

**Micah's Warning to the Divided Kingdom**  
**Micah 3:1 – 5:5a**  
**Lesson 2**

**The Warning to Prepare for Calamity**

Micah 3:1-4

**Micah 3:**<sup>1</sup> And I said, "Hear now, heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel. Is it not for you to know justice?"<sup>2</sup> "You who hate good and love evil, who tear off their skin from them and their flesh from their bones,<sup>3</sup> who eat the flesh of my people, strip off their skin from them, break their bones and chop *them* up as for the pot and as meat in a kettle."<sup>4</sup> Then they will cry out to the LORD, but He will not answer them. Instead, He will hide His face from them at that time because they have practiced evil deeds.

Neither Jewish kingdom heeded this warning from the prophet which showed the cruelty of the coming Assyrian Empire. Yes, the Assyrians removed the flesh from the bones of the Israelites, chopped it up and cooked it in kettles to strike fear in the hearts of the people and demand servitude. The Jews did cry out to God at that time but He did not answer. If they had cried out when Micah foretold the coming calamity, the Lord would have answered, but the time for repentance had passed for the Lord and 120,000 Jewish men and women died in the onslaught.

**The Warning to False Prophets**

Micah 3:5-7

**Micah 3:**<sup>5</sup> Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who lead my people astray; when they have *something* to bite with their teeth, they cry, "Peace," but against him who puts nothing in their mouths they declare holy war.<sup>6</sup> Therefore *it will be* night for you—without vision, and darkness for you—without divination. The sun will go down on the prophets, and the day will become dark over them.<sup>7</sup> The seers will be ashamed and the diviners will be embarrassed. Indeed, they will all cover *their* mouths because there is no answer from God.

The great tragedy of the destruction of the Northern Empire fell on the shoulders of the false Jewish prophets who made up lies and the seers dreamed up false images, but none of them came from God.

**Micah's Power**

Micah 3:8-12

**Micah 3:**<sup>8</sup> On the other hand I am filled with power— With the Spirit of the LORD— and with justice and courage to make known to Jacob his rebellious act, even to Israel his sin.<sup>9</sup> Now hear this, heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and twist everything that is straight,<sup>10</sup> who build Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with violent injustice.<sup>11</sup> Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe, her priests instruct for a price and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD saying, "Is not the LORD in our midst? Calamity will not come upon us."<sup>12</sup> Therefore, on account of you Zion will be plowed as a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the temple *will become* high places of a forest.

Micah had nothing to worry about; his prophecies came through his teacher, the Holy Spirit. The leaders of both kingdoms exuded corruption in the sight of the Lord. They did nothing for the sake of the Lord. Money lies at the root of every religion's words and actions. Although they claimed His presence in their midst, the prophets and priests had no relationship with God and He did not respond to them. Jerusalem, the Lord's great city for His people, and Zion, the great throne of Israel's kings, could not survive the coming wrath of the Lord at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians. Notice the change of the prophecy from Judah and Israel, the two kingdoms, to Jacob and Israel, who represent the same person. Jacob the deceiver became Israel, God's chosen head of His chosen nation. What does that mean? Micah's message covers all of Israel without respect to the differences found in the Divided Kingdom.

### **In the Last Days**

Micah 4:1-5

**Micah 4:**<sup>1</sup> And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it. <sup>2</sup> Many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war. <sup>4</sup> Each of them will sit under his vine and under his fig tree, with no one to make *them* afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. <sup>5</sup> Though all the peoples walk each in the name of his god, as for us, we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.

Micah's prophecy transcends the coming tragedy to remind the Jews of God's ultimate plan and promise. One day in the future, Jerusalem and Zion will belong again to Israel and true peace will prevail, not the false peace proclaimed by the false prophets and seers of Micah's day. Then, and only then, will all the weapons of warfare find their ways into the melting pots to become farming tools to provide food for the nation. From that time on, the Lord will truly be in their midst forever and ever.

### **In that Day**

Micah 4:6-8

**Micah 4:**<sup>6</sup> "In that day," declares the LORD, "I will assemble the lame and gather the outcasts, even those whom I have afflicted. <sup>7</sup> "I will make the lame a remnant and the outcasts a strong nation, and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on and forever. <sup>8</sup> "As for you, tower of the flock, hill of the daughter of Zion, to you it will come— even the former dominion will come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.

Micah's prophecy speaks of the coming day of the Lord when He will take charge over the city of Jerusalem and Mount Zion forever as His city and His throne. When the Lord arrives, the greatness of Zion will overshadow all its former glory. Micah speaks of Jerusalem and Zion as daughters in this passage. Why? His next words return to the warning of the coming calamity, specifically the calamity to the Southern Kingdom and the word daughter gives imagery to the next warning.

## Off to Babylon and Exile

Micah 4:9-13

**Micah 4:**<sup>9</sup> "Now, why do you cry out loudly? Is there no king among you, or has your counselor perished, that agony has gripped you like a woman in childbirth?"<sup>10</sup> "Writhe and labor to give birth, daughter of Zion, like a woman in childbirth; for now you will go out of the city, dwell in the field, and go to Babylon. There you will be rescued; there the LORD will redeem you from the hand of your enemies."<sup>11</sup> "And now many nations have been assembled against you who say, 'Let her be polluted, and let our eyes gloat over Zion.'<sup>12</sup> "But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, and they do not understand His purpose; for He has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor."<sup>13</sup> "Arise and thresh, daughter of Zion, for your horn I will make iron and your hoofs I will make bronze, that you may pulverize many peoples, that you may devote to the LORD their unjust gain and their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

Nothing could stop the coming destruction of the Southern Kingdom and Micah used the idea of a daughter's (or woman's) fear of childbirth in those days. In Micah's prophecy, the Southern Kingdom must be birthed into Babylon from where the Lord will rescue her, bringing her back to the Promised Land in renewed strength. Its great promise brought no comfort to the Jews; they ignored the message of Micah.

## The Ruler from Bethlehem

Micah 5:1 -5<sup>a</sup>

**Micah 5:**<sup>1</sup> "Now muster yourselves in troops, daughter of troops; they have laid siege against us; with a rod they will smite the judge of Israel on the cheek."<sup>2</sup> "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."<sup>3</sup> Therefore He will give them *up* until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child. Then the remainder of His brethren will return to the sons of Israel."<sup>4</sup> And He will arise and shepherd *His flock* in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they will remain, because at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth.<sup>5a</sup> This One will be *our* peace.

Jerusalem's king of the Southern Kingdom must muster his troops for the coming siege. History tells that the Southern Kingdom survived but the Northern Kingdom of Israel did not. Its king, struck on the cheek, disappeared from sight. Hoshea, the last king of the Northern Kingdom submitted to the Assyrian king, Shalmaneser, but failed to pay the tax as agreed. When Sargon ascended to the Assyrian throne he besieged Samaria because of the loss of revenue and carried the northern 10 tribes away into exile in 722 BC. Hoshea disappeared, most likely killed in the siege.<sup>4</sup>

But in the Southern Kingdom, the smallest of the towns will survive by the name of Bethlehem Ephrathah. Bethlehem means the house of bread and Ephrathah means fruitful. Although it sits just five miles from Jerusalem, it is too small to be considered a clan of Judah. A clan consisted of 1,000 families but Bethlehem did not have that many people claiming her as a home town. Nevertheless, One, the Ancient of Days, will claim her and she will be fruitful when He, the true Bread, goes forth from her as a child to become the Great Shepherd King to the ends of the earth.

---

<sup>4</sup> 2Ki 17:5, 6; 2Ki 18:9-12; Hosea 10:7; Hosea 13:11