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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Micah 5.

(2014)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

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Micah 5.

Topics.

- Out of Bethlehem Ephrathah will come one who is to be ruler in Israel.
- The LORD will give Judah up until Christ comes.
- Seven shepherds and eight princes of men.
- A lion amongst the beast of the field.
- In that day the LORD will destroy Israel's chariots and their sorceries.

INTRODUCTION: Micah prophesied in Judah during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (about 750–700 B.C.), at about the same time as Isaiah. It was a time of prosperity, and Micah denounced the wealthy, who were oppressing the poor, and warned of impending judgment. The Northern Kingdom actually fell during Micah's ministry, in 722, and Judah almost fell in 701 (2 Kings 18–20).

The book contains three sections, which alternate between words of warning and messages of hope. Micah told of a day when there would be peace among all nations, who would then be able to beat their swords into plowshares (4:3), and of a royal deliverer who would save Israel from all her enemies. This deliverer would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

Out of Bethlehem Ephrathah will come One who is to be Ruler in Israel.

Micah 5:1-2 ----- ¹Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; (Judah) with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. ²but you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

Micah is calling Judah to gather her armies because the armies of Babylon are about to invade the city of Jerusalem. The expression, "They strike the judge of Israel on the cheek". Immediately refers to the armies of Babylon invading the city and destroying the temple and pillaging the scared vessels and taking the priests of Jerusalem into captivity for seventy-years.

At this time Judah had not only turned to idolatry, astrology, occultism and had altars for worshiping the host of heaven (the sun, moon, stars and planets) in the court of the Temple, but also worshipped at the altars of Baal and were even sacrificing their sons on the altars of, Molech in the Hinnom Valley.

Added to these abominations they were shedding innocent blood, cheating the innocent out of justice, not helping the less fortunate and oppressing the poor for their own gain all of these gross wickedness's permeated the land of Judah and Israel.

Because of this God used Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon who the LORD called His shepherd (Jer. 25:9) to bring judgment upon the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Babylon invaded the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem and took its inhabitants (the two tribes of Judah) into captivity. Later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria) captive. Israel and Judah were under Babylonian rule for seventy-years. They went into captivity to Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and were even sacrificing their own sons to pagan gods.

While in captivity God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar. Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy-years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) gave permission to Israel to return to Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved City Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again).

Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a time of prosperity and peace followed.

The glory and beauty of prophecy: many Bible prophecies contain a fulfilment for the people of the prophet's generation and also contain within the language a message for future generations this prophecy of Micah is one of those prophecies. Micah prophesies that Babylon is about to smite the judge of Israel on the cheek, meaning they are about to invade and wound the LORD'S people, but the words, "They smite the judge of Israel on the cheek," immediately takes the mind of the ardent Bible reader to the following verses, when another judge of Israel was struck on the face as the following New Testament verses show: -

- They (the high priest and those with him) did spit in his (Jesus) face and struck him and some slapped him, saying, "Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?" (Matt. 26:67-68)
- Some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophecy!" And the guards received him with blows (Mark 14:65).
- The men holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him and blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" (Luke 22:63-64).

God in His brilliance through Micah's prophetic message points us thousands of years ahead in time to the ultimate judge, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some teachers use the following words of Micah, "From Bethlehem Ephrathah will come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days (v2) to support the theory that Jesus pre-existed before time began, but that is a mistaken interpretation. The expression "Whose origin is from old from ancient days" simply means that Christ was in the eternal plans and purposes of God's eternal mind from the beginning of time and it has been prophesied of him from ancient days through all the prophets that he would come.

Ephrathah: means, fruitful land, it was the place where Rachel was buried and the ancient name of Bethlehem or the district around it. (Gen. 35:16) (Micah 5:2). Pause for a moment and enjoy the wonder, splendour and beauty of Bible prophecy, thousands of years before the Lord Jesus Christ was even born in Bethlehem Micah spoke of it.

Matthew wrote: -

- After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?" When Herod heard this he inquired of the people where the Christ was to be born and they told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel'" (Matt. 2:1-6)

Thousands of years before the birth of Christ the LORD (knowing that the people of Judah are about to be taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon and his fierce armies) through the prophet Micah gives the people of Israel the promise of a future deliver who will come to comfort them and give them hope while they endure being separated from their land and their beloved city Jerusalem and survive through the hardships of their seventy-years in captivity.

The LORD will give Judah up until Christ Comes.

Micah 5:3-4 ----- ³therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴and he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

This verse can refer to the following two events: -

1. To the LORD giving the rebellious people of Judah and Israel up to Babylonian captivity. During this time God moulded them into one united and faithful nation who worshipped only the Lord their God and at the end of it the LORD delivered them from Babylonian rule to return to their own land and their beloved city Jerusalem the Holy city of God. It could be said that Babylon was pregnant and in labour, with the rebellious people of Israel and Judah during which time the LORD moulded them into one faithful and united nation and at the right time gave birth to his beloved people Israel to return triumphantly and with rejoicing to their homeland.
2. To Mary and the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ and to his ministry as God's Shepherd and his death and resurrection which not only brought deliverance to all Jews from the condemnation of the law, but also brought deliverance from sin and death to the Gentiles.

John in the New Testament tells us Jesus was filled with God's Spirit without measure, meaning without any limitations and that God gave all things into his hand so that he began his ministry in the strength and power of the LORD as Micah the prophet had spoken thousands of years ago (Matt. 3:10-17) (John 1:32) (John 3:34).

The following verses show that Christ will be great to the ends of the Earth.

- God raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come (Ephes. 1:20-21).
- God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth (Philip. 2:9-10).
- From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:15-16).

When Jesus returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish.

The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Seven Shepherds and Eight Princes of Men.

Micah 5:5-6 ----- ⁵And he shall be their peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men; ⁶they shall shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod at its entrances; and he shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he comes into our land and treads within our border.

He shall be their peace: refers to the one the woman has given birth to (v3).

Assyria: (modern day Iraq) is a country along upper Tigris River in, it was a great international power. The people of Nineveh were Assyrians. The Assyrians are depicted as lions and a very cruel race. In the British Museum there are huge statues of lions always depicted with wings (symbolizing aggression). Babylon took off Assyria's wings and stood up in its place.

Nimrod: was the founder of Nineveh and other cities in or near Assyria. He became distinguished as a hunter, ruler, and builder.

Shepherd: refers to one who protects friends from their enemies.

Princes: implies, an anointed leader.

Seven: is a masculine number meaning the sacred-one.

Eight: is a feminine number it carries the idea of surplus (i.e., above perfect).

Micah is saying that the one the woman gives birth to will bring peace to his people and when their enemies arise against them he will raise up anointed and perfect shepherds and principled men in contrast to the false prophets of Micah's day who cared more about their own gain, power, fame and wealth than the people they were shepherding, worse than this they constantly spoke lies to the people leading them astray from God and His will. The ultimate fulfilment of this will be when Christ returns in glory to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. Jesus and his resurrected and anointed and perfect shepherds and principled men will shepherd the surrounding nations of Jerusalem through the word of God and His righteous laws and mightily protect God's people (especially when the final beast nations come against Christ and his Kingdom).

A Lion amongst the Beast of the Field.

Micah 5:7-8 ----- ⁷Then the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples like dew from the LORD, like showers on the grass, which delay not for a man nor wait for the children of man. ⁸And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of sheep, which, when it goes through, treads down and tears in pieces, and there is none to deliver.

Dew and showers of rain on the grass brings life and growth while a lion amongst the animals of the forest and a young lion among sheep speaks of being the strongest, the one with the power, nothing can harm the lion. These verses apply (with limitations) to Israel's return to Jerusalem, multitudes of Jews from the surrounding nations who had scattered from their beloved city because of the Assyrian and Babylonian invasion returned and they became (for a while at least) a strong nation and a blessing to the people around them.

But this prophecy goes far beyond the era of Assyria and Babylon and transcends time and history until it reaches its ultimate and true destination which will be when Christ returns in glory to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. For further information concerning Christ's return, see the notes following (Micah 5:3-4) under the title: "The LORD will give Judah up until Christ Comes," (above).

Back to the prophecy of Micah: those who belong to God will be like fresh dew and soft showers falling on the grass, meaning they will be a blessing to the nations and bring a life of security and abundance to the people of the earth and peace among all nations.

They will have the strength and power like that of a lion among sheep, meaning they will be the head of the nations and not the tail, there will be none that can harm them. This is because the one the woman gave birth to refers to the Lord Jesus Christ who will become the head of all nations, ruling and reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords over the nations from Jerusalem God's Holy city.

In that Day the LORD will destroy Israel's Chariots and their Sorceries.

Micah 5:9-15 ----- ⁹Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries, and all your enemies shall be cut off. ¹⁰And in that day, declares the LORD, I will cut off your horses from among you and will destroy your chariots; ¹¹and I will cut off the cities of your land and throw down all your strongholds; ¹²and I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and you shall have no more tellers of fortunes; ¹³and I will cut off your carved images and your pillars from among you, and you shall bow down no more to the work of your hands; ¹⁴and I will root out your Asherah images from among you and destroy your cities. ¹⁵And in anger and wrath I will execute vengeance on the nations that did not obey.

These verses were fulfilled (with limitations) God used Cyrus the king of Media Persia as His anointed shepherd to execute vengeance on Babylon and the nations in league with them because of the way they treated His people while in captivity. The people returned to Jerusalem and not only rebuilt the city and the temple of God, but destroyed all pagan idols and altars of worship throughout their land. Israel never again returned to their past religious pagan practices or the worship of idols and other gods, but they never destroyed all their weapons of war and even today have a vast arsenal of weapons of mass destruction and of nuclear capabilities.

Over time the people of Israel did fall into many other sins, because the religious leaders (the chief priests, the Pharisees and scribes) loved wealth, power, control and fame more than humbly serving God and caring for His people. They oppressed the less fortunate for their own greedy gain they robbed the poor of justice and did not care for the widows and the orphans, even worse still they drove them out of their own homes. But this does not mean that Micah's prophetic words have failed to achieve what they set out to do, the era of Babylon and the rebuilding of Jerusalem is not the final resting place for Micah's future prophetic vision.

Though Micah's prophetic words may have rested there for a moment they do not remain there, but take up wings and transcend time and history to arrive and settle on the Lord Jesus Christ ruling and reigning in a time when God creates a New Earth and a New Jerusalem in which sorrow and weeping, is replaced by eternal gladness and rejoicing.

Everyone who builds a house will live in it, there will not be banks to repossess them or wars to destroy. All will prosper and enjoy the work of their own hands, they will plant gardens and eat their own food and children will not be stubborn or rebellious. The wolf and the lamb will eat together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, there will be nothing that can hurt or destroy in all of God's Holy Mountain (Isaiah 65:17-25).

FOOTNOTE: when reading Micah words, "The remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples" (v8) it is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ.

This is because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew) this means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called, a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God).

The Apostle Paul said: -

- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—¹²remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world. The practical application of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them.

The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

End