



Micah

Prince of Peace to be Born in Bethlehem

The Messianic pictures in Micah are extraordinarily arresting. The Messiah is to be born in Bethlehem and universal peace will come when men of all nations learn at His feet.

Flashes of righteous anger, vivid images, beautiful promises, follow one another in rapid succession in this prophecy.

The sins of the people are put before us in blunt frankness and it is on this backdrop that the prophet believed that the people would come and sit at the feet of the Messiah. Micah reminds us that God is never in a hurry and He is sovereign in people's lives. He causes all things to work for His honor and glory.

The divine conqueror came as a lowly babe from remote Bethlehem to bring salvation to a lost world. It was not Jerusalem or Rome, but a small insignificant village and peasants that God came to fulfill His eternal purpose. The wise men went to Jerusalem seeking the newly born King of the Jews. They were sent to Bethlehem by the seven hundred year old prophecy from Micah. To that little village came the most significant event in Israel's history. Universal peace will come when the people of earth sit at the Messiah's feet and He arbitrates their international disputes.

THE BREAKER

If we aren't careful we will miss the first word of promise to the remnant. God will send His breaker to open a way for His redeemed (2:12-13). God will assemble the lost sheep and gather His remnant.

I'll surely assemble all of you, Jacob,
I will surely gather the remnant of Israel.
I will put them together like sheep in the fold;
Like a flock in the midst of its pasture
They will be noisy with men.
The breaker goes up before them;
They break out, pass through the gate and go out by it.
So their king goes on before them,
And the Lord at their head. ”
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The figure is that of the children of God being shut up in a prison and they will be delivered by the mighty hand of Yahweh.

In the highest sense Christ opens the prison doors and redeems the captives of Zion. He breaks through the prison walls and leads His people out the gate to freedom. No human power can stop Him. Yahweh is at their head. "The breaker" breaks through, goes up before them, passes through the gate and goes out. The One leading them is King Yahweh. Just as the angel of the Lord went before the people in the wilderness, so the Messiah will lead the procession in the future redemption of the people of God.

Keil says, "The future of this prophecy commenced with the gathering together of Israel to its God and King by the preaching of the gospel, and will be completed at some future time when the Lord shall redeem Israel, which is now pining in dispersion, out of the fetters of its unbelief and life of sin." It is a beautiful picture of "the redemption to be effected by Christ out of the spiritual Babylon of this world." Jesus Christ releases the captives and sets free the downtrodden.

The unfaithfulness of God's people cannot make null and void His promises of redemption. The time of universal peace will not take place before the royal palace and the temple are utterly destroyed. Ezekiel saw the Shekinah departing before the Babylonians destroyed the temple (Ezek. 10:18; 12:22). However, our prophet says that Zion will eventually be exalted from deepest degradation to the highest glory. Zion is depicted in glory as the heathen nations stream to it to hear the law of the LORD. The dominion of Zion will be restored from its fallen condition in the distant future.

THE RESTORATION OF ZION

The opening verses of chapter four are almost exact duplicate of Isaiah 2:2-4. The Lord has given the same promise of millennial blessing to Micah and Isaiah. Both men were moved by the Holy Spirit to pen these words. That does not prevent the thought of their knowing of each other's preaching and ideas.

"In the last days" (4:1) always denotes the Messianic era in the prophets. Jesus Christ split time. The line of demarcation is drawn by the incarnation of the Son of God, the Messiah. How long will the Lord reign over the peoples of the world? Verse seven says, "The LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on and forever." The prophet lifts our sights to afar. The throne of David will be firmly established before the Lord forever (2 Sam. 7:12, 13).

"The mountain of the house of the LORD" is the temple mountain, Mt. Moriah, which will be exalted above all the mountains and hills in glory (v. 2). The Gentiles are seen steaming to the mountain to receive God's blessings. In the eyes of the prophet Zion becomes the greatest and loftiest mountain in the world because nations stream to it to hear God's Word. Yahweh is enthroned there and He gives continual instructions to

nations stream to it to hear God's Word. Yahweh is enthroned there and He gives continual instructions to the nations. "And the peoples will stream to it. And 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'" (v. 2).

Keil notes the "earthly elevation is a symbol of a spiritual one." The LORD God is enthroned there. The Gentiles stream to Him out of a desire for salvation. "The word of the LORD" is the message of salvation. This manifestation takes place in Christ and will be exalted in the Messianic time. Formerly the people of Israel went to the mountain to worship, now many flow there to worship the Lord of glory. Zion is glorified by the appearance of the Messiah.

This is the preaching of the Gospel, which began at Jerusalem, and from there flowed over all the earth, offering living water to those who came to it in faith to Jesus Christ.

The Messiah will judge between the nations. What the League of Nations and the United Nations could not do this person will accomplish. The Prince of peace is the bringer of peace. He acts as a judge, Lit. "to set right," and settle and put to stop disputes. Many nations will acknowledge Him as King and Judge.

"Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hoods; Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war" (v. 3). Weapons of warfare will be turned into agricultural machines. No more war colleges! Verse four describes that happy state of perfect peace. It will not be done by humanism, but in the strength of the Lord forever (v. 5).

All of this will take place in a time of humiliation and when miserable conditions prevail in Israel (vv. 6-7). The Lord inflicts this misery in the punishment of sins. The restoration of the remnant which is to become a strong nation over which Yahweh reigns in a perfect monarchy. Calvin said, "God will prove that He was the author of that kingdom, and that all the power is His. . . The prophet therefore indicates a certain difference between that shadowy kingdom [of David] and the new kingdom which God will openly manifest at the advent of the Messiah."

Keil and Delitzsch explain, "The substance of the promise itself points to the times of the completion of the Messianic kingdom, i.e. to the establishment of the kingdom of glory (Matthew 19:28). The temple mount is a type of the kingdom of God in its New Testament form, which is described by all the prophets after the forms of the Old Testament kingdom of God. Accordingly, the going of the nations to the mountain of the house of Jehovah is, as a matter of fact, the entrance of the heathen who have been brought to the faith into the kingdom of Christ. This commenced with the spread of the gospel among the Gentiles, and has been continued through all the ages of the Christian church. But however many nations have hitherto entered into the Christian church, the time has not yet come for them to be so entirely pervaded with the spirit of Christ, as to allow their disputes to be settled by the Lord as their King, or to renounce war, and live in everlasting peace. . . The cessation of war and establishment of eternal peace can only take place after the destruction of all the ungodly powers on earth, at the return of Christ to judgment and for the perfecting of His kingdom (cf. Rom. 11:25ff). . . The kingdom of glory will be set up on the new earth, in the Jerusalem which was shown to the holy seer on Patmos in the Spirit, on a great and lofty mountain (Rev. 21:10; 21:22)." They see it as "the time of the completion of the kingdom of God in glory."

In verses 8-10 the reign of Jehovah upon Mount Zion is still further defined as effected through the Messiah. The prophet does not here mention the descendant of David, but Yahweh Himself. Hengstenberg notes, "For although Christ was the true seed of David, yet He was also, at the same time, Jehovah, viz. God made manifest in the flesh. With respect to this promise, however, it must also be kept in mind that it will be finally fulfilled only in the future, when the kingdom and throne of glory (Matt. 19:28) shall be set up."

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"The tower of the flock" (v. 8) refers to the descendents of David. "He stands and feeds in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God." Even so come, Shepherd of Israel and shepherd your people.

THE BIRTH OF THE KING

This shepherd king will come from humble stock in extremely humble circumstances.

The Judge of Israel in 5:1 is in His deepest abasement and contrasted with the Ruler of Israel in His divine glory. The humble village of Bethlehem is contrasted with the greatness of what it will become when God bestows it with glory. From Bethlehem there comes forth a glorious ruler in Israel. Dominion will return to the house of David. The insignificance of Bethlehem is seen from the circumstances of its being left out of the list of towns in the tribe of Judah. "The birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem, and not in Jerusalem the city of David, presupposes that the family of David, out of which it is to spring, will have lost the throne, and have fallen into poverty. This could only arise from the giving up of Israel into the power of its enemies," write Keil and Delitzsch.

The old Jewish synagogue unanimously regarded this passage as containing a prophecy of the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem.

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 (5:2).

The fulfillment by the fact that Christ was actually born in Bethlehem cannot be looked upon as accidental circumstances because His parents were not residents of Bethlehem, but Nazareth.

In Josephus' days it was little more than a mere village. It was too small to be numbered among the heads of Judah. It was of lowly rank. Just as youthful David had been an insignificant shepherd in this small village and God exalted him to be of king of Israel, so from this insignificant village the Messiah would be born and crowned with glory. God raised him from being a shepherd of lambs to the shepherd of the nation. The Ruler proceeding from Bethlehem is the Messiah.

When we examine this prophecy we are reminded how God caused Joseph and Mary to go to Bethlehem in its fulfillment. Matthew 2:1-11 simply relates the arrival of Magi from the East to worship the King of the Jews. The family of David had been reduced to the lowest degradation. An imposter sat on the throne in Jerusalem, an Idumean by birth who had no blood of David running through his veins. Foreigners ruled the nation through a puppet king of non-Jewish blood.

"The ruler of Israel who has sprung from eternity" is to be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah. The coming forth from Bethlehem implies birth in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:5, 6; John 7:42). "

This Ruler will be the Good Shepherd (v. 4) and be the Prince of peace (v. 5). "And this One will be our peace." The One who is peace will give peace to His people (cf. Eph. 2:14). The Prince of Peace is the Messiah (Isa. 9:6). Keil notes, "To the nations Christ is set for the rising and falling of many (Lk. 2:34; Rom. 9:33; Isa. 8:14; 28:16)

9:33; Isa. 8:14; 28:16)

Hengstenberg gives us a good summary of evidence regarding the old Jewish interpretation of this passage.

"The reference to the Messiah was, at all times, not the private opinion of a few scholars, but was publicly received and acknowledged with perfect unanimity. As respects the time of Christ, this is obvious from Matt. 2:5. According to that passage, the whole Sanhedrim, when officially interrogated as to the birth-place of the Messiah, supposed this explanation to be the only correct one (Cf. John 7:42). Bethlehem is marked out as the birthplace of the messiah, was held as an undoubtedly truth by the ancient Jews. This appears from the confident reply of the Sanhedrim to the question of Herod as to the birth-place of Christ." Their interpretation was changed after the fact. All the ancient Jewish interpreters adhere to the Messianic interpretation.

It is my prayer that you will submit to Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, the Messiah. If you need help in knowing Him in an intimate personal relationship read [A Free Gift for You](#).

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Wil is a graduate of William Carey University, B. A.; New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Th. M.; and Azusa Pacific University, M. A. He has pastored in Panama, Ecuador and the U. S, and served for over 20 years as missionary in Ecuador and Honduras. He had a daily expository Bible teaching ministry head in over 100 countries for ten years. He continues to seek opportunities to be personally involved in world missions. Wil and his wife Ann have three grown daughters. He currently serves as a Baptist pastor and teaches seminary extension courses in Honduras.

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