God of the covenant with His people, will be known in that day as “the Lord”, Adonai, the Commander, “of the all the earth”. Everything belongs to Him. He takes back everything that the people in iniquity have appropriated themselves and with which they have lived in rebellion against Him.

Zion will have the honor of triumphing over the peoples when they are gathered together like sheaves on the threshing floor. Instead of being afraid of them and fleeing from them, she will act forcefully against her enemies. Fear will then reign with her enemies and they will try to flee.

Against her enemies the LORD will make their horn – the horn is a picture of power – of iron. She will repel them with it. He will also give her hoofs of bronze to trample them with it. In this way she will crush many peoples who have trampled her for so long.

When God’s time has come, the daughter of Babylon will be made like a threshing floor (Jer 51:33). And the worm of Jacob will be the threshing sled, with which God will thresh and crush the mountains and treat the hills as if they were chaff (Isa 41:14-15). The situation is then reversed, because at first Jacob was the threshing floor and Babylon the threshing sled (Isa 21:10).

When God gives His people the prospect of victory, He also arms it with strength and skill. The daughter of Zion must make use of that. In herself she has no strength. But she also has to stand up. It is her responsibility to thresh. The honor of victory belongs to God. Zion will bring the threshed corn on God’s altar as a grain offering. The spoils of Zion’s victory will be brought into the sanctuary and devoted to God (cf. Num 31:28; Jos 6:17).

On everything we have, it must be written "HOLY TO THE LORD" (Zec 14:20-21). Extraordinary blessings call for extraordinary gratitude. God has made it possible for us to actually obtain everything we possess. That is why He must be glorified with all that has become our part.

Micah 5

Mic 5:1 | The Judge of Israel Smitten on the Cheek

*1 "Now muster yourselves in troops, daughter of troops;
They have laid siege against us;
With a rod they will smite the judge of Israel on the cheek.*

Several explanations of this verse have been given. The correct translation of that part is: "With a rod they have struck the Judge of Israel on the jaw. It seems that this verse has three parts, each with its own subject. There is a clear connection between the parts or subjects.

The first line is a call of the LORD to Assyria, the "daughter of the Gang of Struggles". Assyria is called to group and stand in battle order to go to war against Jerusalem (cf. Joel 2:9-12a; Psa 83:1-9).

In the second line we hear what the faithful remnant says. They see the armies coming. They acknowledge that they are sent by the LORD as the inevitable judgment of the idolatry of the unbelieving mass of the Jews. Through the word "us", Micah makes himself one with the part of the population that is faithful to the LORD. He takes his place in spirit with them in the besieged city.

In the third and fourth lines, the prophet gives the cause of judgment, the answer to the question of why that siege took place. The correct translation of that part is: "With a rod they have smitten the Judge of Israel on the cheek." This refers to the rejection of the Lord Jesus, because He is "the Judge of Israel". He is so called because He has the judiciary, while He has been treated and condemned so unfairly. 'To smite on the cheek' means to treat with contempt (cf. 1Kgs 22:24; Job 16:10).

All distress and oppression that will afflict Jerusalem in the future are the result of their rejection of the Messiah, God's anointed King. They have humiliated and abused Him. That is why God's anger comes upon them, an anger that He exerts by sending hostile nations against them.

Mic 5:2 | A Ruler From the Days of Eternity

2 *“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
[Too] little to be among the clans of Judah,
From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel.
His goings forth are from long ago,
From the days of eternity.”*

After the deep humiliation of Zion and all the distress that will befall the people in the future as a result of smiting “the Judge of Israel” (Mic 4:14), Micah is speaking about this Judge in more detail here. This abused and rejected Judge will go forth from Bethlehem as a Ruler. He will not only save His people from the power of the enemy, but through Him there will be blessing for the whole world. The greatness of the future Ruler over Israel, the Lord Jesus, contrasts sharply with the earlier humiliation.

The announcement of the birth follows all promises of a glorious future, because that future lies in Him, because He is the One who makes up that future. Micah first mentions the birthplace of the Messiah. That is seven centuries before His birth. Just as Micah announces the place of birth, so his contemporary Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah is born of a virgin. The special thing is, that this virgin becomes pregnant without the intervention of a man (Isa 7:14; Lk 1:35).

Bethlehem means ‘bread house’ and Ephrathah means ‘fertile’. The Messiah will be the true food of His people (Jn 6:51) and everyone connected with Him will bear fruit for God (Jn 15:5). This is not something for the people of the world to become enthusiastic about. Likewise, the place of birth is not an attractive place. There is not much to enjoy. But He Who is born there is a Ruler Who will carry out the intention of God (2Sam 23:3; Jer 30:21).

The fact that He is not born in Jerusalem, but in the insignificant Bethlehem, shows the decline of the royal house of David. Bethlehem may be an insignificant place for people, but for God this place has the greatest significance. It is the place of the birth of His Son. The Messiah will come forth from there, in accordance with the announcement of the prophet Micah. And He will come forth there “for Me”. The LORD thus says that the Messiah will be there for Him, to fulfill the promises made by Him.

The place of the birth of the Messiah is also clear to the spiritual leaders of the people when the Messiah is actually born. When Herod hears of His birth, he inquires with the chief priests and scribes about the place of Christ's birth. They then quote this verse from Micah (Mt 2:3-6).

It is remarkable that Matthew in his quotation replaces 'Ruler' with 'Leader' (Darby Translation). Of course, this is not a mistake. Matthew, like all other biblical writers, is led by the Holy Spirit (2Pet 1:21). God's Spirit inspired him (2Tim 3:16) to quote the translation of the Hebrew text from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, in which the word for 'Ruler' is translated by 'Leader'. That fits exactly with the way He was born. He is certainly the born King and it is certain that He will rule. But if He had appeared as Ruler, the people would have been lost. Now He comes first to be their Leader and to shepherd them as His people (cf. 1Chr 11:2).

There is another difference. Here it says "Bethlehem-Ephrathah", while Matthew writes about "Bethlehem, land of Judah". Ephrathah is reminiscent of the birth of Benjamin, 'the son of the right hand', and of the death of Rachel (Gen 35:16-19). In Micah the thought seems to be that while all hope of life for Israel – in the picture of Rachel – is gone, the Christ – in the picture of Benjamin – appears. In Matthew, the Gospel representing the Lord Jesus as the King, it is about Judah, the tribe from which the King comes.

The false leaders of the people at the time of the birth of the Lord Jesus examined and knew the Scriptures, but they did not allow the Scriptures to examine and guide them. If our familiarity with the Word of God is only rational, intellectual, it will increase our guilt because it has no effect in our lives.

For example, it is a small thing to print your initials on your Bible so that everyone knows that Bible is yours. But it is something completely different to let the Bible print its mark on you, and that is no small thing. Then you don't have a mouth full of Bible texts, but your life shows the contents of the Bible. So you must have knowledge of the Bible, because otherwise there can be no life that is in accordance with the Bible.

In this verse Micah presents the Lord Jesus as born in Bethlehem and at the same time as the Eternal One. His origin is twofold: from Bethlehem and

from the days of eternity. This indicates that He is Man and God. He has become Man, He is God eternal. Although He was born at a certain time, He is not subject to time (Psa 90:2; Pro 8:22-23). This is where the preexistence of the Messiah is taught, i.e. that the Ruler born on earth is the same as the eternal God. Isaiah also indicated His Godhead (Isa 9:5-6).

Mic 5:3 | The Remainder of His Brethren

*3 Therefore He will give them [up] until the time
When she who is in labor has borne a child.
Then the remainder of His brethren
Will return to the sons of Israel.*

Verse 2 can be seen as an intermediate sentence. Then verse 3 connects to verse 1 and gives the result of the smiting of the Judge of Israel. The beginning of the verse, “therefore”, refers to the reason for giving them up. Israel is given up to its enemies because of their rejection of the Messiah.

Israel, and more specifically Judah, is given up, but it is only for a certain time. That period of time is compared to a period of childbirth. This refers to the great tribulation, the time of the many soul-exercises, the fears and difficulties that Israel goes through at that time. Israel has to go through all those deep ways, the fear, the judgments and the chastisements of God, in order to make them accept and acknowledge that it has earned those punishments because of its iniquity. The people will be like Naomi, who will be brought back to the land by grace and to whom it is given that the King will be born of her (Rth 1:6; 4:17).

When we look at Revelation 12 with this verse, we see that Micah is talking about the end time. From the description given by John, it becomes clear that the woman who gives birth is the people of Israel (Rev 12:1-2). The contractions of labor of which Micah speaks are still future and look forward to the great tribulation.

In the first verses of Revelation 12, John describes that the Lord Jesus was born of Israel. When He is born, the great red dragon in the person of Herod is ready to devour Him (Rev 12:4; Mt 2:16). That fails because God takes Him up into heaven (Rev 12:5). This is visible in the ascension of the Lord Jesus. And then suddenly John moves us into the time of the great

tribulation (Rev 12:6). Contractions of labor overwhelm the people. That time is described in the rest of Revelation 12. But at the same time it is the announcement of the (second) coming of the Lord Jesus.

When the Lord Jesus returns, His brethren (cf. Mt 25:40), the Judeans, His 'tribesmen', 'His own flesh and blood' (cf. 2Sam 19:13), will return to the land. They will convert to the LORD, together with the other tribes of the land, who are still in the scattering all over the world.

Mic 5:4 | He Will Shepherd Them and Be Great

*4 And He will arise and shepherd [His flock]
In the strength of the LORD,
In the majesty of the name of the LORD His God.
And they will remain,
Because at that time He will be great
To the ends of the earth.*

Micah continues to speak about the Ruler Who will be born. Here we see Him, the Messiah, after He has come to earth for the second time. He stands in full strength ready to serve. He has stood up for His people and has defeated their enemies. He will shepherd His people and provide for the needs of the flock of Israel. He rules His people, but He does so as a Shepherd. This is God's ideal King and the greatest benefit for His subjects.

The first ruler in the Bible is Nimrod (Gen 10:8). But he is a hunter. A shepherd is committed to the sheep and gives life (Jn 10:10b), a hunter takes life. The Lord Jesus is the good Shepherd. 'Shepherd' is one of His most beautiful names and tasks.

His royal care and protection are beautifully expressed in His service as a Shepherd (2Sam 5:2; 7:7; Isa 40:11). He performs His service as the dependent Man. His strength is that of the LORD. This guarantees absolute safety. No enemy will dare to disturb the peace of the sheep. He also shepherds them "in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God". From Him radiates the royal glory and sovereignty of God. Also in the realm of peace He is both the dependent Man and the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15).

While He stands to serve, they may dwell in peace (Lev 26:5-6). They will never want to leave His presence again. The protection, rest, and care He offers cannot be approached by others. No one can stand in His shadow. He is great to the ends of the earth. Everything on earth is under His dominion. To whom else can they go? There is no one but Him!

Mic 5:5 | He Will Be Peace

*5 This One will be [our] peace.
When the Assyrian invades our land,
When he tramples on our citadels,
Then we will raise against him
Seven shepherds and eight leaders of men.*

“This One will be peace” in one word describes what the coming of the Messiah will mean for the world. He has peace in Himself and grants it to His people (Eph 2:14; Isa 9:5-6; Zec 9:10). Peace is not only the absence of war, but includes all the salvation and restoration that God will grant to His people. That salvation is embodied in the Lord Jesus. He will be peace for Israel in three ways:

1. He will protect them from their enemies, represented in Assyria (verses 5-6),
2. He will give them strength to overcome their enemies (verses 7-9) and
3. He will destroy all weapons and idolatry, so that they will rely only on Him and no longer on their own strength (verses 10-15).

Assyria here represents all hostile nations. They will think they have conquered Israel when they have robbed the people of his government by entering their palaces. There is no one left, they think, who can lead Israel in resisting their march.

Then there will be “seven shepherds” and “eight leaders”. In them we see the remnant that in complete power – the number seven speaks of perfection – and new energy – the number eight represents a new beginning – will drive out the enemy (cf. Ecc 11:2). The shepherds and leaders act on authority and in the power of the great Shepherd and Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus. They are the saviors of whom Obadiah speaks (Oba 1:21).

It says “we will raise”. This means that the people of Israel will set seven shepherds against the power of the enemy. As said, the number seven expresses perfection. These shepherds, under the Chief Shepherd, that is the Lord Jesus, form a perfectly functioning army to push back the upcoming enemy. The shepherds are leaders. Seven is sufficient, but by adding an eighth, the number becomes more than sufficient. The fact that they are called shepherds is in connection to verse 4. The fact that they are leaders “of men” makes it clear that they are not shepherds of cattle, but of people.

Mic 5:6 | He Delivers From the Enemy

*6 They will shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword,
The land of Nimrod at its entrances;
And He will deliver [us] from the Assyrian
When he attacks our land
And when he tramples our territory.*

The remnant strengthened by the LORD will not only drive the Assyrian out of the land, but drive him back into his own land and rule over him there with the sword. In “Nimrod” we can see Babylon and Assyria united. The beginning of the kingdom of Nimrod is Babylon (Gen 10:10). After that he extended his territory to Assyria (Gen 10:11). That the remnant shepherds the land of the enemy with the sword, means that the authority over that land lies with the remnant, the people of the LORD.

All the work of the remnant and its blessed results can only come about because the LORD gives the strength to accomplish this work. He has promised that He will deliver His people from Assyria if it overpowers the land. Micah and with him the God-fearing remnant affirm with certainty that the LORD will do this and that He will do it in the way just described.

Thus in verses 2-6 we find the Lord Jesus presented as Baby, Ruler, the Eternal, Shepherd, Peace and Deliverer.

Mic 5:7 | The Remnant Like Dew and Showers

*7 Then the remnant of Jacob
Will be among many peoples
Like dew from the LORD,*

*Like showers on vegetation
Which do not wait for man
Or delay for the sons of men.*

When “the remnant of Jacob” in the strength of the Shepherd has driven away the enemy and rules over him, it gets its original function of blessing for the whole earth (Gen 12:3; 22:18). The prophet Hosea presents the LORD as this dew for men (Hos 14:5); here the remnant is the “dew” (cf. Psa 110:3). Israel as the dew refers to the abundant, invigorating and fertilizing service that the people will have among the nations, through which new, powerful life will be conceived and promoted. This is the result of living together in peace as brothers (Psa 133:3).

Also the “showers” are a blessing of the LORD (Deu 11:11; Eze 34:26). Without rain, the green herb will not last long (2Kgs 19:26; Isa 37:27; cf. Gen 2:5). The rain guarantees that the herb stays green all the time. The quality of society will be preserved and promoted through the teaching that the remnant will give from the Word of God (Deu 32:2). This will truly be a ‘green society’. The conversion of the people, of which the remnant is the core, will be the riches for the Gentiles (Rom 11:12).

This blessing is not because people ask for it. Also, no one is able to work this through their own effort (Mk 4:26-28). It is a fruit of grace. The people of the LORD will be like something that comes from heaven, like dew from Him Who is the Father of rain and Who gives birth to the drops of dew (Job 38:28). The remnant is born from above, its origin is heaven and not earth. They have the nature of God. They are produced in silence, just as the dew is produced in silence, without us knowing how that happens. Thus is the way of the Spirit (Eze 37:7; Jn 3:8).

Mic 5:8 | The Remnant Is Like a Lion

*8 The remnant of Jacob
Will be among the nations,
Among many peoples
Like a lion among the beasts of the forest,
Like a young lion among flocks of sheep,
Which, if he passes through,*

*Tramples down and tears,
And there is none to rescue.*

After the blessing that the remnant will be, a second characteristic comes here, again derived from Whom the LORD is. In the previous verse the remnant is presented as the dew because it is a characteristic also of the LORD. Now the remnant is presented as a lion. By this it shows a characteristic also of the LORD, who is also compared to a lion (Gen 49:9; Rev 5:5). For those who rebel against the authority of the Messiah, the remnant is like a lion. Thus, the remnant is a blessing (dew) or a judgment (lion) in God's hand.

Mic 5:9 | Lifted up Against the Adversaries

*9 Your hand will be lifted up against your adversaries,
And all your enemies will be cut off.*

Here the prophet addresses the LORD on behalf of the faithful remnant. The reaction to the special place that the remnant receives from the LORD is the acknowledgment of His power. They will say to the LORD that His hand is lifted up (Isa 26:11). With this they express that they are aware that everything they can do is due to Him. This is their third characteristic.

Mic 5:10-14 | Everything Taken Away That Man Relies On

*10 "It will be in that day," declares the LORD,
"That I will cut off your horses from among you
And destroy your chariots.*

*11 "I will also cut off the cities of your land
And tear down all your fortifications.*

*12 "I will cut off sorceries from your hand,
And you will have fortune-tellers no more.*

*13 "I will cut off your carved images
And your [sacred] pillars from among you,
So that you will no longer bow down
To the work of your hands.*

*14 "I will root out your Asherim from among you
And destroy your cities.*

The answer of the LORD is that He will take away everything mentioned in verses 10-14. They are all things on which the heart of His people trust instead of on Him. Above all, He takes this false trust away from their hearts, but at the same time destroys the tangible means on which they rely. Only in this way can Israel remain usable in the hand of the LORD. It is a characteristic of the Messianic era that all means of battle and idolatry in every form have been completely eradicated. They will not want to know more about it (Hos 14:3).

The first carnal means to be eradicated are “horses” and “chariots” from which they derived their false human strength (verse 10). They have relied on horses and chariots and multiplied them (Psa 20:7). The LORD will eradicate them from their midst, so that they cannot be tempted to trust them again. The picture of war horses and chariot does not fit the realm of peace.

It will also no longer be possible to entrench oneself behind the city walls (verse 11). They have built their cities as settlements and that gives them the feeling of security. That the LORD is their guarantor of protection and security, they don't think about that any more. The LORD will tear down this false security. Israel will be able to live in peace in the country without external protection, but under the protection of the LORD (Zec 2:4-5).

In verses 12-13 it is about the false religion, the sinful worship of God. First there are the “sorceries” and “fortune-tellers” (verse 12). The sorceries are exterminated “from your hand”. This may be seen in objects that are held in the hand and to which magical powers are ascribed. The foolishness to go to fortune-tellers to know what the future brings will not happen again. On the one hand because those people have been exterminated and on the other hand because the glorious future has become present.

Many of them have said to the work of their hands: ‘You are our gods’ (verse 13). But now idolatry will be abolished and abandoned. The LORD will exterminate the carved images and the sacred pillars - these are both the movable and the fixed. With the idols they have erected monuments, including sacred pillars, and there are cities dedicated to idolatry (verse 14). The LORD will radically deal with this too.

Mic 5:15 | God's Vengeance on Those Who Will Not Obey

15 *"And I will execute vengeance in anger and wrath
On the nations which have not obeyed."*

When the LORD has purified His land of all that is contrary to His holiness, He will judge the nations that have not answered the call to repent. These nations are in contrast to the nations mentioned in Micah 4 (Mic 4:1). After that, the realm of peace is definitively established. There is no tolerance in the Messianic realm of peace for things that do not belong there, while the nations that refuse to join this realm are exterminated.

Micah 6

Introduction

The previous chapters show God's outward actions with His people. In the last two chapters we see the ways of His Spirit with this people. Both the political history and the spiritual state of the people are presented by all the prophets, as well as the restoration and conversion of Israel.

Micah 6 is in the form of a dispute. This form is also found, for example, in Isaiah 1 and in Micah 1. The chapter contrasts the appropriateness and righteousness of God's demands with the ingratitude and superstition of Israel which are the cause of ruin and judgment. The prophet does not look to the future full of blessing, but to the present full of sin.

Mic 6:1-2 | The Indictment of the LORD

*1 Hear now what the LORD is saying,
"Arise, plead your case before the mountains,
And let the hills hear your voice.
2 "Listen, you mountains, to the indictment of the LORD,
And you enduring foundations of the earth,
Because the LORD has a case against His people;
Even with Israel He will dispute.*

Micah begins this last part of his prophecy with the call to listen to what the LORD says (verse 1; Mic 1:2; 3:1). Before he passes on the word of the LORD, it first comes to himself. The LORD commands him to arise and to let his voice be heard. Micah must call the mountains to account, which means that he makes them witnesses to the indictment which the LORD will have with his people in the verses to come. He also has to let his voice be heard to the hills.

The inanimate creation in all its expanse must listen to the indictment of the LORD (verse 2). The highest heights, these are the "mountains", and the deepest depths, these are the "enduring foundations of the earth," which are deep in the earth, the bearers of the earth, and everything in

between are called to witness His indictment. That case is mentioned three times in verse 2. It is therefore a very special case because the other party in the courtroom is “His people”, “Israel” (verse 2; cf. Deu 32:1; Isa 1:2; Jer 2:12-13).

With “mountains” and “hills” we can also think of the responsible part of the people who hold a certain position of power, perhaps the king or the leaders of the people. The “enduring foundations of the earth” (or the land) may be those who should watch over the principles upon which the society of Israel is based. Perhaps the priesthood.

God always has a dispute with those who disobey Him. He cannot have fellowship with people who do not bow to His Word and certainly not with people He has brought into a special relationship with Himself. He has surrounded His people with all care and provided them with all blessing. But their reaction to this is one of the greatest possible acts of infidelity and ingratitude. They have turned their back on the LORD and treated Him with contempt. From what has He deserved this? That is what He asks the people in the following verse.

How do we respond to the many proofs of His care for us and the many blessings He has given us?

Mic 6:3 | Call to Testify Against the LORD

3 *“My people, what have I done to you,
And how have I wearied you? Answer Me.*

Here the LORD takes the position of an accused person. Instead of accusing them, He is going to defend Himself against His people. He wants to speak to their hearts when He speaks to them as “My people”. We listen here, as so often in the prophets, to His deep desire that they remember that He made them His people.

He asks His people what He has done to them that causes them to turn away from Him. Has He made their lives so unbearable? Did He tire them with extraordinary demands or excessive requests (cf. Isa 43:23; Isa 5:4; 7:13)? He calls them to testify against Him, to accuse Him of something they have to complain about. He wants them to think about it, so that

they may come to the conclusion that their whole attitude toward Him is wrong. That he speaks out in this way is condescending grace.

Mic 6:4 | The Care of the LORD for His People

*4 “Indeed, I brought you up from the land of Egypt
And ransomed you from the house of slavery,
And I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam.*

It remains still in the courtroom after the questions of the LORD to His people in the preceding verse. Then the LORD Himself takes the floor again. He will tell them what He has ‘done’ to them. Instead of exhausting them by imposing burdens on them, He has freed them from burdens and overloaded them with blessings and favors. The greatest proof of this is that He ransomed them from Egypt while doing signs and wonders. As a result, they have become a free and independent people (Amos 2:10; Jer 2:6). The deliverance from Egypt is often quoted by the prophets. This deliverance represents the most important act in which God demonstrates His saving love for the people.

He reminds them that after their deliverance, He provided competent guidance in their journey through the wilderness, on their way to the promised land. He gave them the great lawgiver and leader Moses, as well as the high priest Aaron and the prophetess Miriam.

Moses and Aaron, who played an important role in the redemption from Egypt, are together a picture of the Lord Jesus, Who redeemed us from the world and leads us to the promised land. Moses and Aaron are a type of Christ as “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession” (Heb 3:1). In Miriam we see the experience of the relationship (Exo 15:21), our answer to Who the Lord Jesus is as the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.

Mic 6:5 | The Righteous Acts of the LORD

*5 “My people, remember now
What Balak king of Moab counseled
And what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
[And] from Shittim to Gilgal,
So that you might know the righteous acts of the LORD.”*

Then the LORD reminds His people, that He addresses once more emotionally as “My people” (cf. verse 3), what Balak through Balaam wanted to do against them, but what Balaam by the working of God’s Spirit answered him (Deu 23:5; Num 22-24). This should also convince them that God is not after their destruction, but after their blessing. He has changed the curse that the king of Moab wanted to bring on them into a rich blessing. God does not allow His people to be cursed (Psa 105:14-15).

They must also remember what happened “from Shittim to Gilgal”, that is, during the journey to the promised land after the event with Balak and Balaam. Shittim is the last place in the wilderness where the people camped (Num 33:49; Jos 3:1) and Gilgal is the first place in the promised land where the people camped (Jos 4:19). During that journey they witnessed how the LORD defeated Midian, that the Jordan was dried up for them and that Jericho was conquered out of Gilgal and after that the whole country was conquered.

These two places are a summary of the enormous change in their circumstances after their deliverance from Egypt. From slavery in a foreign country they were brought by the LORD into their own country with an abundance of blessings. If they would think about all those things, they would have to admit how good God had been to them, how great His faithfulness and how righteous His actions have always been.

It is important that we are regularly determined by everything the Lord has done for and with us. We easily forget that He saved us from the world to live for Him. Life with all its prosperity and hustle and bustle can occupy us so much that we no longer think of Him. That is why it is good to proclaim the Lord’s death every first day of the week by celebrating the Lord’s Supper at His Table. Then we are reminded again of what He has done and also from which He has redeemed us and what He has given us.

Mic 6:6-7 | With What Come to the LORD?

*6 With what shall I come to the LORD
[And] bow myself before the God on high?
Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings,
With yearling calves?*

*7 Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams,
In ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I present my firstborn [for] my rebellious acts,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*

After the obvious proofs of God's faithfulness in the previous verses, the people ask Micah what they should do. This is done by means of a member of the people. The question seems to indicate that they recognize that there is distance between them and the LORD. They speak about "God on high", the God Who is far away from them, while in His warm love He has addressed them twice as "My people".

They do have some ideas about how they could bridge the distance between them and God. These have to do with bringing offerings. They are well informed about this in their religion. At the same time it makes it clear that their conscience has not come into God's light. The proposals they make to obtain God's favor show that they have not understood anything of what is due to God. He does not seek outward rituals, but the sacrifices of a broken spirit and a defeated heart (Psa 51:16-17; 1Sam 15:22; Isa 1:11-20; Jer 7:21-23; Hos 6:6; Amos 4:5; 5:15,22-24).

The people speak of burnt offerings, while sin offerings are appropriate, because the fellowship broken by sin must be restored through confession and reconciliation. This is clearly shown in Leviticus 4, in the description of the sin offering. That they ignore it shows that they still believe to be in connection with the LORD as His covenant people. They must not change but God must change, they think. That they want to offer calves of one year old, shows that they do not want to sacrifice too much. An adult animal is worth much more. But their sacrifices are worthless because they are not brought with the right mind. Such sacrifices are called "worthless offerings" (Isa 1:10-13).

But if they have to, they also want to satisfy the LORD by making a great number of sacrifices. In this way they suddenly go to the other extreme. It is characteristic of people who do not live in fellowship with God that they do not have a healthy balance in their spiritual life. Maybe they want to imitate Solomon with this (1Kgs 8:63). As if the LORD is concerned with the number. Another idea is to bring an enormous amount of oil for grain

offerings. Yes, they are willing to invest heavily to secure God's favor. Let Him tell it.

If that still is not enough for Him, they even propose to sacrifice their children. Maybe that way they can obtain His favor. That is how pagan their way of thinking has become. But the firstborn already belongs to the LORD (Exo 13:2,12) and the sacrifice of children is forbidden by law (Lev 18:21; 20:2-5; Deu 12:31; 18:10). However, the idolaters do not take this into account (Jer 19:5; 32:35; 2Kgs 16:3; 21:6; 3:27).

The LORD does not want body flesh to be sacrificed, but that the spirit of man should submit to Him. He seeks and rejoices in "truth in the innermost being" (Psa 51:6). Their religion has been reduced to a mere outward honor of God. He does not seek their gifts, He seeks themselves. What is condemned is not the sacrifice prescribed by God, but the sacrifice that serves as a substitute for obedience.

Mic 6:8 | What the LORD Has Told

*8 He has told you, O man, what is good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justice, to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?*

If they want to know how to please God, they should ask for the known way. God has already told this (Deu 10:12-13). Micah points out what they should know when it comes to what God wants. The people are addressed as "man", which indicates the general validity of what the LORD asks for. The word "man" also refers to the nullity of man in the face of God on high. The LORD has told "what is good". Things that are "good" are things that have a good effect, things that serve for the good of others and themselves.

Micah calls three good things and nothing else. There is no need for anything else. This is what suffices. They don't have to come up with anything else or think of something else instead. The three things relate to the three relationships in which man stands: to his neighbor, to himself and to God (cf. Mt 23:23; Lk 11:42).

1. The first is "to do justice" or to act righteously toward one's neighbor, that is, to act according to the norms of God's Word. With our neighbor

we can think of our housemates, fellow members of the church and our colleagues.

2. The second is “to love kindness” as a mind of one’s own heart. This means that we have the mind of God. Then we are not hard, have no self-esteem and do not put ourselves above the other, but seek the well-being of the other.

3. The third is “to walk humbly with your God”, which is a walk to His honor and joy (cf. Gen 5:29; 6:9). Walking with God means that we live in conscious fellowship with God in humility of spirit. This includes the whole life in all its manifestations, the whole behavior that is shown. In order to be able to live like this, someone must have new life. These things cannot be accomplished by the not born again human being. We see it perfectly in the Lord Jesus and can learn it from Him, for He is “gentle and humble in heart” (Mt 11:29).

For the Christian who knows and enjoys the blessings of the heavenly land, this means that he lives “righteousness and holiness of the truth” (Eph 4:24), is “kind” to others (Eph 4:32) and tolerates the other in love “with all humility” (Eph 4:2).

Mic 6:9 | Hear the Rod

*9 The voice of the LORD will call to the city—
And it is sound wisdom to fear Your name:
“Hear, O tribe. Who has appointed its time?”*

But what the LORD asks in verse 8 is not found among the people. That is why the prophet resumes his preaching of repentance and tells the city of its sins. The city that is addressed will be Jerusalem as the center of sinful practices (Mic 1:5). It testifies of wisdom when God’s actions are observed in judgment and when they are accepted as righteous. There is salvation for those who bow down to God’s voice announcing judgment and thereby acknowledging that it is justified to come.

The Name of the LORD, through which He comes forth in all His attributes in His whole Being, looks forward to a true conversion.

He who is wise shall fear the LORD and listen to his voice of the LORD. Through this he will be freed from judgment. The true wisdom appears from doing what He says. Only what He says is important and the rest does not matter.

The last sentence of this verse can also be translated with: “Hear the rod and Who has appointed it for you” (Darby Translation). This is a remarkable way of expression. The rod is the symbol of discipline (Isa 10:5,24). Here the rod speaks, which may mean that it does not strike yet. Pointing to an expected punishment can prevent the exercise of the discipline if the warning is taken to heart. He who listens does not need the rod. If the rod then comes and someone is still listening, he will repent and not be given up to eternal judgment. In the rod the voice of the LORD can be heard, for he is the One Who has appointed it for His people.

Mic 6:10-11 | A Short Measure and False Weighing Instruments

10 *“Is there yet a man in the wicked house,
[Along with] treasures of wickedness
And a short measure [that is] cursed?
11 “Can I justify wicked scales
And a bag of deceptive weights?*

In these verses the reason for the announcement of the rod is given. In verses 13-16 the rod is described.

The indictments in verses 10-11 are made in questioning form. Despite the various warnings, the wicked still hide their wicked gains in their homes. They continue to collect treasures in this way. They pile them up in their homes, as if they are safe there and that no one sees them and can reach them. But God sees it. He can reach them and will judge them for it (Jam 5:1-5).

The “short measure”, literally “shrunken ephah” is a too small measure of content (cf. Lev 19:36; Deu 25:14; Amos 8:5; Pro 22:14). An ephah is a grain measure of probably between twenty and forty-five liters. They make the ephah smaller. As a result, one pays for the specified number of liters while getting less. This deception is despised by the LORD. This cunning behavior is completely contrary to the justice He asks of man (verse 8).

Apart from a short or shrunken measure, they also use “wicked scales” and “deceptive weights”. This wicked, deceptive practice has also contributed to the multiplication of their possessions. “Wicked scales” are scales that do not accurately reflect weight, which indicate more than the weight on them. The use of weights that are too heavy also makes the price too high. God hates such practices.

How could He “be pure” (Darby Translation) if He did not condemn the use of such methods? They defile themselves through their behavior, but this does not taint Him in His purity. On the contrary, in His purity, He cannot allow any staining by sinful acts among His people. He is “too pure to approve evil” (Hab 1:13).

This use of a false measure of content and deceptive means of weighing can also be applied spiritually when it comes to judging something that happens in the church of God. How often does it happen that false criteria are used in the assessment of a case. It just so happens that we don’t let a sin of someone we like or a sin of a family member weigh as heavily as a sin of someone we dislike. God abhors such an approach.

Mic 6:12 | The Iniquity of the People

*12 “For the rich men of [the] city are full of violence,
Her residents speak lies,
And their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.*

The rich not only have houses full of illegally acquired treasures, but they themselves are full of violence. They do not shy away from a means of violence to increase their wealth. It is not only the rich who misbehave. The inhabitants of Jerusalem also do the same. Their misbehavior is reflected in the lying language they speak with a deceptive tongue. They are a people of violators and liars and deceivers. They act and speak like that because they are selfish. They want to benefit themselves at the expense of others. Others are the victims of their boundless greed.

Mic 6:13 | The Discipline of the LORD

*13 “So also I will make [you] sick, striking you down,
Desolating [you] because of your sins.*

On the behavior described in the previous verses, the LORD must bring His discipline. He cannot tolerate this behavior. Because of their sins He will make them sick. As a result, they will not be able to enjoy their treasures, nor will they be able to continue their sinful activities. Nothing of their wealth and of themselves will remain, for He will desolate them.

That the LORD will make them sick and desolate them because of their sins, should come as no surprise. He has let His people know this in His law through Moses (Deu 28:15-68; Lev 26:14-39). They will be smitten with the diseases of Egypt without anyone being able to heal them. For they have rejected the LORD their Savior. What can then be expected for improvement?

Mic 6:14-15 | Much Done, No Result

*14 "You will eat, but you will not be satisfied,
And your vileness will be in your midst.
You will [try to] remove [for safekeeping],
But you will not preserve [anything],
And what you do preserve I will give to the sword.
15 "You will sow but you will not reap.
You will tread the olive but will not anoint yourself with oil;
And the grapes, but you will not drink wine.*

In His discipline the LORD will bring hunger into the land. They will no longer be satisfied with what they take, but will have a constant feeling of hunger. What they think they can store in a safe place will not be safe for the enemy. What they have tried to remove for safekeeping, will be found (Hag 1:6; Lev 26:16; Deu 28:38-40; Isa 62:8-9).

It will be given over to the sword by the LORD, that is, it will be taken from them by force as a judgment of the LORD. They have taken it by force, it will be taken by force from them. He who sows violence shall reap violence.

Of all their efforts of sowing, olive treading, and grape harvesting, they will enjoy nothing themselves. Their efforts will be in vain as far as they are concerned. It will all fall into the hands of the enemy, who will profit

from it. Grain, oil and new wine are mentioned several times together as a summary of the blessing of the land (Deu 11:14; 12:17; 14:23; 28:51).

The grain to eat is taken from them so that they will go hungry. The oil with which they rub their skin to look beautiful is taken from them so that they will look hideous. The wine as the symbol of joy is taken from them, so that they sink into sorrow and misery.

This has a spiritual application. If we are unfaithful to the Lord, we stop reading in God's Word, that is, we stop feeding on the Lord Jesus as the bread of life. We also stop being led by the Holy Spirit and the joy disappears from our lives. We will starve spiritually, live according to the flesh and end up spiritually in misery.

Mic 6:16 | The Cause of the Reproach of God's People

16 *"The statutes of Omri
And all the works of the house of Ahab are observed;
And in their devices you walk.
Therefore I will give you up for destruction
And your inhabitants for derision,
And you will bear the reproach of My people."*

The first half of this verse is related to verses 10-12, the second half to verses 13-15.

With an additional proof of their deviation, the LORD underlines the righteousness of His discipline over them and why it must come. For "the statutes of Omri and all the works of the house of Ahab are observed". The statutes of the LORD have been replaced by what these wicked kings have devised and done.

The wicked reign of Omri has found its climax in that of Ahab. Omri is said to be worse than all his predecessors (1Kgs 16:25). Ahab introduced the Baal service, persecuted the prophet of God and murdered and robbed his neighbor (1Kgs 16:29-33; 18:9-10; 21:1-3,17-19), all in the spirit of his father.

The thought and behavior of these wicked persons has not been condemned by God's people, but embraced. This does not only happen in the area over which they rule, the ten tribes realm, but their pernicious

influence has also penetrated into the two tribes realm. The inhabitants of Jerusalem continue in the views of these evil men. Then the LORD can do no other than give them up for destruction by plagues and enemies. They will become a mockery, a ridiculous spectacle for the surrounding countries (Lam 2:15). In this way God's people will have to bear their reproach.

At the same time, it is impressive that God is speaking here again about "My people". He shares in the reproach He brings upon His people. The discipline that He must exercise also touches Him Himself. Here we see that He does not act out of vengefulness, but out of love that can only act in this way with the people who have left Him.

Micah 7

Introduction

This last chapter is closely related to the book of Lamentations. Here we hear the prayer of the repentant remnant in the days of the great tribulation. The prophet speaks on behalf of those who no longer walk in pride, but humbled by their sins, they acknowledge the righteous hand of Him Who struck them. He makes himself one with them; he takes the reproach of the city as his own and complains about its sad state.

At the same time, he condemns their behavior, thus expressing God's thoughts and feelings in relation to their condition. But he does so with all the interest that stems from God's love for them. No excuses or second causes are sought, but they accept everything as a just reward for their actions.

Yet they look up with confidence to the God of their fathers, Whose infallible grace they count on for restoration. Here one of the most characteristic features of the true prophet emerges and that is that he is an intercessor for his people. Jeremiah says: "But if they are prophets, and if the word of the LORD is with them, let them now entreat the LORD of hosts ..." (Jer 27:18). And God says to Abimelech about Abraham: "He is a prophet, and he will pray for you" (Gen 20:7; cf. Psa 74:9). The Spirit of God pronounces the judgment. But because God loves His people, in the prophet the Spirit also acts as the Spirit of intercession for His people.

Mic 7:1 | There Is Nothing Left to Eat

*1 Woe is me! For I am
Like the fruit pickers, like the grape gatherers.
There is not a cluster of grapes to eat,
[Or] a first-ripe fig [which] I crave.*

Here Micah is the voice of the God-fearing. He describes the general destruction in Israel. He compares the people with an orchard and a vineyard after all the fruits have been picked. He looks if there is anything left to eat.

But it seems that there are no good people left among the people on whom the LORD can look down with joy (cf. Isa 17:6). The fact that there is “not a cluster of grapes to eat” means that there is not a group of people that wants to honor God. When faithful people are found, they are individuals.

It is the time when the Antichrist is in power. Anxiously, Micah searches around to see if he can discover something among the people that gives right to the title ‘people of God’. When Micah says that his soul craves to find something of fruit for God, he expresses the craving of God’s heart. But he finds nothing but deceit and deception, a zealous lurk on neighbor’s blood and a desire to do evil with both hands.

Mic 7:2 | There Are No More God-Fearing People

*2 The godly person has perished from the land,
And there is no upright [person] among men.
All of them lie in wait for bloodshed;
Each of them hunts the other with a net.*

When Micah looks around to see if there is still “a godly person” to be found, he has to conclude that he has “perished from the land”, that is Israel. The prophet almost seems to say that he is left alone, just like Elijah once at Horeb (1Kgs 19:10). The godly person is the God-fearing, kind, merciful and beneficent man. Just as the early fig of good quality in the advanced season of summer cannot be found, a godly and upright man cannot be found in Israel. Just as the orchards are without fruit, so is Israel without God-fearing and upright people in the days of Micah (Psa 12:1; 14:2; Isa 57:1).

On the contrary, Micah observes bloodshed and devoting oneself to killing one’s fellow man. They do their best to catch their fellow people with a net. A net is used for fishing or hunting. Once an animal is caught in the net, it cannot free itself from it. It is caught to be killed.

Mic 7:3-4 | A Cord of Three Strands of Injustice

*3 Concerning evil, both hands do it well.
The prince asks, also the judge, for a bribe,
And a great man speaks the desire of his soul;*

*So they weave it together.
 4 The best of them is like a briar,
 The most upright like a thorn hedge.
 The day when you post your watchmen,
 Your punishment will come.
 Then their confusion will occur.*

Instead of finding someone to serve God with his hands, Micah sees the hands full of energy working decisively and effectively to do evil (verse 3). For this they have their hands well placed. Their hands are skilled in doing injustice. Doing evil is not an incident, but a situation has arisen in which they can do nothing but do evil. This evil is most strongly expressed in “the prince”, “the judge” and “a great man”. It is the people who occupy a leading or prominent place in the people.

Micah describes their way of working. The prince demands the condemnation of an innocent person. The judge is bribed and pronounces the sentence. Whoever is great in social status or economic influence, the man of prestige or the rich, someone who has power and therefore influence, ensures that his will prevails. He gets what he has set his sights on by using his money and influence. The prince and the judge do what he wants.

These three malefactors form a cord of three strands of injustice, making it strong just like a twisted cord. Also by them, by twisting one sin into another, a case is completely twisted and great injustice is done. Injustice permeates all the fibers of the social climate. This is no different today.

Such a climate of injustice can only arise and continue to exist if those who are “the best” and “the most upright” offer the protection of “a briar” and “a thorn hedge” (verse 4; cf. Jdg 9:14-20). Such figures at the top of a society not only disappoint when you expect something from them, but they cause injury and pain (2Sam 23:6).

When all, even the ‘good ones’, are so depraved, the measure of injustice is full. This is what must be judged. When it comes, they will not know what to do, because they have not listened to the warnings of the watchmen, who are the prophets of God. “The day when you post your watchmen” is the day the prophets have announced (cf. Jer 6:17; Eze 3:17; 33:7).

Mic 7:5-6 | No One Can Be Trusted

*5 Do not trust in a neighbor;
Do not have confidence in a friend.
From her who lies in your bosom
Guard your lips.
6 For son treats father contemptuously,
Daughter rises up against her mother,
Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
A man's enemies are the men of his own household.*

Sin is so devastating, that all normal relationships are torn apart. There is no longer any protection to be found in friendships, marriages or family ties. People you could trust in all circumstances, with whom you shared your secrets, your friends, must be approached with distrust. Do not believe what they say to you and do not trust what they want to do for you. All are cheaters, no one can be trusted (Jer 9:2-6).

Do not say too much to your most precious relationship on earth, your wife (cf. Psa 141:3). She may be intimate with you, but do not say anything rash, because then you will die. The holiest relationships and the closest ties mean nothing to the wicked. This disruption of relationships is the result of rejecting God. The Lord Jesus quotes this verse of Micah to show the consequences of His coming to earth (Mt 10:21,35-36; Lk 12:53).

The commandment "honor your father and your mother" (Exo 20:12) is trampled upon by son and daughter. It is no wonder that the daughter-in-law resists her mother-in-law and behaves rebelliously against her. It is deeply sad when someone's traitors and worst enemies are his own housemates, his own children and his best friends, from whom protection is expected.

Mic 7:7 | Watch Expectantly for the LORD

*7 But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD;
I will wait for the God of my salvation.
My God will hear me.*

After the prophet has expressed his complaint about the depravity of his time, he looks up to the LORD. Micah uses the word "but", which accentu-

ates the contrast with the foregoing. After Micah has observed everything around him as described in the previous verses, the Spirit of God works in him a looking up to the LORD as the God of his salvation. He is totally different in his behavior and expectation than his peers who think only of themselves and live for themselves.

The Hebrew word for ‘watch for’ (*sapah*) means ‘waiting full of expectation’. It is the word that is also used for the watchmen in verse 4. The God-fearing one will perceive every shadow as a watchman and hear every sound as proof that God is at work. If we do not look forward expectantly to the slightest sign of God’s work, there is a great danger that we will become desperate. Micah sees the ultimate outcome and therefore does not sink into despair.

The situation is bad, but not completely hopeless when he thinks of “the God of my salvation”, which is the God from whom all his salvation, his full salvation, comes (Psa 27:9; Isa 17:10). Micah does not start to work himself, but waits for God, that He will act in His time. This resignation in God’s will to the knowledge that He works sovereignly in the world, creates peace in the heart of Micah. He expresses confidence that his God will hear him.

It would be understandable that the social wrongs in God’s people in Micah’s days would lead him to doubt the wisdom of God’s policies. But it is precisely faith in the wisdom of God’s policies that prevents Micah from falling into despair. The language Micah speaks is the language of the faith of Christ and of the Spirit of Christ in the believing remnant in the great tribulation. After the confession of sins comes the confession of faith of the humbled people. The prophet, as representative of the remnant, turns his eye to Him and waits for the hour of salvation (Psa 130:6).

When everything around us is so unfaithful and no one can be trusted anymore, when all love and faithfulness among the people has disappeared and the day of tribulation has arrived, God remains only as the One Who always remains faithful. He who trusts in Him will never be ashamed. Faith says with certainty: “My God will hear me.” Hearing means the release from the total downfall that seems to have come with exile.

Mic 7:8-9 | From Darkness Into Light

*8 Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy.
Though I fall I will rise;
Though I dwell in darkness, the LORD is a light for me.
9 I will bear the indignation of the LORD
Because I have sinned against Him,
Until He pleads my case and executes justice for me.
He will bring me out to the light,
[And] I will see His righteousness.*

Here the remnant is speaking. Micah sees the people in exile and in trouble with an enemy who rejoices (verse 8). The enemy is Babylon (Mic 4:10). But his answer is that the people will surely be restored. He is not yet out of the darkness, but knows that also in the darkness the LORD is to him light and that the light will chase away the darkness once completely (Isa 50:10; 58:10; Psa 37:6).

Like a light in darkness the promise shines that God will intervene and fulfill His promises. Every promise of God is light in darkness. That is what faith can say that God has in mind. Being in darkness means being in misfortune and misery (Psa 107:10; Isa 9:1; 42:7).

Although the faithful have to go through hard times, one day they will rise to receive their inheritance. There is a vivid contrast between the people of God sitting in the dark and the rejoicing effect of the light of God that will shine upon them. The remnant of believers in any period of time can be sure of God's help and their final triumph.

Micah confesses sins and submits to the discipline of God (verse 9). He is convinced of God's righteous action because of the sins of the people. The enemy has been ordered by God as a discipling rod, but the enemy has done more and has wanted to destroy the people. However, God has a purpose with the discipline. Micah knows that purpose, he trusts in it. He knows that he is not in the hands of the enemy, but in the hands of God. That makes him confident that God pleads his case and executes justice for him. This is the trust of the remnant in the end time at the end of the great tribulation.

The remnant knows that God will fulfill His promises and restore the people. Trusting in the help of God stems from the awareness that suffering and misery are a deserved punishment for sin. This awareness and feeling edifies patience and hope: patience to bear the punishment and hope that suffering will cease as punishment as soon as the righteous wrath of God is appeased.

When the LORD leads them out of prison, the darkness, the misery of the great tribulation, they come into the light of freedom and joy. Then they will see with full inner satisfaction and joy how He exercises righteousness to their enemies. It is not gloating, but a consent to the exercise of justice by God. It is to be comforted after mourning over the chastening afflicted.

Mic 7:10 | The Enemies Judged

*10 Then my enemy will see,
And shame will cover her who said to me,
"Where is the LORD your God?"
My eyes will look on her;
At that time she will be trampled down
Like mire of the streets.*

The right of Israel was pushed aside by the peoples who did not count on being God's disciplinarian, but thought they could act in their own strength and at their own discretion. That is why they went further than God wanted. For that they will be judged, which will also mean the deliverance and restoration of God's people. Then it will become clear that God is not powerless to act for His people (Psa 42:3; 115:2).

The remnant will look down upon the enemies. They will see with joy that all hostile powers have been defeated and that God has triumphed. The enemies will be trampled "like mire of the streets", which means that they are worth as much as mire and are just as despicable (Job 30:19; Zec 10:5).

Mic 7:11-13 | Restoration of Israel

*11 [It will be] a day for building your walls.
On that day will your boundary be extended.
12 It [will be] a day when they will come to you*

*From Assyria and the cities of Egypt,
From Egypt even to the Euphrates,
Even from sea to sea and mountain to mountain.
13 And the earth will become desolate because of her inhabitants,
On account of the fruit of their deeds.*

Here Micah speaks in faith about the future restoration of Israel. During that time, the walls of Zion will be rebuilt, but also the whole people will be under the protection of the LORD. He will build the walls, which means that He will provide security throughout the land. The decision to do so will be spread all over the earth. That will be the reason that the nations will come to Israel from all sides (Isa 19:18-25).

Before that happens, the judgment will be executed (verse 13). Each time the prophet changes from blessing to judgment and vice versa, so that the ungodly has no unfounded hope and the God-fearing has no basis for unnecessary despair. Judgment is the fruit of their deeds. The fruit of man's deeds, the consequence of his sins, is that the earth will become desolate. Man thinks he can control creation, but instead of improvement, it becomes a deterioration, it becomes a desolation.

Mic 7:14 | Prayer to Shepherd the People

*14 Shepherd Your people with Your scepter,
The flock of Your possession
Which dwells by itself in the woodland,
In the midst of a fruitful field.
Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead
As in the days of old.*

The promise of salvation brings the prophet to prayer. He asks the LORD to shepherd His people with His scepter (cf. Psa 23:4b; Lev 27:32). The LORD is addressed as Shepherd (cf. Mic 5:3), as Jacob already did (Gen 49:24; Psa 80:1; 23:1). A shepherd leads, cares and rules. The Lord Jesus will do that perfectly. This prayer will be answered in the future. We may pray this prayer for the church.

Here they speak to God about themselves as "Your people" and "Your possession" (Deu 7:6; 9:26,29; 14:2). The people are chosen by Him as His

personal possessions. Because of their rebellion they have not enjoyed the corresponding blessings. When they now call upon Him as “the flock of Your possession”, they do not do so because of what they are in themselves, but because of what God has determined for them. They ask Him to act with them by His grace.

Their next statement about living alone in a forest also belongs to this. With this they refer on the one hand to the blessing of Balaam, who said of Israel: “A people [who] dwells apart” (Num 23:9) and to the blessing of Moses, who said: “Israel dwells in security, The fountain of Jacob secluded” (Deu 33:28). On the other hand, it seems to refer to the fact that the remnant is still expelled and has hidden itself in the forest from the enemy.

The blessing also includes “a good and spacious land” (Exo 3:8). They see that land from their hiding place around them and look forward to enjoying its fruit again. Bashan and Gilead are located in the area on the other side of the Jordan and are also areas rich in pastures (Num 32:1). Their longing is that everything will be “as in the days of old”, by which they mean the days of David and especially the days of Solomon.

Mic 7:15 | Answer to Prayer

*15 “As in the days when you came out from the land of Egypt,
I will show you miracles.”*

God’s answer goes beyond the question. He refers again to His miracles at the exodus from Egypt (Mic 4:10; 6:4). The exodus from Babylon was not accompanied by miracles, the exodus from Egypt was. He starts as it were again with them according to His original thoughts. The need is so great, that miracles are needed to get out of it. The LORD promises that He will perform them.

Mic 7:16-17 | Consequences for the Nations

*16 Nations will see and be ashamed
Of all their might.
They will put [their] hand on [their] mouth,
Their ears will be deaf.
17 They will lick the dust like a serpent,*

Like reptiles of the earth.

They will come trembling out of their fortresses;

To the LORD our God they will come in dread

And they will be afraid before You.

An additional effect of the miracles is that the nations “will see and be ashamed”. If God stands up for His people through the coming of the Messiah, there will be no strength left among the nations. They will no longer have a response. “Put [their] hand on [their] mouth” is also a sign of dismay, of reverence, of silence out of awe because of what they see (Jdg 18:19; Job 21:5; 29:9-10).

Their deafness may be meant literally and be the result of the deafening events that God allows to take place (cf. Job 26:14). In a spiritual sense it can mean that they are deaf because of the many and wondrous things they hear, but that do not penetrate them because they cannot grasp it.

Their attitude towards the LORD will then have changed radically. They will no longer defy Him with their audacious statements. Like the serpent and other crawling animals of the earth, they will be humiliated and lick dust (Gen 3:14; cf. Psa 72:9 concerning the Messiah; Isa 49:23 concerning Israel). As serpents emerge from their holes, the nations will do so trembling before the Messiah. All rebellion is gone. There is now only trembling, fear and fright toward “the LORD our God”, who is the God of His people.

Mic 7:18-19 | Who Is a God Like You?

18 Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity

And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession?

He does not retain His anger forever,

Because He delights in unchanging love.

19 He will again have compassion on us;

He will tread our iniquities under foot.

Yes, You will cast all their sins

Into the depths of the sea.

The coming glorious deliverance arouses praise of Who God is. In the question: “Who is a God like You?” we recognize the meaning of Micah’s name: “Who is like *Yahweh*?” It also recalls the praise of Moses at the deliv-

erance of the people from Egypt (Exo 15:11). In view of the coming deliverance, the faithful remnant expresses the same admiration for God. This admiration becomes even greater when we see that God not only frees His people from external powers, but above all from the much greater power of sin and their guilt. Who is like God Who pardons?

At the deliverance from Egypt, God made Himself known as the God Who is incomparably exalted above all gods. In the re-acceptance of the people who, because of their sins, have been an outcast among the nations, God makes Himself known as the God Who is incomparable in mercy and grace in the face of “iniquity” and “rebellious act” (cf. Exo 34:6-7). It is inseparable from His nature that He is willing to pardon sins.

In the future He will act in this way with “the remnant of His possession. He will fulfill all His promises to a God-fearing remnant that He preserves for Himself according to the election of His grace. He does not retain His anger forever for anyone who is in connection with His Son and to whom His Son’s work is credited (cf. Psa 103:9; Isa 57:16). His anger or wrath does abide forever on those who reject the Son (Jn 3:36b). It is His joy to prove lovingkindness (cf. Psa 103:8).

Micah confesses as the mouth of the remnant that God will have compassion on them again. The iniquities will no longer be a threat. Micah - and the remnant on whose behalf he speaks - knows that God will “tread them under foot”. This indicates that He completely humbles the power and tyranny of iniquities through His power. Sin no longer reigns, for He is the Ruler. For us, through our identification with the work of Christ, sin no longer reigns over us (Rom 6:14).

God will remove the sins to a place from where they will never reappear: the depths of the sea (cf. Exo 15:4-5,10). When God forgives sins, they are no longer to be found and He does not look for them (Jer 50:20; Isa 38:17). He can do so with our sins because the Lord Jesus bore them in His body on the cross, where He received the judgment of God on them (1Pet 2:24).

Mic 7:20 | God Fulfills His Promises

*20 You will give truth to Jacob
[And] unchanging love to Abraham,*

*Which You swore to our forefathers
From the days of old.*

God acts with His people as described in the previous verses to fulfill all His promises He has made to them (Gen 12:2-3; Psa 105:9-10). He has a just foundation for it. Two names are mentioned, that of “Jacob” and that of “Abraham”. It is remarkable that God “gives truth” to Jacob and “unchanging love” to Abraham.

We might have reversed that. After all, Jacob was so often unfaithful, untrue, that the fulfillment of the promises made to him would be a special token of God’s unchanging love. Abraham’s faithfulness would be more in keeping with God’s truth. But it is otherwise and right as it is written here. Especially towards the unfaithful Jacob the faithfulness of God appears. And toward the faithful Abraham, the fulfillment of God’s promises is ultimately not the result of Abraham’s faithfulness, but of God’s unchanging love.

It has been noted that we find the New Testament parallel of these verses in Romans 11. With Micah and Paul we can and want to repeat it in praise at the end of this book:

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him [be] the glory forever. Amen” (Rom 11:33-36).

Other Publications

On the website www.oudesporen.nl more Bible commentaries and publications that have been translated into English are available and will become available, Lord willing. They can be downloaded for free as pdf, e-pub and mobi (for Amazons Kindle).

The commentaries on the books of the Bible can also be read on electronic devices like desktop, laptop and smartphone on www.kingcomments.com. Bible references are linked. See 'Information' on that website.

