

MICAH, THE PROPHET, LOOKS INTO THE FUTURE

BIBLE TEXT : Micah 4:1-7; 5:2; 6:1-8; 7:18-20

LESSON 330 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Micah 4:1-7

¹ But in the last days it shall come to pass, *that* the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

² And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

³ And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

⁴ But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make *them* afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken *it*.

⁵ For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.

⁶ In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted;

⁷ And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.

Micah 5:2

² But thou, Bethlehem Ephrath,

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Major and Minor Prophets

A prophet is one who represents God before the people, or tells the people what God has revealed to him that shall happen in the future. A faithful, righteous preacher of the Gospel is also a prophet of God, for he declares the truth of God's Word as the Holy Spirit reveals it to him. In the Old Testament we find four major prophets who foretold future events, and twelve minor prophets. They are not called major and Minor Prophets because the writings of some were of more importance than others, for "all scripture is given by inspiration of God" (II Timothy 3:16), but they are classified as to the length of their writings.

What God has spoken in His Holy Word through His inspired servants will come to pass, it matters not whether it was written by Moses, David, Solomon, Micah, one of the apostles, one of the other writers, or that the author of portions of the Bible may be unknown. "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21).

A newly revised version of the Bible has recently been published. However, some of the changes made in this new revision do not agree with the original meaning of the Scriptures. The King James Version is authentic and accurate. It was the conscientious work of a large group of men — at least 48 devout scholars and ministers — who had no interest at heart except that of providing for the people the best possible compilation of the Scriptures. God has blessed it to millions who have read it as a guide for their behaviour. It has been said that "the influence of the King James Version alike on our religion and our literature can never be exaggerated."

Reminder

In this lesson we shall look into the writings of one of the Minor Prophets, Micah, whose name means, "who is like Jehovah." This prophet of God paints a word picture of the evil condition of Israel and Judah, but he also foretells a coming Kingdom in which righteousness shall prevail. God's chosen people, the Children of Israel, had disobeyed the Lord and departed from His commandments times without number. Like many people of today, they actually hated good and loved evil (**Micah 3:2 ² Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones;**). But God's mercy was extended toward them, and if they would repent He would forgive. To repent is to come to God with a humble acknowledgement of sin, asking forgiveness and having a true purpose not to grieve God again by wilfully transgressing His law of love and righteousness. The prophet reminds them that God had brought them out of Egypt and had given them Moses, the lawgiver, and Aaron, the priest. His dealing with them had been kindness and mercy. Did they remember the time that Balak had plotted to destroy them by having Balaam curse them? Balaam was forced against his will to bless the people whom God wanted to bless. Surely He is a God of mercy!

Justice — Mercy -- Humility

In chapter six, verse six, of our lesson text, it seems that the

though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.

Micah 6:1-8

¹ Hear ye now what the LORD saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice.

² Hear ye, O mountains, the LORD'S controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.

³ O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.

⁴ For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

⁵ O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD.

⁶ Wherewith 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?

⁷ Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with 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?

⁸ He hath shewed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Micah 7:18-20

¹⁸ Who *is* a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and

conversation changes and it is as if the people were asking the Lord: With what shall I come and bow before Thee? Shall I come with calves as burnt offerings? Or will You be pleased with other sacrifices — thousands of rams or ten thousands of rivers of oil? As if to ask, Will tears avail for sin? will gifts be sufficient to blot out past sins?

Then Micah answers and says that He has showed you a long time ago; you need not ask, as if you had never heard. "What doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8).

Justice, mercy, humility — God requires those things of us today. Just and rightful dealing with one another; mercy, forbearance, compassion, and a hearty desire to do good unto others. Not only should we observe the Golden Rule, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise: (Luke 6:31), but we should also remember this command, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36).

To "walk humbly with thy God" requires constant prayer and watchfulness to keep one's heart and mind free from all pride. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5).

The Remedy for Sin

In this land of the open Bible, we need not be ignorant as to what God requires of us. The first step is to repent and be saved through the Blood of Jesus. There will be no excuse for anyone's coming before Him in the day of judgement without the Blood of Jesus over his heart. Money, good deeds, great gifts, or much weeping, cannot atone for sin, but "the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

Bethlehem

One of the outstanding prophecies of Micah was his telling of the place of Jesus' birth. Micah said that although Bethlehem was small in size and population, and perhaps little in worldly importance, yet it was of the very greatest in spiritual importance, for it was chosen to be the birthplace of the Messiah. We remember learning that at the time of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, when the wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, Herod the king asked the chief priests and scribes where Christ should be born. Their answer was, "In Bethlehem," and they told him the words which Micah the prophet had spoken many years before.

Perhaps some people could not see how anything good could come out of Bethlehem; but sometimes God chooses the little things to outshine the great things. We read of Philip who said one day to a man named Nathanael, "We have found him, . . . Jesus of Nazareth." But Nathanael did not believe that anything good could come out of Nazareth, where Jesus lived as a boy. But when he saw and heard Jesus, he said, "thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49). A King born in Bethlehem and who lived in Nazareth! Surely God often chose the "things, which are not, to bring to nought things that are" (I Corinthians 1:28). The great King Herod thought surely if a king were born it would be in Jerusalem; but Micah said in "Bethlehem."

Futures Hopes

In the fourth chapter Micah tells of a righteous Kingdom which shall be established in the earth, and we have learned of the Millennial Reign of Christ upon the earth — a thousand years of peace from war when men shall "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks" (Micah 4:3). During that time the King of kings and Lord of lords, although born in the little city of Bethlehem, shall reign in Mount Zion over His people.

passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy.

¹⁹ He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

²⁰ Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, . . . he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; . . . and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:18, 19). God's promise unto Abraham still stands: "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, . . . And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan" (Exodus 6:3,4).

Although the Children of Israel had lost possession of the Land of Canaan, God is giving it back to them in these last days. The Jews, God's chosen people, are fast returning to their homeland, and the prophecy of Micah which speaks of the last days is coming to pass: "In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble . . . and I will gather her that is driven out, . . . and I will make . . . her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion" (Micah 4:6,7). All the earth is waiting for that thousand years of peace that shall come upon the earth. Are you praying as Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come"? (Luke 11:2).

QUESTIONS

1. What is a prophet?
2. Can you name several prophets other than Micah?
3. In what city shall the Kingdom be set up during the Millennial Reign of Christ?
4. Will there be any wars during that time?
5. In what way did the Israelites show their lack of appreciation for God's kindness toward them?
6. What did Micah foretell concerning Bethlehem?
7. What passage of Scripture tells us that this prophecy has already come to pass?
8. What does the Lord require us to do today?
9. What did the Lord promise to Abraham, to Isaac, and Jacob?