

MICAH

Where's the Watchtower?

The word of our God stands for ever Isaiah 40:8

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. Therefore He will give them up until the time when she who is in labor has born a child ...

Micah 5:2,3

Study 6a: Why is the *KINGDOM* downplayed?

1. Neither Amos nor Hosea mention the KINGDOM of GOD, but Micah does -- in fact the ONLY time in the minor prophets the future kingdom is mentioned (even in the NWT!)

2. This 'prophet of the common man' may have been a shepherd; his name means 'Who is like Jah?' (= Michael)

3. Analyzing the KINGDOM passage (4:1- 5:15; cf Isaiah 2, esp.vv.1-4):

a. What NATION and CITY are connected to the KINGDOM? (4:5-7) [see 1973 Yearbook, p.260]

Zion will eventually be exalted from the deepest degradation to the highest glory ... The first section (vv.1-7) depicts the glorification of the temple mountain by the streaming of the nations to it to hear the law of the Lord, and the blessing which Israel and the nations will derive therefrom ... With the cessation of war, universal peace will ensue ... All this, however incredible it might appear, not only for the Israel of that time, but even now under the Christian dispensation, will assuredly take place, for the mouth of Jehovah the true God has spoken it. C.F. Keil Minor Prophets Vol.1 pp.455, 458

b. What 4 things are prophesied of that nation? (4:5-8)

[v.6] The LORD will also gather in the banished, the dispersed, and the oppressed of His people just as a shepherd gathers in the limping, the straying, and the castaway sheep. He will make the dispersed of Israel into a strong nation and HE HIMSELF WILL RULE OVER THEM on Mount Zion "from henceforth, even for ever" ... But they will also have a king, the King-Messiah: "Their king shall pass on before them, with the LORD at their head" Joseph Klausner The Messianic Idea in Israel p.74

[v.7] [melekh, king] is emphatic, expressing the setting up of the perfected monarchy, as it has never yet existed ... This dominion will never be interrupted again, as it formerly was, by the banishment of the nation into exile ... C.F. Keil op.cit., p.460

c. What further is prophesied? (4:11-13)

Judah is delivered from Babylon, but without a restoration of the kingdom (4:10, cf. 5:1). But a second catastrophe comes upon Judah, inasmuch as many heathens gather themselves against Jerusalem, with the intention of desecrating it, but yet in such a manner that, by the assistance of the Lord, it comes forth victoriously from this severe attack ... Then follows a third catastrophe, in which Judah becomes anew, and totally, subject to the world's power (5:1) E.W. Hengstenberg The Christology of the Old Testament Vol.1 p.309

d. What purpose does this action serve? (4:12)

The heathen did, for their own ends, what God willed for His. The first step was the same; God willed that His people should be punished; they willed to punish them. But all which lay beyond, they saw not: that God willed (on their repentance) to pardon His own people, but to punish themselves for their pride and cruelty. [Isa. 10:7, 12; Zech. 1:15, 19] Edward Bouverie Pusey The Minor Prophets: Micah p.187

e. But with what else is this attack upon Israel historically tangled? (5:1-4)

From the deepest abasement, however, the Congregation of the Lord rises to the highest glory, inasmuch as the dominion returns to the old Davidic race (4:8). From the little Bethlehem ... a new and glorious Ruler proceeds, born, and at the same time eternal, and clothed with the fulness of the glory of the Lord ... E.W. Hengstenberg The Christology of the Old Testament Vol.1 p.309

f. When only will Christ's universal reign begin? (5:5-15)

Only when the people of God shall have gained the supremacy over all their enemies, will the time have arrived for all the instruments of war to be destroyed. C.F. Keil The Minor Prophets Vol.1 p.490



E.W. Hengstenberg
(1802-69)

No one in the 19th century did more to counteract the excesses of rationalist German criticism, nor to minimize its corrosive effects on the Christian church

Study 6b: Connecting *KINGDOM* with *WATCHTOWER*

4. What is the significance of the Watchtower for Micah? [Notice the SHEPHERD motif (5:4, 4:8)]

The shepherd motif is skillfully woven into the thought of Jerusalem as the seat of royalty by referring to it as a watchtower overlooking the fold in which the sheep were gathered, from which the shepherd could look out upon the surrounding countryside for wild animals and sheepstealers. Leslie C. Allen New International Commentary: The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah p.331

And the tower of the king's castle was so far specially adapted to represent the sovereignty of David ... This tower, which is most likely the one called *bachan* (the watch-tower) in Isaiah [32:14], is called by Micah the flock-tower, probably as a play upon the flock-tower by which the patriarch Jacob once pitched his tent, because David, the ancestor of the divinely-chosen royal house, had been called from being the shepherd of a flock to be the shepherd of the nation of Israel, the flock of Jehovah (Jer. 13:17; cf. 2 Sam. 7:8; Ps. 78:70). This epithet was a very natural one for the prophet to employ, as he not only describes the Messiah as a shepherd in 5:3, but also represents Israel as the sheep of Jehovah's inheritance in 7:14, and the flock-tower is the place where the shepherd takes up his position to see whether any danger threatens his flock. C.F. Keil The Minor Prophets Vol. I p.463

5. In their time of waiting, what will be the attitude of Israel? (7:7-20)

6. Note again NAME MICAH (v.18). Stresses mercy, grace. Where does this theme return? (Rev. 12)

Like the first redemption of Israel out of Egypt, the second or still more glorious redemption of the people of God furnishes an occasion for praising the incomparable nature of the Lord. But whereas in the former Jehovah merely revealed Himself in His incomparable exaltation above all gods, in the restoration of the nation which had been cast out among the heathen because of its sins, and its exaltation among the nations, He now reveals His incomparable nature in grace and compassion. Keil op.cit., p.514

7. In Micah's mind GOD'S UNCHANGING LOVE is inseparable from which promises? (7:18-20)

As One who delighteth in mercy, He will have compassion upon Israel again will tread down its sins, i.e. conquer their power and tyranny by His compassion, and cast them into the depths of the sea, as He once conquered the tyrant Pharaoh and drowned him in the depths of the sea ... The New Testament parallel, as Hengstenberg has correctly observed, is Romans xi. 33-36... C.F. Keil op.cit p.515

Jehovah – Shepherd of Israel

God's individual care of His people, and of each soul in it, had, since David's time [Ps. 23], and even since Jacob [Gen. 49:24], been likened to the care of the shepherd for each single sheep. The Psalms of Asaph [74:1; 78:52; 79:13; 80:1] must have familiarised the people to the image, as relating to themselves as a whole, and David's deep Psalm had united it with God's tender care of His own in, and over, death. Yet the predominance of this image in Micah is a part of the tenderness of the Prophet. He adopts it, as expressing more than any other natural image, the helplessness of the creature, the tender individual care of the Creator. He forestalls our Lord's words, I am the good Shepherd, in his description of the Messiah, gathering the remnant of Israel together, as the sheep of Bozrah [2:12]; His people are as a flock, lame and despised [4:6], whom God would assemble; HIS ROYAL SEAT, THE TOWER OF THE FLOCK [4:8, emphasis added]; the Ruler of Israel should stand, unresting, and feed them [5:4] ... He sums up his prayer for his people to God, as their Shepherd; Feed Thy people with Thy rod, the flock of Thine heritage [7:14]. Edward B. Pusey The Minor Prophets Vol. 4 pp. 33-34