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Micah (Full Book)



Micah - Steve Gregg

In Micah, a book by Steve Gregg, the prophet Micah delivers a series of oracles that foretell God's judgment on Israel for their transgressions against His laws. Micah also prophesizes the birthplace of the Messiah, who will come to execute vengeance on those who do not listen to the Gospel. The book offers a mixture of both destruction and hope, ultimately pointing towards the restoration of the remnant of Israel and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth.

Transcript

Isaiah was a city dweller, an inhabitant of Jerusalem, whereas Micah lived out in the country in a village about 25 to 30 miles southwest of Jerusalem. The name of that village was Moresheth Gath. That means possession of Gath.

It was near the Philistine border. Gath, of course, was a Philistine city. So he lived really on the outskirts of Judah, and yet he had much in common with Isaiah.

We don't know whether he was in any sense influenced by Isaiah and familiar with Isaiah's ministry. It seems probable that he would have been. Micah's ministry extended through the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, which is the same duration as Isaiah's, with the exception that Isaiah also dates his ministry with the time of Uzziah, which was one king previous to this, which means that while Isaiah prophesied through the reigns of four kings, Micah prophesied through the reigns of the latter three of those same four.

And that would suggest that Isaiah started earlier and was probably an older prophet, an older man, and there's much reason to believe that Micah was acquainted with Isaiah's prophecy, as we'll see in a few moments. There are many parallels between the way that Micah liked to express a point and the way that Isaiah did so. With reference to the style of the book, Micah is written as if it were a courtroom drama.

God is bringing charges against Israel, first of all the northern kingdom, and then Judah and Jerusalem. And there's much courtroom language in the book. For example, in verse 2 it says, Hear all you peoples, listen, O earth, and all that is in it.

Let the Lord be a witness against you. The Lord is going to bring His case against them, as we see there. Likewise, in chapter 6, in verses 1 and 2, it says, Hear now what the Lord says, arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice.

Hear, O you mountains, the Lord's complaint, and you strong foundations of the earth. The Lord has a complaint against His people, and He will contend with Israel. So, we read of this kind of courtroom language.

We also have reference to, in verse 3 of chapter 6, that God encourages or challenges the people to testify against Him, if they are able to do so, to find some fault with Him. He's testifying against them. The word testimony, obviously, is a term that relates to a courtroom.

In chapter 7, in verse 9, the remnant anticipates vindication from God after the judgment of the wicked, and the language there also suggests a courtroom kind of motif. In verse 9 of chapter 7, I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him until He pleads my case and executes justice for me. Now, there are other prophets who have indicated that God had, as it were, a legal case against Israel.

There are different ways that the different prophets explained or illustrated God's complaint against Israel. For example, Hosea, with his marriage and his remarriage to his adulterous wife, did so in order to show, in a human analogy, how God was wronged by Israel, and how He had a valid reason to be angry at them, just like a man would be if his wife was committing adultery. Here, Micah takes a different tack.

He doesn't talk about adultery, spiritual adultery, but he talks more like a man who's got a legal case against another man. In this case, it's God against Israel because of their violation of His laws. And so that's sort of a motif that runs through the entire book.

I mentioned that Micah may have been influenced by Isaiah. It's a little less likely, it seems, that Isaiah was influenced by Micah. Isaiah wrote a lot more than Micah did, at least as far as preserved writings are concerned.

And since Isaiah began a little earlier than Micah, and was probably older, it seems more likely that Micah would have been influenced by Isaiah than vice versa. Although it's entirely possible that the Holy Spirit, in inspiring these two prophets, gave them very similar messages and even very similar language, quite independently of their even being aware of each other. But it seems unlikely that Micah, one of the few loyal prophets to God in Judah at this time, would have been unaware of Isaiah, who was not only a notable prophet, but also a statesman and a relative of the king, and so forth.

I mean, how anyone could be, at that time, a prophet of Jehovah in Judah and not be aware of Isaiah, who was a well-known statesman and prophet, is inconceivable, I think. So it seems probable that Micah had read or heard Isaiah preached, and Micah took up

some of the same themes under inspiration and used many of the same images that Isaiah used. I've made in the handout here a list of quite a few of the images that appear in Micah, but are also found in Isaiah.

I've only given, in the case of the passages in Isaiah, that I list only one sample, usually, of this image in Isaiah, although most of these are recurrent images in Isaiah. Starting at the beginning of Micah and working through to the end, I've found, or I've itemized ten different images that are not uncommon in Isaiah, but which Micah also uses. For example, in Micah 1.9, he says, "...for her wounds are incurable." That is, Israel's wounds are incurable.

Likewise, in chapter 6 and verse 13, on the same subject, it says, "...therefore I will also make you sick by striking you." Now, Isaiah had opened his prophecy with this reference to Israel being smitten by the Lord and sick, like a man smitten from head to toe, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, and they were full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores, which had to do with the judgment and the chastening that had come upon Israel as a result of their sins and God retaliating against them. So, the idea of the nation being judged by God, being like a person being wounded and sick, is from Isaiah, chapter 1, verses 5-6, for example, and comes up a couple of times in Micah. In Micah 1.16, it says, "...make yourself bald and cut off your hair because of your precious children.

Enlarge your baldness like the eagle, for they shall go from you into captivity." This reference to baldness is a reference to mourning. People would shave their head when they were in mourning. And when he says, "...enlarge your baldness like an eagle," it means, like the bald eagle, shave all your hair off, because it's much to mourn about.

Your children are going off into captivity. And so, the idea of them shaving off their hair in order to mourn is what Micah's got in mind there. In Isaiah, chapter 3, the women of Judah are rebuked for their haughtiness and for their ornaments and so forth.

And in Isaiah 3.24, God says, "...instead of a sweet smell there shall be stench, instead of a stash of rope, instead of well-set hair, baldness, instead of a rich robe, girding of sackcloth, and branding instead of beauty, because your men shall fall by the sword and you are mighty in the war." So again, they will mourn. They'll shave their heads bald because of the people that are lost in battle. The same idea is both in Isaiah and in Micah.

The use of the images of darkness and light are very common in Isaiah and other prophets, and Micah uses them as well. In chapter 3, for example, Micah 3.6 says, "...therefore," speaking of the false prophets of Judah, "...you shall have night without vision, you shall have darkness without divination. The sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be dark for them." The idea of things being dark and not light as a picture of doom and calamity as opposed to positive experiences and blessings and

so forth is something we encounter in Isaiah and several other prophets.

In Isaiah 13.10, with reference to the fall of Babylon, God says the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will stop shining and so forth, and we see similar images throughout other parts of the prophets as well. And in Isaiah 9.2, it says, "...they that sat in darkness have seen a great light," referring to the light of Jesus' teaching. So also in Micah 7.8, it says, "...do not rejoice over me, my enemy.

When I fall, I will arise. When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me." Sounds like Isaiah 9.2 there. Those who sit in darkness, a light shines upon them, which was, of course, in Isaiah's case, a reference to Christ's teaching in Galilee.

And this is also talking about the remnant receiving light from God. So Micah and Isaiah have similarity there. The most striking similarity between Isaiah and Micah is in the passage which is found in Micah 4, verses 1-3, which resembles almost word for word a similar passage in Isaiah 2, verses 2-4.

You'll recognize it as we read it in Micah 4. "...Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on top of the mountain, and shall be exalted above the hills, the people shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.

For out of Zion shall the law go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off. Nations shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nations shall not lift up sword against nations, neither shall they learn war any more." The passage is very similar to Isaiah 2, verses 2-4. And there's only a few words rearranged. In fact, in some cases it's the same words but put in a different order.

And why it would be so similar and yet have those dissimilarities is not known. It's hard to imagine that Micah wrote this without being aware of Isaiah's passage. And yet he didn't copy word for word Isaiah's passage.

It seems likely that he and Isaiah had much of the same revelation, obviously. That similarity is so great, it seems probable that Micah had already become aware of Isaiah's passage to that effect, and Micah wanted to reiterate it but slightly changed his own words. The idea of the nation being like a woman in labor to give birth is one that we find in Micah and in Isaiah.

In Micah 4, verses 9-10, the second half of verse 9, Micah 4, 9, the second half of that verse says, "...for pangs have seized you like a woman in labor. Be in pain and labor and bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in birth pain." And then over in chapter 5, verse 3, Micah 5, 3 says, "...therefore he shall give them up until the time that she who is

in labor has given birth. Then the remnant of his brethren shall turn to the children of Israel." Now, the idea of the nation being in labor and giving birth to something, and what is actually coming to birth is the church, comes from Isaiah chapter 66, beginning with verse 7. Isaiah 66, 7 says, "...before she prevailed, she gave birth.

Before her pain came, she delivered a male child. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Shall a nation be born at once?" This is the spiritual nation, the church. "...for as soon as Zion prevailed, she gave birth to her children.

Shall I bring to the time of birth and not cause delivery, says the Lord? Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb, says your God?" And so it goes on. But the point here is that the prevailing of the nation of Israel is going to bring about the birth of the church, of a spiritual nation. Both Micah and Isaiah speak of it in those terms.

Now, Jesus also spoke of the same, but he kind of narrowed it down. It was he and his disciples, the remnant, that were actually going to be enslaved. But if you'll turn to John chapter 16, for example.

John 16, 21. Actually, I should suggest starting at verse 20. John 16, 20.

"...Most assuredly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice, and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come. But as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish for the joy that a human being has been born into the world.

Therefore, you now have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you." What this is referring to is the fact that Jesus, in dying, was going to himself go through anguish like a woman in labor, and the disciples would sorrow too like a woman in labor. But when they would see what was born from this, the church coming into existence as a result of this anguish, there would be much to rejoice about. It's taking up the Isaiah and Micah imagery, and speaking of the birth of the church that way.

Likewise, we have something similar to that in Revelation 12, where a woman in Revelation 12, 1-3, is seen pregnant. The woman apparently is Israel, judging by the symbols used of her. She is clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of 12 stars.

The 12 stars represent the 12 tribes of Israel. And she is with child. She is crying out in labor and in pain to give birth.

And then in verse 4, she gives birth to a male child. Excuse me, verse 5, Revelation 12, 5, she gives birth to a male child who is Jesus, who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron.

So the idea of the nation being in labor in order to bring forth the new order through the Messiah and the church age is an image that first comes up in Isaiah, but also found here in Micah.

Another image from Isaiah that is found in Micah is the comparison of the Messiah to a shepherd. Not all of the prophets refer to the Messiah as being like a shepherd, but Micah does, and so does Isaiah. In Micah 5, 4, speaking of the Messiah, it says, He shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and they shall abide, etc.

Now, He shall stand and feed his flock resembles Isaiah 40, 11. Isaiah 40, 11 is also about the Messiah. It says, He shall feed his flock like a shepherd.

He shall gather the lambs in his arm and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. The idea of the Messiah feeding the flock comes from Isaiah, it's also in Micah, also Ezekiel 34 talks about the Messiah as a shepherd feeding the flock. Another place where this is found in Micah would be in chapter 7, verse 14.

Speaking of the Messiah, in Micah 7, 14 it says, Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock of your heritage. And further in that same verse, Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in days of old. So the Messiah being the shepherd over Israel, or over the remnant of Israel, the flock, is brought up a few times here.

Actually, there are three Messianic passages in Micah, and all three of them refer to the church as a flock of sheep. Two of them specifically refer to the Messiah being like a shepherd of the flock. Another thing that's in Micah that's found as well in Isaiah is the use of Assyria, who was, of course, in Micah and Isaiah's day, Assyria was the dominant pagan nation that was going to destroy the northern kingdom and was going to menace the southern kingdom.

Using Assyria as a type or an emblem of the pagan nations in general, the Gentiles in general. We saw in Isaiah 19, for example, you probably will remember, it's a striking passage, and we had much to say about it when we went through it, but in Isaiah chapter 19, verses 24 and 25, it says, In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria. In the blessing of the midst of the land, even a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, and blessed is Egypt, my people, and Assyria, the work of my hand, and Israel, my inheritance.

When we talk about that, I mentioned that Egypt and Assyria were used as emblems of Gentiles in general, particularly, in this case, Gentiles that had been enemies of Israel, because Israel had spent time in bondage in Egypt, and the northern kingdom had been destroyed by Assyria, and much of Judah had been as well, and therefore, Assyria and Egypt stand for Gentiles that had been in hostile relation to Israel, and there are other times in Isaiah when Assyria is used that way. Well, Micah uses Assyria as a type in that

way, too, it would seem. In Micah 5.5, after talking about the Messiah's coming, it says, When the Assyrian comes into our land, and when he treads in our palaces, then we will rise against him, seven shepherds and eight princely men.

They shall waste with the sword in the land of Assyria, in the land of Nimrod, at its entrances. Thus he shall deliver us from the Assyrians. Now, he is God.

The deliverance of God's people from their enemies is very clearly in two here, but it can't be literally the Assyrian, because in verses 2-4, it's describing Jesus. In verse 2, he was born in Bethlehem, and he's shepherding his sheep. In verse 4, the church.

And therefore, the Assyrian can't be literal Assyrian, because after Jesus came, there's no Assyrians left. They were an extinct nation. There were Romans, and there were other Gentiles, and I would suggest to you that the Assyrians in these passages in Micah, coming as they do after the reference to the Messiah coming and shepherding his sheep, is a reference to the enemies of the church or the Gentiles in general, the pagan world, and how God will vindicate them and preserve the church from their pagan enemies.

The idea that Israel is a fruitless vineyard is familiar to us from Isaiah, especially Isaiah 5. Isaiah 5, verses 1-7 talk about the vineyard of the Lord being Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant plant, and how he gave it every advantage to bear fruit, but it didn't. Justice and righteousness were the fruit he was seeking for, but he got none. Micah has the same image in Micah 7, 1 and 2, at least an allusion to a similar one.

Micah 7, 1 and 2 says, Woe is me, for I am like those who gather summer fruits, like those who glean vintage grapes. There is no cluster to eat of the first ripe fruit which my soul desires. The faithful man has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among them.

Notice, it's like he's out gathering grapes, seeking righteous men and faithful men, but he can't find them. It's like there's no clusters there on this vineyard. This vineyard is not producing fruit, and the fruit he's looking for is faithful men and upright men.

Very similar to Isaiah's parable of the vineyard in Isaiah 5. Another thing that was true in Isaiah, in many passages, in my haste to put this handout together, I only found one passage in Isaiah, but I remember when we were going through it, there were quite a few, that Isaiah sometimes, of course, we know that he talks a lot about the wilderness being changed into a garden plot, and in those passages where he does so, of which there are many in Isaiah, he often speaks of the wicked as briars and thorns that will be burned up, and the righteous are like trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, and so forth, in contrast to the briars and thorns, which are fruitless. Briars and thorns are worthless, fruitless weeds, whereas trees that produce fruit is what his people are compared with. Well, Micah also uses, at least once, this idea of the wicked being like thorns and briars in Micah 7.4. Speaking of the wicked, it says, "...the best of them is like

a briar.

The most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge." So the comparison of the wicked, even the best of them is like briars or thorns, is very much like Isaiah's use of a similar imagery. Then, again, something that we saw on many occasions going through the book of Exodus, excuse me, of Isaiah, was the concept of another Exodus, that God would bring about another deliverance of his people that would be comparable to the Exodus in Moses' time. But, of course, the Exodus of which Isaiah speaks was a spiritual one.

It would be a deliverance of his people from the bondage of sin, not from the bondage of Egypt. We saw this, for example, in Isaiah 11, verses 15 and 16. Isaiah 11, verses 15 and 16.

"...the Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt. With his mighty wind he will shake his fist over the river and strike it in its seven streams and make men cross over dry shod. There shall be a highway for the remnants of his people who were left from Assyria, as it was for Israel in the day when they came up out of the land of Egypt." And he's talking about some deliverance he will accomplish that will be like the time he brought them out of Egypt.

Like the Exodus, in other words. He says it will be like smiting a river in its seven streams and drying it up so they can cross over dry shod, the very language from Exodus that Jews passed over the Red Sea dry shod, and so forth. But it's talking spiritually here, of course, about what the Exodus Jesus accomplished in his death and resurrection.

But Micah uses the same imagery. By the way, Isaiah uses it a lot, and we had occasion when we went through Isaiah to point out many times when Isaiah likened our salvation that we know as Christians to the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt. Well, Micah does the same.

In Micah 7.15, where he's talking about the Messiah's kingdom in the Messianic age, the present age, as I understand it, Micah 7.15, he says, "...as in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them marvelous things." So he's likening this salvation of the Messiah to the days which brought them out of Egypt. Likewise, in verse 19, he says, "...he will again have compassion on us." Again, like he did when he brought them out of Egypt, in other words. There will be a second expression of this compassion and deliverance from God.

"...he will subdue our iniquities. He will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." Now, in Exodus, God caused the Egyptian soldiers to be cast into the depths of the sea. They were the ones that were subdued.

The enemies of the Jews at the time of the Exodus were the Egyptians. And God subdued the Egyptians and cast them into the depths of the Red Sea, and they died there. But

this second Exodus is going to be spiritual.

It will not be Egyptians. It won't even be Assyrians or Babylonians or Romans. It will be our iniquities.

You will subdue our iniquities and our sins you will cast into the depths of the sea. Which, again, tells us that the second Exodus, the spiritual Exodus, is in fact that, a spiritual one, a deliverance not from human oppression, but from the slavery of sin. So we have the Exodus imagery there in Micah as we do in Isaiah.

Now, these are the principal things I found. Actually, I just dug those out this morning as I was reading Micah again and catalogued them here for you because I thought that would be of value to you. There are others.

There are other themes that are found in Isaiah that are also found in Micah, but they're somewhat more generic kind of things that all the prophets talk about, like complaining about people's drunkenness and their pride and their idolatry and things like that. Isaiah has a lot of that. Micah has a lot of that, but so do a lot of other prophets.

I was trying to point out principally the images that Isaiah popularized, which Micah apparently liked as well, whether influenced by Isaiah or not. He obviously had some of the same themes or ways of expressing themes as Isaiah did. Now, another thing about the style of Micah's book that I'd like to point out is that in a few places he likes to use plays on words, plays on Hebrew words, of course.

In the English, this doesn't come out so much, and therefore you wouldn't spot it just reading an English translation, but in the Hebrew there are some words that he likes to play games with. One of those is his own name. The name Micah means who is like Jehovah.

The name Michael, which obviously is similar to Micah, Michael means who is like God because El is God, but the A-H at the end of Micah is short for Jehovah. So Michael means who is like God. Micah means who is like Jehovah.

And in chapter 7 of Micah, verse 18, he says, Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? In one sense, this question is another part of the Exodus motif that he's using because when the Jews came out of Egypt and they sang the song of Moses in Exodus chapter 15, part of that song in Exodus 15 and 11 was, Who is like unto thee, O Lord among gods? Who is like thee? Asking rhetorically, who is like God? Well, Micah asked the same question. Who is a God like you? And that's actually a play on his own name because his name means who is like Jehovah. And another place where he has an extended wordplay is found in chapter 1, verses 10 through 15.

Here, there is a list of various cities, most of them obscure to us, all Judean cities, and

they're all references to cities that the Assyrians under Sennacherib would conquer in Judah. They're Judean cities. Sennacherib conquered 46 Judean cities.

They're not all listed here, but some of them are. Let me read the passage to you, verses 10 through 15. Verse 15.

Now, that doesn't make much sense to us. It's quite obvious that he's pronouncing doom, or gloom at least, upon these cities that are named. But in Hebrew, there's a play on words in virtually all of them.

I put it in your notes here because I didn't expect that you'd catch this. I write it all down just by my face. But gas, tell it not in gas.

The word gas sounds like the Hebrew word for tell. And so tell it not in tell town. Some would understand this to have the meaning.

Weep not at all in Beth-Aphra. Roll yourself in the dust. Beth-Aphra in the Hebrew means house of dust.

So he says, in the house of dust, roll yourself in the dust, like a person throws dust on their head when they're mourning. If you roll in the dust, you're even in greater mourning. It's one thing to throw a bit of dust on your head.

It's another thing to just get down and wallow in it. But the idea is the name of this town means house of dust. And for that reason, he uses that statement, roll yourself in the dust, house of dust.

In verse 11, he says, pass by in naked shame, Shapir. Shapir means pleasant or beautiful, probably like well-attired, dressed up and ornamented and so forth. But instead of being ornamented and beautiful, Shapir means in naked shame.

The inhabitant of Zanan does not go out. Zanan sounds like the Hebrew word for come out. The Hebrew word for come out sounds very much like the name of this city, Zanan.

So he says, the inhabitant of Zanan does not go out. Bethesda is taken away from you. Bethesda means house that is near or neighbor or near house.

It has to do with a house that's close by. And so the nearby house, Bethesda, will be taken away. It won't be near anymore, is what is meant here.

In verse 12, the inhabitant of Meroth, Pined. The word Pined, literally in the Hebrews, was sick. The word Meroth sounds like the Hebrew word Marah, which you probably are familiar with because there was a place called Marah, the place where the Jews drank bitter water and Moses sweetened them by throwing a tree into the water.

When they came out of Egypt in Exodus 15, the place was called Marah because it

means bitter. But you might recall at that place, at Marah, Moses is said to have healed the bitterness of water by throwing in this tree and God there described himself as the Lord who heals them. And so Marah has to do with not only just bitterness, but a bitterness that is caused by sickness.

And so when it says here, the inhabitant of Meroth is sick or was sick, it's a play on the sound of the name being like the name Marah, which can mean sick or bitter. In verse 13, O inhabitant of Lachish, harness the chariot to the Swiss steeds. Lachish sounds like the Hebrew term for team, like a team of horses or steeds.

Lachish, the Hebrew word for steeds or team of horses, sounds like Lachish. And that's why it says, O inhabitant of Lachish, harness the chariot to the Swiss steeds, as if to go out in war to defend themselves. But of course they're going to lose, is the idea.

Verse 14, give presence to Moresheth Gath. Well, Moresheth Gath means possession of Gath. So give presence to the possession or the presence of Gath.

The house of Aqzib shall be a lie. Aqzib means deception or a lie. Verse 15, I will bring an heir to you, Mereshah.

Mereshah means inheritance in the Hebrew. So bringing an heir to the inheritance. The heir would be the Assyrian who's going to conquer it and obtain it and inherit it.

But to refer to the conqueror as an heir is a play on words, on the fact that the name of the town means an inheritance. An heir is a person who receives an inheritance. And so these are the principal word plays that are found in this passage.

I'm totally lost on English-speaking people reading the English Bible, but the original Hebrew listeners will of course catch it immediately. If you'll turn the page over that I've handed out to you, we have a few other things to discuss, and then I'd like to look verse by verse, but not in great detail, through the book of Micah. With reference to the significance of the book of Micah, though it's a small book and we call it a minor prophet, it actually had a fair amount of influence on other passages of Scripture.

We read, for example, in Jeremiah 26, 18, that 100 years after Micah's time, the people of Judah remembered Micah's prophecy and could even quote it. And they did so when Jeremiah was being persecuted and some wanted to kill him. Some of his supporters came to his rescue and quoted from Micah to basically defend Jeremiah.

The passage in Jeremiah is Jeremiah 26. Starting at verse 17, it says, Then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying, Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest. Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? They're arguing

that they shouldn't put Jeremiah to death, because after all, Micah said similar things to those that Jeremiah said.

Micah said them during the reign of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah didn't put him to death, so why should we put this guy to death? It's basically what they're saying. But this was 100 years after Micah's time. Jeremiah lived a century later, and yet Micah's words were familiar enough to the people that they could quote them off the top of their head like that.

They were quoting, of course, Micah chapter 3, verse 12, when they quoted him there. So, even though it's a small book, it was a well-known book even a century after his time among the Jews, even in a time when the Jews were fairly apostate, there were still those who remembered Micah's prophecy. I've already made reference to the way that Micah chapter 4, verses 1 through 3 resembles Isaiah chapter 2. The likelihood, I said, is that Micah was familiar with Isaiah.

It's possible that Isaiah was familiar with Micah, and that the influence might have been the other way, but it doesn't seem likely. For example, Isaiah has the passage in his earliest chapters, which may have been written during the reign of Uzziah, and Micah wasn't prophesying yet during the reign of Uzziah. But you might recall that Isaiah 6, verse 1 talks about the death of Uzziah, suggesting that the contents of the first five chapters of Isaiah might have been written before the death of Uzziah.

And that's exactly where this passage is found in Isaiah, in the earliest chapters. So, since Micah was not yet prophesying during the reign of Uzziah, but only in the next king, Jotham, probably Isaiah was at first. Micah 5.2 is one of the most explicit prophecies about the Messiah, specifically mentioning that he'd be born in Bethlehem, as David, his predecessor, was.

It is quoted in Matthew 2.6 by the scribes and chief priests when Herod consulted them. Remember, the wise men came to Herod and said, where is he who is born king of the Jews? Herod consulted the chief priests and the scribes, and they told him in Bethlehem he'd be born. And they quoted from Micah 5.2. And this was, of course, about 700 years after Micah's time.

So his prophecy, again, was still influential, still familiar. The Jews were still reading Micah, even 700 years after his time. And maybe most dignifying to the book of Micah is that Jesus quoted from the book of Micah, though he did so in a way that seems a little unusual.

He quoted from Micah 7.6. In Micah 7.6 it says, For son dishonors father, daughter rises against her mother, daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, a man's enemies are the men of his own house. Now, Micah is not prophesying anything there. He's describing his own time.

He's describing how treacherous people were in general and how nobody could be trusted. Even family members would betray one another. However, Jesus quoted from that in Matthew 10.

When he was sending out the twelve on their mission, he told them that they would be persecuted and that there would be division caused because of him and that people who they would have thought would be on their side would be against them, even family members. And so, in Matthew 10, verses 35 and 36, Jesus says, For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes will be those of his own household. So, he's basically quoting Micah, although what he's doing is putting it in the future tense.

Micah said it in the present tense. A man's foes are those of his household. Micah is basically saying the whole country is so treacherous, there's so little faithfulness, there's no faithfulness.

Just a few verses earlier in Micah 7, 2, he said, The faithful men have perished from the earth. There's no loyalty, there's no family cohesion. Family members will betray other family members.

And that was the way things were among the people in Micah's day. Jesus told his disciples they could expect things to be that way for them, too, as they take their stand for him in a hostile world. And that was in Matthew 10, 35-36.

Now I'd like to give you an outline of the book, and then I'd like for us to kind of survey the book. I hope to read the whole book, but I won't comment on every verse. I think we have time to read through it.

It's not real long. But let me just tell you first how it is structured, how it's outlined. There are essentially three prophecies in the book, and each of them ends with the Messianic age, which is, again, a little bit like Isaiah.

Isaiah had cycles that his prophecy took where he talked about God's complaint about the people, then he talked about the judgment that was going to come upon them, he talked about a remnant of them being preserved, and then from there he would kind of lapse into a discussion of the Messiah's kingdom. And then that would bring things to a climax, and he took it over with a cycle again later on. Isaiah did this from time to time.

That's sort of how Micah's prophecies are. There are three of them. The first is in chapters 1 and 2. The first prophecy is Micah chapters 1 and 2. The second is chapters 3 through 5. Micah chapters 3, 4, and 5 is the second prophecy.

And the third prophecy is chapters 6 and 7. Now the reason we call these separate prophecies is because each of those places, chapter 1, chapter 3, and chapter 6, sort of start fresh a new thing. Chapter 1 very clearly is the beginning of a prophecy, the

beginning of the word of the Lord that came to Micah. In chapter 3, verse 1, it says, "...and I said..." From chapter 1, verse 2, through chapter 2, verse 13, everything's been pretty much in quotes.

It's been God speaking. But then in chapter 3, verse 1, the prophet speaks up and says, "...and I said..." as if to introduce a new oracle that he gave on a separate occasion, which makes chapter 3, verse 1, the beginning of another oracle or another prophecy. And that one runs without interruption through chapter 5. And then, of course, chapter 6, which begins the third prophecy, says, "...hear now what the Lord says..." which begins another oracle, and we have it running then.

So we have three separate oracles. Each one is introduced in this way, by a break in the oracular mode, by him saying, "...and I said..." or "...the Lord said..." or "...hear what the Lord says..." or something like that. But mostly, after these few statements, it's just one long oracle from God.

And so there are these three prophecies, and they divide up into... they divide up into sort of a logical progression of thought. The first prophecy is against Israel, the northern kingdom. And the second is against Judah, the southern kingdom.

And the third is against Jerusalem, the capital of the southern kingdom. So it moves from an oracle against Israel to an oracle against Judah to an oracle against the capital of Judah, Jerusalem. Starting, even as Amos does, by prophesying things against the most distant land, and then moving closer and closer to home.

Amos did this toward Israel. He prophesied against Moab and Edom and the Philistines and so forth, and then against Judah, and then he brings it home finally to Israel, his own nation. So Micah starts out by prophesying against Israel, then against Judah, then against his own capital, Jerusalem.

Now each of these prophecies gives God's case against the target audience. God's case against Israel is followed in chapters 1 and 2 by a short reference to the Messianic Age. In fact, the first prophecy divides as follows.

Chapter 1, verses 1 through 5, are sort of an introductory announcement that God intends to bring judgment against Israel and Judah. Bring them to trial. And then chapter 1, verses 6 through 16, tells how Assyria is going to be used by God to destroy Samaria, that's the capital of the Northern Kingdom, and to give trouble to Judah.

In chapter 2, verses 1 through 5, God brings his case against the rulers of Israel, the Northern Kingdom, and in verses 6 through 11, against the false prophets of Israel. Chapter 2, verses 1 through 5, is against the rulers of Israel, and verses 6 through 11, against the false prophets of Israel, and then the closing two verses are a glimpse of the Messianic Age, and that closes that particular oracle. Chapter 2, verses 12 through 13,

are about the Messiah's kingdom, and the restoration of the remnant.

Then the second prophecy begins. And, like the first one, he first addresses the rulers, and then the false prophets. But this time it's of Judah.

In chapter 3, verses 1 through 4, he gives his case against the rulers of Judah. And in chapter 3, verses 5 through 12, against the false prophets of Judah. So, he indicts the rulers and the false prophets of Israel and of Judah in these separate oracles.

And then, as the first oracle ended with a glimpse of the Messianic Age, so does the second, in chapters 4 and 5, a much longer glimpse, two chapters long, devoted to a description of the age of the Messiah. Then the third prophecy is against Jerusalem, and that's chapters 6 and 7. In chapter 6, verses 1 through 7, 13, he gives his case against Jerusalem, what he's upset about. And then, the closing verses, chapters 7, verses 14 through 20, are, again, about the Messianic Age.

The prophet prays for the coming of this age, of the Messiah. So, this is how the cycle goes. Now, the first two chapters were written before 722 B.C. We know that because, of course, he's predicting what Assyria is going to do to Israel.

Well, Samaria, the capital of Israel, was crushed by Assyria in 722. So, we know those first two chapters were written before that year. However, the second oracle, chapters 3 through 5, was uttered probably after the fall of Samaria in 722.

We know, for example, that that oracle was given in the reign of Hezekiah. But that could be before or after the fall of Israel, of Samaria, because that happened during the reign of Hezekiah. But, that this was in the latter part of the reign of Hezekiah, seems clear from the fact that Judah is being addressed, and yet it is referred to as Jacob and Israel.

Now, back when there were two kingdoms, Israel was distinct from Judah. But when the nation of Israel, the northern kingdom, fell, and only Judah remained, then the name Israel was used, as well as Judah and Jacob, for that one remaining kingdom. And so, the use of the word Israel and Jacob in referring to Judah in chapters 3 through 5 suggests that these were written after there was no longer a northern kingdom by that name.

How do we know that chapter 3 was written to Judah? Well, it talks about those who were building up Zion with bloodshed, in verse 10. Zion is, of course, Jerusalem. And so, he's talking about the people who are building up the city of Jerusalem.

That would certainly not be the northern kingdom, but the southern kingdom doing that. How do we know this was during the reign of Hezekiah? Well, because in Micah 3.12, we have a verse that we read a moment ago, quoted in Jeremiah 26. Remember, in Jeremiah 26, the people who were defending Jeremiah quoted Micah 3.12, and said, Micah of Moreshah prophesied these words during the reign of Hezekiah.

Now, the book of Micah doesn't tell us if these were during the days of Hezekiah, but Jeremiah 26.18 does tell us that that was during the reign of Hezekiah. Okay, and the last prophecy was probably also after the fall of Samaria. We don't know how late.

It would have been probably very late in the days of Hezekiah. So that gives you some idea of the dates. Now I'd like to scan through the book.

I will not comment on every point, and some of the points that we'll look at, of course, that we'll read, I've already made some comments on. But I would like to go through, and there are some individual points I'd like to make that didn't come up under any of the headings that we've surveyed here. So, Micah 1.1, the word of the Lord that came to Micah of Moreshah in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

Now Micah was a prophet of the southern kingdom, as I mentioned, and most of his prophecy is against Judah, but it's also against Samaria, the northern kingdom. Whereas Hosea and Amos directed their prophecies almost entirely against the northern kingdom, Micah prophesied against the northern and the southern kingdom, mostly the southern, but the first two chapters are against the northern kingdom. So he prophesied against both houses of Israel.

This, during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, Jotham was a good king, Ahaz was a bad one, Hezekiah was a good king. So some of the time that Micah prophesied there were good kings, but that doesn't mean there weren't great sins in the society, even during the reigns of the better kings. The society was fairly corrupt in many cases.

Verse 2, Here are all you peoples, listen, O earth, and all that is in it, the Lord God, let the Lord God be a witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple. For behold, the Lord is coming out of His place. He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth, or of the land.

The mountains will melt under Him, and the valleys will split like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place. All this is for the transgression of Jacob, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what are the high places of Judah? Are they not Jerusalem? Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field, places for planting a vineyard.

I will pour down her stones into the valley. I will uncover her foundations. All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces, and all her pay as a harlot shall be burned with the fire.

All her idols I will lay desolate, for she gathered it from the pay of a harlot, and they shall return to the pay of a harlot. God is coming out of His place, it says in verse 3. He's going to come down and tread on the high places of the land, or of the earth. Here's one of the

places that we read of God coming down, God coming, the Lord coming, and where it is obviously not talking about a physical coming of God or of Jesus to the earth.

And I point out to you before, of course, the places in the Old Testament, as well as the New, which seem to speak of the coming of the Lord, but where, in my opinion, it's not referring to the Second Coming. There are times, of course, where I believe the Bible refers to the Second Coming, but we have to be careful not to assume too much from this kind of language, because Isaiah himself in Isaiah 19.1 spoke of the Lord coming to Egypt, riding on a swift cloud, and now Micah speaks of the Lord coming down and treading on the high places of the earth, and he's not talking about the Second Coming of Christ. He's talking about the destruction of Samaria that happened in 722 B.C. We know that that's what he's talking about, because he says in verse 5, all this is for the transgression of Jacob.

And later he says, and what is the transgression of Jacob? It's Samaria. So he's talking about the temple judgment on the northern kingdom, when the Assyrians came and destroyed Samaria. That he equates with the Lord coming down in judgment upon Israel.

Now notice in verse 4 he talks about the mountains melting under him, and the valleys will split like wax before the fire, and waters poured out in a steep place. This is obviously apocalyptic language. This kind of language, if it's found in the book of Revelation, people are inclined to take it as the end of the world.

But people don't recognize that the language used in Revelation, and in all of the discourse, and in Zechariah, and in this place, and in many other places, is apocalyptic. It's not talking about the end of the world. It's not talking about literal mountains melting, and things like that.

Joel uses language of a similar sort. At the end of Joel, chapter 3 verse 18, although here it's talking about blessing instead of cursing, but notice the language. Joel 3, 18, and it will come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drip with new wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water, fountains shall flow from the house of the Lord, etc.

The idea of the mountains dripping with new wine and the hills flowing with milk is not literal, nor was it literal when Moses and Joshua referred to the land of Canaan as a land flowing with milk and honey. These are simply images of prosperity, and this idea of the valleys splitting and the mountains melting here in Micah is simply a reference to judgment coming upon them, and destruction. It's what we call apocalyptic imagery, and therefore should not be pressed for a literal fulfillment of actual mountain splitting and so forth.

He says in verse 6, therefore I'm going to make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field. Now Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom. Later on, chapter 3, verse 12, he said

he's going to do the same thing to Zion or Jerusalem, the capital of the southern kingdom.

Both capital cities are going to be devastated and ruined. Verse 8, therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked, I will make a wailing like jackals and a mourning like ostriches, for her wounds are incurable, for it has come to Judah, it has come to the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem. Now the wounds of Israel, the northern kingdom, are incurable.

They're not going to be redeemed. They're not going to be saved from this Assyrian threat. They're incurable.

And not only has Israel fallen, or is it inevitably going to fall to Assyria, but the Assyrians are even going to come down to Judah and to the gate of Jerusalem as well. And we know this happened. Sennacherib sent his troops under Rav Sheikah to Jerusalem.

He did conquer 46 Judean cities, but he didn't conquer Jerusalem. He ended up halted at the wall of Jerusalem and eventually driven back by the supernatural judgment of God when he smoked those cinders while they slept by an angel of the Lord. But that's what he's referring to in verse 9. Then we've already read verses 10 through 15, which goes through a list of those cities.

I would point out that tell it not in Gath in verse 10 is not only a play on words because Gath sounds like the word for tell. It's also a quote of David himself. In Samuel 1 in verse 20 when David heard about the death of Saul and Jonathan.

When it came to him that Saul and Jonathan had died in battle, David sang this lament for them. And in 2 Samuel 1, 19 and 20 says, The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places. How the mighty have fallen.

Tell it not in Gath. Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon. Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.

Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Gath and Ashkelon were Philistine cities and of course Saul had waged war against the Philistines all his life and now that he was dead, David didn't want the Philistine cities to be able to exult over the death of their enemies. Don't tell the people of Gath that this has happened.

Don't tell the people of Ashkelon. I don't want them exulting over the death of the beauty of Israel. A very gracious way for David to speak of someone who had been such an inveterate enemy of his.

But, tell it not in Gath is part of David's lament. Micah quotes it deliberately but as part of, you know, Gath was going to be conquered by the Assyrians too here, along with these Judean cities because Gath and Judea were near each other. Moreshep Gath, his

own hometown, was right next to Gath and belonged to Gath.

And so we've kind of dealt with those latter verses of chapter 1. They go through those cities and those plays on words there. Then in verse 2, I mean chapter 2, verses 1-5 are against the rulers of the northern kingdom. He says, And that day one shall take the proverb against you and lament with a bitter lamentation and say, We are utterly destroyed.

He has changed the heritage of his people. How he has removed it from me. To a turncoat or a traitor or apostate.

He has divided our fields. Therefore you will have no one to determine boundaries by lot in the congregation of the Lord. Now, this is against the rulers who are so conniving to exploit the helpless under them, that they lie awake at night in bed, devising their plans.

It says, And in the morning, as soon as the light comes, they run out to devise their plans. They're coveting other people's fields. Verse 2 says, They're taking them by violence, taking a man's inheritance.

This is no doubt an allusion back to what Ahab had done in the days of Jezebel and Ahab. Remember, he took Naboth's vineyard in this very way. Although Ahab was, of course, a king of Israel.

He was some generations before Micah's time. But it seems likely that Ahab's success in doing this set a precedent that caused other rulers after him to do the same thing whenever they wanted something just to grab it. In fact, not only that, but Ahab and Omri's sins had not only become a model to later kings of Israel, but even kings of Judah.

Because we read in Micah 6 and verse 16, and this in a prophecy against Jerusalem. Micah 6, 16 says, For the statues of Omri are kept, and the works of Ahab's house are done. That is in Jerusalem, which was, you know, Ahab and Omri were kings of the northern kingdom, not of the southern kingdom.

And yet the wickedness of these wicked kings was practiced not only by the successors of Ahab in the northern kingdom, but even the kings of Judah, or many of the princes and rulers of Judah, followed the same practices. Therefore God says he's angry and he's giving the heritage of the northern kingdom away to the Assyrians. Now, chapter 2, verse 6, he now turns to the false prophets and denounces them.

Do not prattle, you say, to those who prophesy, so they shall not prophesy to you. They shall not return insult for insult. You who are named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the Lord restricted? Are these his doings? Do not my words do good to him who walks uprightly? Lately my people have risen up as an enemy.

You pull off the robe with the garment from those who trust you as they pass by, like

men returned from war. The women of my people you have cast out from their peasant houses, from their children, you have taken away my glory forever. Arise and depart, for this is not your rest.

Because it is defiled, it shall destroy you, even with utter destruction. If a man should walk in a false spirit and speak a lie, saying, I will prophesy to you of wine and drink, even he would be the prattler of this people. What it's saying is, the people forbid true prophets to prophesy.

Now, there were true prophets in Israel at this time. Hosea was prophesying in Israel at this time. But there were also false prophets there.

And we know that Amos, sometime earlier than Hosea, not much earlier, just one generation earlier, had been forbidden by the priest at Bethel to prophesy, very much like this. The people of Israel did not want the true prophets to prophesy. They called true prophecy prattle, in verse 6. You're just prattling, you're just making noise.

And don't do it. Stop prophesying. But in verse 7, he says, is the spirit of the Lord restricted? In other words, can the person who's prophesying not prophesy if the spirit of the Lord is speaking to him? Can they restrict it? Can they stop it? Are not these his doings? Are not these words God's words? Not man's? How can we stop them from coming to pass? And furthermore, he says in verse 7, do not my words do good to him who walks uprightly? Why wouldn't you want to hear my words? My words are good for good people.

Are you a bad person? Why should you forbid God's words to be spoken when his words are good for the people who walk uprightly? Are you not upright? Is what he's implying. And yet he says in verse 11, if a man should speak in a false spirit, that is a false prophet, and speak a lie, speaking out of wine and drink, either meaning that he's prophesying while drunk, or else he's prophesying that the people will prosper and have much wine and drink. It could mean either way.

Then these people will let him be their prattler, or their prophet. But Micah refers to that kind of prophecy as genuine prattle. Now, in reference to verse 8 and 9, especially verse 9, when it says, the women of my people you have cast out from their pleasant houses, from their children you have taken away my glory forever.

What this means is that the people who have not listened to the prophets of God, and who have listened to false prophets instead, have brought upon themselves the calamity of the Israelites being taken from their houses and going into captivity, and the glory of the nation of Israel being taken away by the Assyrians. This prophecy ends in verses 12 and 13 by reference to the Messiah. I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnants of Israel.

I will put them together like the sheep of the fold, like a flock in the midst of the pasture. They shall make a loud noise because of so many men. The one who breaks open will come before them, and they shall break out, pass through the gate, and go out by it.

Their king will pass before them with the Lord at their head. Their king here is the Messiah. And there are two images here.

In verse 12, the image is that of a flock or a fold of sheep. And in verse 13, more like a jailbreak, like an exodus, breaking away, escaping from prison or from bondage. And so in verse 13 it talks about one will come who will help you break out.

The one will come who will accomplish your liberation. He is king who will go before you, and you will follow him out. That is a shift of metaphors from verse 12 which is talking about a shepherd and a flock and so forth.

Now, notice in verse 12 it says, I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob. Someone could understand that to mean all the Jews. However, the very next line says, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel.

The remnant of Israel and all of Jacob. Seems strange because remnant and all are contrary terms. But of course, all of the spiritual Israel is gathered by gathering in the Jews, the remnant of Jews and the rest of the Gentiles that are coming into the church.

And in that way he says in verse 12, I will put them together like sheep of the fold. Jesus said in John chapter 10 verse 16 that he had other sheep that the Jewish disciples didn't know about namely Gentile sheep. He is going to go and bring them and they are going to be one fold and one shepherd.

And that is talking about the same thing here apparently. And he says, like the flock in the midst of the pasture, verse 12, they shall make a loud noise because of so many men. Now, Isaiah on a number of occasions spoke about the great number of people that would be brought in from the nations into God's flock.

And that apparently is what is being referred to here. Okay, chapter 3 begins the second oracle. This against Judah.

And as in the first one, he first decries the leaders and then the false prophets. Verses 1 through 4 are against the rulers of Judah. Hear now heads of Jacob and you rulers of the house of Israel.

Is it not for you to know justice? You who hate good and love evil, who strip the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones, who also eat the flesh of my people, flay their skin from them, break their bones and chop them in pieces like meat in the pot, like flesh in the cauldron. Then they will cry to the Lord, but he will not hear them. He will even hide his face from them at that time because they have been evil in their deeds.

Now this reference them, you know, stripping the people, skinning them, chopping them up, putting them in the pot. This was not literally happening. That's what they did to sacrifices in the temple.

They skin them, they chop them up, they boil them, some of the meat. He's referring here to the abuse that an animal was typically to suffer in being sacrificed. The leaders of Israel are sacrificing people, not literally, but they're abusing the people of Judah, exploiting them and oppressing them comparable to the way that they sacrifice animals.

And he uses words somewhat more graphic than are literal. And then against the prophets in verse 5, thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who make my people strays, who chant peace while they chew with their teeth, but who prepare war against him who puts nothing in their mouths. That is mercenary prophets.

If you put food in their mouth, they'll proclaim peace to you, but they'll proclaim war against you if you don't put anything in their mouth. Therefore you shall have night without vision. A prophet without vision isn't much of a prophet.

And you shall have darkness without divination. These false prophets didn't hear from God, they used divination. Which is occultic, of course.

But basically he's saying I won't allow you to get any more visions or divination. You'll have darkness, no light. You won't see anything.

You'll have nothing to offer to people who are putting food in your mouth and they'll probably stop paying you. So the seers shall be ashamed and the diviners abashed. Indeed they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer from God.

Now in contrast to the false prophets, Micah describes himself a true prophet in Judah. But truly I am full of the Spirit of the Lord and of justice and might to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin. Now hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity, who build up Zion with bloodshed.

That is, they, I'm not sure exactly how they build it up with bloodshed, but they basically through oppression and even murder apparently gain money for their projects. And Jerusalem with iniquity, her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord and say, is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us.

This is what they said in Jeremiah's day too. The temple of the Lord is here. How can the Babylonians destroy us? That's what they were saying apparently about the Assyrian threat in Micah's day.

Well, the Lord's among us. How can any harm come on us? Even though they're doing

things that are abominable to God. Therefore, because of you, Zion shall be plowed like a field.

Jerusalem shall be heaps of ruins, and the mountains of the temple like the bare hills of the forest. Now, this could be figurative in the sense that the eventually, long after Micah's day, the Babylonians did destroy Jerusalem, though they didn't literally plow it like a field. There was a time later, after the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, that the Roman general Rufus excuse me, Terentius Rufus was his name.

Terentius Rufus, the Roman general who actually did, after he destroyed the temple, tore up the foundation with a plow. He actually used a plow to pull up the foundation stones of the temple and Zion was literally plowed like a field. So it could be a literal thing, referring that far off into the future, or it could be just figuratively that Zion was going to be devastated, which the Babylonians also did, though they didn't literally plow it.

Now, having said all these bad things, Micah turns again to close this oracle as he did the first, with the reference to the Messianic age, this time a much longer one, two chapters in length. Now, it shall come to pass in the latter days, chapter 4, verse 1 says, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills, and the people shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob.

He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Now, as I told you before, this is a passage that some people would understand to be a reference to the Millennial Kingdom of the Messiah through His Second Coming.

I am inclined to believe it's about the Church. There are spiritual aspects to it. The mountain of that Lord's house is the Church, the spiritual Zion, the spiritual Lord's house, which in the New Testament, the Church is the house of God.

Gentiles from all nations flowing in has to do with the influx of Gentiles into the Church, which has been going on for 2,000 years now. The turning of their weapons of war into implements of farming suggests that those that were hostile and inclined to make war with each other in the past, now by being reconciled to one another in Christ, no longer are hostile, no longer have needed weapons to fight each other. Instead, they are involved in cultivating the seed of the kingdom and so forth.

One thing in Micah's passage that's somewhat different than Isaiah's passage that is like it, is that in verse 4 he says, But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree. Isaiah doesn't have this part. And no one will make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken, for all people walk each in the name of his God, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever.

Now, referring to each person walking in the name of his God, small g, suggests that the passage is referring to a time when there will still be pagans. There will still be people who are not serving Jehovah. God's people, those who flow into his holy mountain, those that participate in the Messianic kingdom, those who come into the Church, they will walk in the name of Jehovah, but other people will still be around walking in the name of their other gods, which is true in the Church age, but would not be presumably true during the millennium after Jesus comes back.

We would not find people walking in the name of other gods than Jehovah. We would assume that Jesus is ruling the whole earth in the millennial reign. So I feel like this adds weight to the suggestion that we're looking here, not about a future millennium, but the Church.

Verse 6, In that day, says the Lord, I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcasts and those whom I have afflicted. I will make the lame a remnant and the outcasts a strong nation, so the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion. I take this to be spiritual Zion, the Church.

From now on, even forever. Notice it's not a thousand year reign. It's a forever reign.

And you owe tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion. To you, it shall come. Even the former dominion shall come.

The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem. That is the authority of the Davidic kingdom will be restored in Jesus, who is of David's seed and who has authority over heaven and earth now. Now, why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in your midst? Has your counselor perished? For the pangs have ceased to me, have seized you like a woman in labor, be in pain and bring and labor to bring forth a daughter of Zion like a woman in birth pangs.

For now you should go forth from the city and shall dwell in the field. He says, and you shall even go to Babylon. This is prophesied about a hundred and something years before they went into Babylon.

Micah at the time he prophesied this Babylon was not even a threat. Babylon was just another small nation that was under a serious hook at this time. So there'd be no way in the natural that Babylon's rise to power and conquering the region and taking the Jews into captivity.

None of it could have been anticipated in the natural in the days of Micah. And yet he foresaw it as Isaiah also did that the Jews are going to Babylon and there you should be delivered there. The Lord will redeem you from the hand of your enemies.

As in Isaiah, the redemption of the Jews from Babylon here also is as a type, I think of the messianic age. And we'll see that, of course, clearly in chapter five, especially verse 11. Now, as many nations have gathered against you who say let her be defiled and let her eye look upon Zion, but they do not know the thoughts of the Lord, nor do they understand his counsel for he will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor arise and thresh your daughter of Zion, for I will make your horn iron and make your hooves bronze and you shall beat in pieces many peoples.

I will consecrate their gain to the Lord and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth. Now, likening God's people to an ox that tread out the grain on the threshing floor with horns of iron and hooves of bronze means sort of an invincible animal. The threshing ox with the horns and hooves of metal, you know, it's like who could resist horns of iron and hooves of bronze.

In fact, Jesus himself, when he was seen in Revelation chapter one, had feet like bronze, suggesting also that he was going to judge and trample and none could break. He would break everything. Bronze is a pretty strong metal.

The idea here is that there are nations that come against God's people, but all opposition to his people will serve only to be a destruction to the wicked and sort out the wheat from the chaff among them. This threshing is a reference to sorting out the wheat from the chaff, and that is, I think, what goes on as the church preaches the gospel. Among the heathen, among the enemies of God, some of them turn out to be wheat.

They get converted. Others turn out to be chaff, and they simply end up getting trampled in the longer scheme of things. Chapter five.

Now gather yourselves in troops, O daughter of troops. He has laid siege against us. They will strike the judge of Israel with the rod of the cheek.

Now, this probably refers to the judge of Israel will be struck on the rod of the cheek. It's probably really a reference to the fall of the kingdom, the Babylonian captivity, followed by in verse two, the birth of the Messiah. Although it's possible that verse one striking the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek could be a reference to Jesus being stricken.

Thus, Isaiah 50 speaks of Jesus as not turning his cheek from those that would pluck out the hair, and not turning his face from shame and spitting and so forth. And we know Jesus was struck. But I suspect that verse one is a reference to the destruction of the Davidic dynasty with the Babylonian exile, and only restored in verse two with the birth of the Messiah from Bethlehem, the same town that David originated from.

But you Bethlehem, Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, not a very significant city in the land of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Now, this verse tells us that in terms of human origins, Messiah will originate from Bethlehem, but his origins are really from beyond that. He doesn't really originate from Bethlehem.

His goings forth have been from of old, even from everlasting. He is the eternal God. He just happens to have a beginning to his earthly career as a human being at Bethlehem, as David his type did.

Therefore he shall give them up, that is the Jews, until that time that she who is in labor has given birth. Then the remnant of his brethren shall return to the children of Israel, and he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, and the majesty of the name of the Lord is God. And they shall abide, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth, and this one shall be peace.

Paul said in Ephesians 2.14 that he himself is our peace, who has made the two one, and broken down the wall of division that was between us, the Jews and Gentiles. He is our peace, Ephesians 2.14 says. And this speaks of Jesus and says, this one shall be peace.

When the Assyrian comes into our land, and when he treads in our palaces, then we shall raise against him seven shepherds and eight princely men. Seven and eight is a typical Hebraism to mean an indefinite number, but resistance. When the enemy comes in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against us, said Isaiah, and this is a similar thought here.

They shall waste with the sword the land of Assyria and the land of Nimrod at its entrances, and he will deliver us from the Assyrian. When he comes, that is when the Assyrian comes to our land, and when he treads within our borders. Now actually God did deliver Jerusalem from the Assyrian when they came in, but this probably is not referring to that because it wasn't through seven shepherds and princely men, but it was through an angel of the Lord that he delivered them, and therefore this is probably to be spiritualized with reference to the church.

Then the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples, like dew from the Lord, like showers on the grass that tarry for no man, nor wait for the sons of men. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, when he passes through, both treads down and tears in pieces, and none can deliver. Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries, and your enemies shall be cut off.

Now the remnant here I take to be the church, of course, and in verse 7 the church is likened to dew, and in verse 8 it is likened to a lion among the beasts of the forest. Both of these talk about what the remnant of Jacob is like in the midst of many nations, in the

midst of many peoples. What the church is like in the world.

First it's like dew from heaven. It's a kingdom from heaven. The church originates from heaven, and it refreshes.

It's like the dew comes down and waters the ground, and it's good for the earth. The church's presence here is like God's kingdom has come from heaven and is here on earth. Like leaven in a lump and so forth.

It's having a positive influence on the earth. But it is not answerable to man. It carries for no man.

It waits not for the sons of men, like the dew. You can't control the dew. You can't keep it around if it's going to evaporate.

It's under God's control, not yours. The church is not answerable to man. It is not under human control.

It is a work of God. It comes down from heaven, like dew. But it refreshes the earth, and it's good for the earth.

But it's also like a lion in the midst of the nations. That is, it's a force to be reckoned with. The church isn't just a blessing.

It's also got an agenda. It's also coming as a warrior to make war against the powers of darkness and to challenge the authority of the pagan nations and to bring them under the authority of Christ. This is, therefore, a church victorious and a force to be reckoned with, like a lion in the midst of sheep.

Now, Jesus said he was sending his disciples out like sheep in the midst of wolves, in one sense. Physically speaking, individual Christians are in a hostile world where they can suffer harm. But, taken in a larger vision of things, the church is more like a lion in the midst of sheep because it's conquering the world.

The kingdom of God is destined to fill the whole earth, as Daniel and Jesus himself said. And that's what I think it's talking about there. In verse 10, and it shall be in that day, says the Lord, that I'll cut off horses from your midst and destroy your chariots, just as the swords will be turned into plowshares and the spears into pruning hooks, so that chariots and horses will have no need in the kingdom of God.

I will cut off the cities of your land and throw down all your strongholds. I will cut off sorceries from your hand. In other words, there will be reformation and holiness.

All the sins and occultism and idolatry will be gone. You shall have soothsayers, your carved images I will cut off, and your sacred pillars from your midst. You shall no more worship the work of your hands.

I will pluck your wooden images from your midst, and thus I will destroy your cities. And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury on the nations that have not heard, that is, the ones that have not listened to the gospel. He brings the gospel to the nations and the godly will throw away their idols and throw away their sorceries and so forth and will reform and come into the church, but those nations that do not, he'll execute vengeance in anger and fury upon starting with Jerusalem, but also the pagan nations that have the same rebellion against gospel will experience his wrath eventually.

Now very quickly the final, the final prophecy is in chapters 6 and 7. Hear now what the Lord says. Arise, plead your case before the mountains and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, O you mountains, the Lord's complaint.

And you strong foundations of the earth, for the Lord has a complaint against his people, and he will contend with Israel. So the mountains and the hills are called to be witnesses of this complaint that God's going to bring us in a court of law against his people. Now he speaks to the people and tells them what he has against them.

O my people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Testify against me, for I brought you up from the land of Egypt. I redeemed you from the house of bondage. I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam.

O my people, remember what Balak, the king of Moab, counseled, and what Balaam, the son of Beor, answered him, from Acacia Grove to Gilgal, that you may know the righteousness of the Lord. And remember how I delivered you, I gave you good leaders, I confounded the counsel against you that Balaam gave. In other words, I've done a lot for you.

I'm into you for quite a bit. Why haven't you been obedient to me? Why haven't you been loyal to me? Now in verse 6 and 7, it seems to me like Mike is representing the people's reaction to this charge. And the people, they act sort of snidely, like, well, you know, what do you want, God? You want us to sacrifice our kids or what? You know, I mean, they're kind of being, it seems almost sarcastic or defiant, like, you know, God, you're asking you know, you're asking a lot.

Why aren't you satisfied with the way we are? He says, With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? Now this is being a little extreme. And basically what they're saying, well, you know, how do you please God? God's kind of hard to please, apparently. What do you want from me? A thousand rams? Thousands of rivers of oil? Want me to sacrifice my own firstborn son? Will that please God? Suggesting that God's not really reasonable.

And that his demands are a bit extreme, a bit unreasonable, and who could be expected to meet them? But the answer that is given, probably by the prophet to the people's question is in verse 8. He is shown to a man what is good and what does the Lord require of you? But to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. Now, he's basically saying God's just looking for common decency. He wants you to do the right thing to be just in your dealings, to be merciful to people, to be humble before God and to walk with him.

These are the simple things. Now, this is a great preaching verse. I just don't have any time to preach right now.

I've got to move along. But what he's saying here is that God's demands are not unreasonable at all. He just wants you to be decent.

He just wants you to be just and merciful and humble. That's just being, you know, a reasonably good person. He's not so concerned about the multitude of rams that you offer and rivers of oil and so forth.

It's not expensive to please God. All you have to be is a person of justice and mercy and humility. And for us fallen and proud beings, that might be a steep order, but it is still extremely reasonable for God to request it.

And that's all that God requests. Now, he enumerates some of the sins of the people that are part of his complaint against them. Begin at verse 9. The Lord's voice cries to the city, Wisdom shall see your name.

Hear the rod. They've been smitten by the rod. Why don't they get the message? Hear what the rod is saying to them.

Who has appointed it? Namely, God has. And there, are there yet treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked? That is, there's unjust gain that is still not returned to the victims from whom it was taken. And the short measure that is an abomination, shall I count those pure who, with the wicked balances and with the bag of deceitful weights, this is dishonest business practices.

We know that reference to false balances in the Proverbs and so forth has to do with corruption in the marketplace. For her rich men are full of violence. Her inhabitants have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

So, violence and deceit, these are some of the things God has against them. Therefore, I will make you sick by striking you, by making you desolate because of your sins. You shall eat, but not be satisfied.

Hunger shall be in your midst. You may carry some away, but shall not save them. And what you do rescue, I will give over to the sword.

So, they'll have shortages of food and so forth. You shall sow, but not reap. You shall tread the olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil, and make sweet wine, but not drink wine.

Possibly because they'd be besieged by the Syrians, and the Syrians would eat their crops as they were trapped inside the city. The croplands being outside the city walls. For the statutes of Omri are kept, and the works of Ahab's house are done.

And you walk in their councils, that I may make you a desolation, and your inhabitants a hissing, before you bear the reproach. Therefore, you bear the reproach of my people. Chapter 7. Woe is me, for I am like those who gather summer fruits, like those who glean vintage grapes.

There is no cluster to eat of the first ripe fruit which my soul desires. The faithful man has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among men. They all lie and wait for blood.

Every man hunts his brother with a net. God's looking for good men like fruit in a vineyard, but he finds none. That they may successfully do evil with both hands.

The prince asks for gifts, the judge seeks a bride, and the great man utters his evil desire. So they scheme together. The best of them is like a briar.

The most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge. The day of your watchmen and your punishment comes. Now shall be their perplexity.

Then he talks about how unreliable everybody is, including friends and family. Do not trust in a friend. Do not put your confidence in a companion.

Guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your bosom, your wife. For she dishonors father. Daughter rises against her mother.

Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies are the men of his own house. Therefore, I will look to the Lord.

I will wait for God of my salvation. My God will hear me, says Micah, speaking as a representative, I think, of the remnant, the righteous remnant in general, who are also speaking in verse eight. The righteous remnant do not rejoice over me, my enemy.

When I fall, I will rise. When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be light to me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him until he pleads my case and executes justice for me, which of course ultimately was done at the cross.

He will bring me forth to the light and I will see his righteousness. Then she who is my enemy will see and she will cover her face and say to me, where is the Lord your God? My eyes will see her. Now she will be trampled down like my own in the streets.

Now why is the enemy here a she? Probably because Jerusalem, unsaved Jerusalem, the Jews who rejected the Messiah is the virgin daughter of Zion. It is the city of Jerusalem is probably the she and it's probably a reference here to the destruction of Jerusalem as we commonly have in the prophets after talking about the Messianic blessings. Then there's the destruction of the rejecting Jews in 70 AD and she who is my enemy, certainly the Jewish city Jerusalem is the first enemy of the church crucifying Jesus and killing many of the apostles and so forth.

Verse 11 In the day when your walls are to be built, this is the walls of the spiritual Zion, in the day with decree, in that day the decree shall go far and wide in that day they shall come to you from Assyria and the fortified cities from the fortress of the river and from sea to sea and mountain to mountain. This just means from the whole world people will come into the church. Yet the land of Israel will be desolate because those who dwell in it and the fruit of their deeds which is of course the case.

Most of the church ages and no people, no civilization there. Shepherd your people with your staff. This is a prayer for God to send the Messiah, the shepherd the flock of your heritage who dwell solitarily in a woodland in the midst of Carmel.

Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in days of old. As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them marvelous things. The nation shall see and be ashamed of all their might.

They shall put their hand over their mouth and their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent. They shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth.

They shall be afraid of the Lord God and fear because of you. Who is a God like you? Pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of his heritage. He does not retain his anger forever, but he delights in mercy.

He will again have compassion on us and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob and mercy to Abraham, which was sworn to our fathers from days of old.

This fulfillment of the mercies of promise to Abraham is in Christ in the church. According to Galatians 3:16, these promises to Abraham and to his seed are fulfilled in Christ and those who are in Christ. So we're talking about the church here.

The nations will be ashamed. The nations will be terrified when they see God's vindication of his people and all the enemies of the church will be ashamed and on their bellies like snakes of the earth and terrified because of the fear of God at the day of his judgment. That brings us to the end of the book, to the end of the tape.