

V. *Global Glory*

01-Jan-06 Micah 4:1-5:1

Theme: The promises of eternity are more powerful than the problems of the present.

Key Verses: Micah 4:1-2 ¹Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. ²Many 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.

Review

Last week we studied Micah chapter 3. Micah delivers three messages of condemnation and judgment to three different groups of leaders. The common theme of these messages is the *Judean justice* – or rather, injustice – that was administered to God's people. In the first message, Micah describes the judges of Judah who are no better than *corrupt cannibals*. They have so perverted justice that they are essentially devouring the less fortunate who cannot afford to pay for a favorable verdict. As a consequence, God the Judge promises to repay these *ravenous rulers* by turning a deaf ear to them and their pleas. By turning His face from them, God is promising them disaster instead of blessing.

The second group of leaders condemned by Micah are the *peace prophets*. These false prophets led God's people astray by providing encouraging messages to those who could afford to hear them. They were blessed with a real gift from God, but chose instead to sell their services to the highest bidder for their own selfish ease and comfort. As a consequence, God promises to remove their gift and cut them off from society in shame. In contrast, Micah presents himself as the true *powerful prophet*. Micah is empowered by the Spirit of God, concerned with the administration of true justice, and not afraid to preach the entire counsel of God.

Finally, Micah describes the *lousy leaders* who abhor justice, pervert all equity, engage in bloodshed and iniquity, and sell their services to the highest bidder, all the while claiming an orthodox religious veneer. They cling to the externals of their religion while trying to justify their wickedness and sin. However, God is not fooled. Those who *sow sin* will *reap rubble*. Those who put their trust in buildings rather than in God will find their trust misplaced.

Micah's condemnation of these groups reminds us that God is concerned with our methods and our motives. God gives us many gifts that we are to use in His service. Let us use them for the right reasons and in the right manner, so that we may give glory to Him rather than try to gather glory for ourselves.

Introduction

Micah chapter 4 is an exciting shift from the previous chapters. Micah shares with us insights into what God was doing in history past and what God will do in history future. This passage is full of time references to both Micah's present (our past) and future: **in the latter days** (4:1), **in that day** (4:6), and **now** four times (4:9, 10, 11, 5:1).

As we consider the promises contained in this passage, let us be aware of four different levels of prophetic fulfillment. In the first level, Micah is speaking to the listeners of his day about their

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current situation, most likely the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BC. Secondly, Micah's words have some application in the intermediate time frame from the Babylonian captivity and restoration up to the first advent of Christ. Thirdly, there is clearly reference in Micah 4 to the church age we are currently in (*i.e.*, between the first and second advents). Finally, there is an eschatological sense to Micah that finds its ultimate fulfillment only in eternity after the second advent of Christ. Realizing that Micah's prophecy weaves back and forth between these four levels of fulfillment and even can be interpreted on multiple levels simultaneously will help us as we study the details of Micah chapter 4.

Having said that, the real interesting observation about this passage is that its time-oriented nature follows a reverse pattern. That is, the beginning of the passage points to the most time distant events, while subsequent sections draw progressively nearer to Micah's immediate timeframe. Consider the following:

- *Sennacherib's Siege*: Micah 5:1 describes the dire situation currently facing Jerusalem during Sennacherib's siege in 701 BC.
- *Threshing Thoughts*: Micah 4:11-13 describes Sennacherib's siege as well, but it also foretells victory, thus looking a bit beyond the current trial.
- *Coming Captivity*: Micah 4:9-10 predicts travail leading to Babylonian captivity and then restoration. Thus, the time frame in view is 100+ years into the future from Micah's day.
- *Forever Flock*: Micah 4:6-8 predicts a regathering of God's remnant and a future dominion that seems to look beyond the Babylonian captivity/restoration and into the church age.
- *Heavenly Harmony*: Micah 4:1-5 predicts a golden age of worship, peace, justice, and security that has begun in the church age but will ultimately be realized only in the consummation after the second advent of Christ.

Regardless of the time frame Micah is describing, the overall presentation is one of God's sovereignty over events and nations, emphasizing His *global glory*.

As we exposit this passage, we will thus be doing it in reverse time order, considering at first the most distant promises of God and then gradually telescoping inwards to the current crisis of Micah's day. This has the impact of putting the immediate trial facing God's people in the context of the bigger picture. Sure, *Sennacherib's siege* is a huge deal for those trapped in Jerusalem, but the plans of God are much bigger and comprehensive than anything the king of Assyria can throw at God's people. By arranging his oracles in this reverse fashion, Micah is teaching us that the promises of eternity are much more powerful than the problems of the present.

Exposition

A. Heavenly Harmony (4:1-5)

The first section in Micah chapter 4 is a beautiful picture of *heavenly harmony*. In a very real sense, Micah is describing the church age. However, we live in the tension between the "now" and the "not yet." Right now we do experience the spiritual realities that Micah describes. But in an even greater way, the prophecy of Micah 4:1-5 will be fulfilled after the second advent of Christ when we are in paradise forever with our Lord.

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The language of Micah 4:1-5 provides a direct contrast to the end of chapter 3. In 3:12, the **mountain of the temple** is made into **the bare hills**; in 4:1, the **mountain of the Lord's house** is exalted **above the hills**. In Micah 3:11, human judges pervert justice **for a bribe**; in 4:2 God **shall judge** righteously. The focus of Micah 3 is on the sinfulness of human society; the beginning of Micah 4 is on *heavenly harmony*.

One last comment before we study the text. Micah 4:1-3 is essentially identical to Isaiah 2:2-4. Since Micah and Isaiah were contemporaries, it is unclear whether Micah is quoting Isaiah or Isaiah is quoting Micah. Ultimately it doesn't matter, because the Holy Spirit is the ultimate author of both passages!

1. Worldwide Worship (4:1-2)

This prophecy is said to occur **in the latter days** (v. 4:1a). Generally speaking, this phrase refers to the church age; that is, the time after the first advent of Christ. For example, Peter in Acts 2:17 interprets the phrase "in the last days" (quoting Joel 2:28) as occurring in his own day. Thus, Micah is looking far down the time tunnel from his own day into our own day, and even beyond.

The substance of the first part of Micah's future vision has to do with *worldwide worship*. Micah sees the exaltation of **the mountain of the LORD's house** (v. 1a). Micah is referring to the Temple of God, the place of worship. At the end of chapter 3, Micah had predicted that the temple mount would be reduced to a bare hill, devoid of any special significance. But in this oracle, the importance of that mountain is raised to new heights. Although the physical hill of Zion only reaches about 2400 ft above sea level, in spiritual significance it is raised above the height of Mt. Everest.

What is the significance of this mountain? As we know from studying Scripture, mountains are often used to symbolize the meeting place between God and man, specifically in worship. Worship is a "mountaintop experience." Eden was on a mountain (we know this because four rivers flowed out of Eden and water flows downhill). Noah worships God on Mt. Ararat and receives the covenant sign of the rainbow there. Abraham went up to Mt. Moriah (later Mt. Zion) to sacrifice his son Isaac. Moses meets God at Mt. Sinai, first in the burning bush and then later as he receives the Ten Commandments and sees the backside of God's glory. David prepared Mt. Zion to be the site of the Temple which Solomon later built. Elijah worships God on Mt. Carmel, defeating the prophets of Baal there, and later receives encouragement from God on Mt. Sinai. Christ is transfigured on a mountain and the disciples' response is to build altars and worship.

So, when Micah talks about God's mountain and God's house, he is talking about the place where God's people come into His presence to worship. In the New Testament era, that means the Church. It is the Church's primary mission to worship God and give Him glory. It is no coincidence that the New Testament describes the Church as both a temple and as a mountain:

¹⁶And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For *you are the temple* of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Cor. 6:16).

²¹... in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a *holy temple* in the Lord, ²²in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:21-22).

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¹⁸For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest [*i.e.*, Mt. Sinai] ... ²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ²³to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect (Heb. 12:18, 22-23).

Therefore, we should not be surprised when Micah uses the imagery of God's mountain to picture the *worldwide worship* of the Church. In this passage, Micah gives us several characteristics of the church in his description of the latter days.

First, the Church is exalted above all things. It is **established on the top of the mountains**; it is **exalted above the hills** (v. 1b). The Church has a noble and glorious position. We should not be ashamed of the gospel but rather encouraged by it.

Second, people from **many nations** will flow into **the mountain of the Lord** or **the house of God** for worship (v. 1c-2a). The picture of the nations streaming into the Church is reminiscent of the picture of the river flowing from God's house:

⁴There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High (Ps. 46:4).

This is obviously a description of the Church Age, where God's people are no longer limited primarily to the Jewish nation. This prophecy was first fulfilled at Pentecost, when people from all over the world were gathered in Jerusalem, heard the gospel in their own tongue, and were added to the Church. The growth of the Church continues on into our own day as God adds to it those who are being saved, even as Joel prophesied:

³²And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. *For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance*, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls (Joel 2:32).

The third characteristic of the Church in Micah 4:2 is that it is a place where God will **teach** His people. What a contrast to Micah's day, where those in charge of teaching God's people – the priests and the prophets – were only interested in lining their own pockets! (*cp.* Mi. 3:11). The Church is a place of teaching and learning. That's why we have Sunday school for all ages. All of us should take every opportunity available to us to learn more of God's Word.

The fourth characteristic of the Church is that we **walk in His paths** (v. 2b). It is not enough to come and be taught. We must also obey. Walking with Christ means a consistent lifestyle of obedience. The Church is characterized by those who worship God and obey His commands.

The final characteristic of the Church in 4:2 is a spirit of evangelism: **for out of Zion the law shall go forth** (v. 2b). The Church is not supposed to keep the gospel to itself. Rather, we are to share the gospel according to the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20). How else are the nations going to stream in? Remember:

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" (Is. 52:7; *cp.* Nah. 1:15).

In summary, Micah's vision of the Church describes it as glorious, global, teachable, obedient, and evangelical.

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2. Perfect Peace (4:3-5)

The first two verses of Micah's vision describe for us who are God's people. The next three verses describe what God does on behalf of His people. Micah doesn't stop with the picture of *worldwide worship*. He goes on to describe the *perfect peace* that can only be found in Christ. On one level, Micah's description applies to the Christian's current spiritual condition. However, the ultimate fulfillment of Micah's prophecy can only come after the second advent of Christ and the defeat of all His enemies.

First, Micah describes the justice that God dispenses (4:3a). God is a righteous **judge**, unlike the corrupt judges of Micah's day (*cp.* Mi. 3:11). Bentley comments that "righteousness will prevail within the kingdom of God."

God's justice is the basis for the lasting peace that Micah describes:

³He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (Mic. 4:3).

This is a beautiful picture of disarmament and the cessation of hostilities against God and His people. Micah uses the same imagery that Joel first introduced in Joel 3:10 but reverses it:

¹⁰*Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, 'I am strong' (Joel 3:10).*

Joel was describing the final battle of God against His enemies; Micah is describing the peace that follows Christ's final victory. Ultimately, the Church shall be relieved of its struggle and shall enter into its rest. This sentiment is described in verse 4 of Samuel J. Stone's great hymn, *The Church's One Foundation*:

'Mid toil and tribulation,	Till with the vision glorious
And tumult of her war,	Her longing eyes are blest,
She waits the consummation	And the great church victorious
Of peace for evermore;	Shall be the church at rest.

God's justice and peace lead to prosperity and security. **Everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree** (v. 4a). This picture is used often in Scripture to describe peace and prosperity. For example:

²⁵And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, *each man under his vine and his fig tree*, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon (1 Kgs. 4:25).

¹⁰In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, '*Everyone will invite his neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree*' (Zech. 3:10).

Because God has defeated all of His enemies, His people are safe and secure. **No one shall make them afraid** (v. 4b). There is nothing any longer to fear. No more death, no more sorrow, no more pain, no more enemies.

This security is confirmed because it is the word of God: **for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken** (v. 4c). We can be certain of this idyllic future, because it is not based on the accomplishments, talents, or abilities of the Church; it depends totally and completely on the word of God.

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Finally, these great and glorious promises are guaranteed throughout eternity. **We will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever** (v. 5b). God Himself will guarantee that our walk with Him is steadfast. He will not allow us to deviate, but will ensure our salvation forever.

God's people are truly blessed, not because of who they are or what they have done for themselves, but because of what God has done for them. God's justice and peace lead to a guaranteed eternal prosperity and security for His people. You can count on it.

We enjoy a taste of these blessings today. We have experienced God's righteousness imparted to us as He daily sanctifies us more and more into the image of His Son. We are no longer at war with God – His peace that surpasses understanding already guards our “hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7). God has already given us “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). We no longer have the “spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (1 Tim. 1:7). But the ultimately fulfillment of this *heavenly harmony* will only be at the consummation of the kingdom.

B. International Intervention (4:6-5:1)

We will cover the rest of Micah 4 a bit more quickly. The rest of the chapter (including the first verse of chapter 5) breaks down into four short oracles. The time frame of these oracles stretches from the church age backwards to Micah's present and the troubles with Sennacherib. Consistent with the theme of *global glory*, these four oracles demonstrate God's sovereignty over the nations through His *international intervention* in the affairs of men.

1. Forever Flock (4:6-8)

This next section also points to Micah's future: **in that day**. However, the picture he paints does not start out as glorious as the previous section. Instead, Micah in verses 6-7 addresses the **lame**, the **outcast**, and the **afflicted**. Through the power of God, they are transformed into a **remnant** and a **strong nation**.

At one level of meaning, Micah is addressing the future exiles from Judah after the destruction of Babylon in 586 BC. The terms “lame”, “outcast”, and “afflicted” would certainly apply to them. But on a deeper level, Micah is addressing all those who “once were far off” and “have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:14). Thus, this oracle extends from the restoration from the Babylonian captivity right into the present church age.

The particular Hebrew word translated as “lame” is rare in the Scripture, occurring only two other times:

³¹Just as he [Jacob] crossed over Penuel the sun rose on him, and he *limped* on his hip (Gen. 32:31).

¹⁹Behold, at that time I will deal with all who afflict you; I will save the *lame*, and gather those who were driven out; I will appoint them for praise and fame in every land where they were put to shame (Zeph. 3:19).

The reference in Zephaniah has a similar context and meaning to our passage here in Micah 4. I believe that both of these prophets are likely referring back to their lame ancestor, Jacob, who became Israel after wrestling with God. It is in the weakness of his limp that Jacob becomes a new man. As Prior puts it:

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The result of that wrestling-match was a different Jacob, someone who was teachable, humble and able to be used by God. So now with ‘the house of Jacob’: as God moved to bring His people low, He would turn them into a strong nation. They would limp for the rest of their lives, but they would genuinely lean on the Lord and walk in His name — unlike the current leadership of Jerusalem (3:11). As Jacob was, from Penuel onwards, given a new name, Israel, so Micah’s Israel would eventually become a new nation, ‘the Israel of God’ (Gal. 6:16).

This is the second time in his prophecy that Micah offers comfort to those in exile, calling them a remnant. The first time was in 2:12:

¹²I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather *the remnant of Israel*; I will put them together *like sheep of the fold, like a flock* in the midst of their pasture; They shall make a loud noise because of so many people (Mic. 2:12).

Notice that Micah once again combines the image of a remnant with that of a sheep flock: **And you, O tower of the flock** (v. 8). Just like a watchtower guards a city, so the Good Shepherd takes care of His remnant, His flock. His care, His **reign** over His people, will be **from now on, even forever** (v. 7). Jesus Christ is both a Shepherd and a King. God’s promise here is that He will always have a remnant, a people of faith that He will preserve. God’s people are His *forever flock*.

This oracle starts with the **lame**, the **outcast**, and the **afflicted**, but it ends up with a **stronghold**, **dominion**, and a **kingdom** (v. 8). **Jerusalem** and **Mount Zion** move from oppression to success. As Christ goes from humiliation to exaltation, the Church moves from suffering to victory. Notice how the end of this oracle really is the starting point for the previous one which describes the dominion of Christ’s kingdom throughout eternity.

2. Coming Captivity (4:9-10)

Continuing in this reverse order train, the next two verses describe the *coming captivity* in Babylon that is the starting point for the restoration of the remnant in the previous oracle. Micah wrenches his audience back to the present. No longer is he talking about “the latter days.” Instead, his emphasis here and in the next several verses is **now**. Four times in six verses Micah says, “Now.” This oracle and the last two present the city of Jerusalem under trial.

Although the oracle starts out with **now**, it becomes apparent by the end of verse 10 that the time frame is not the current political crisis between Hezekiah and Sennacherib, king of Assyria, but the crisis in the near future between Hezekiah’s descendents and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon.

There are two possible interpretations to the questions asked in verse 9. The first interpretation views the **king** and **counselor** as the human leaders of the people. These questions are thus viewed as ridiculing the ineffective and ungodly leadership that leads the city of Jerusalem into the crisis that results in its destruction in 586 BC. However, Waltke proposes an alternative interpretation, namely that both “king” and “counselor” refer to God Himself. After all, one of the names of Christ is “wonderful counselor” (*cp.* Is. 9:6). In this view, Micah is reminding the people that despite outward circumstances, God is in control. Waltke writes: “As verse 12 makes clear, the one ‘wonderful in counsel’ (Is. 28:29; *cf.* Jer. 32:19) has a plan of salvation even in the calamity.”

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Verse 10 paints a terrible picture of anguish for the suffering city. The people of God are called **daughter of Zion**, a common name given in the Old Testament (used 26 times). It is especially common here in Micah chapter 4, where it is used three times (vv. 8, 10, 13). A related term, “daughter of troops” is used in Micah 5:1. This “daughter” language seems particularly appropriate in verse 10, where Micah speaks of the anguish of God’s people in terms of childbirth.

The period of time leading up to the Babylonian captivity will be agonizing, like the **birth pangs of a woman in labor** (v. 9b-10a). Although I cannot speak from personal experience, I understand that labor contractions can be among the most severe pain that a person can experience. And yet, the agony of labor leads to the wonder of childbirth and new life. So, even in this imagery of pain, there is hope in and beyond the suffering.

Micah doesn’t sugar coat it. He warns the Old Testament people of God that pain and suffering are coming their way. **To Babylon you shall go** (v. 10b). That might seem an odd message to bring, especially when it was Sennacherib of Assyria, not Babylon, who was knocking on their doorstep. But like the pangs of childbirth, there is hope of new life in Micah’s prophecy. First, there is implied victory against Sennacherib. Assyria is not the enemy who will punish Jerusalem for her sin; it will be Babylon. So there is a respite coming from their current trial. Secondly, even in defeat against Babylon, there is the assurance of **deliverance and redemption**. God will restore His people **from the hand of your enemies** (v. 10c). This ending promise of salvation is the starting point for the previous oracle, which describes the gathering of the remnant and the restoration of the daughter of Jerusalem.

Prior gives a good application of this section:

The same principle holds good for any time of suffering for the people of God. However endless or meaningless it seems, our King, Jesus, is alongside us and our Counselor, God’s Holy Spirit, wants to bring strength and encouragement to hang in there.

3. *Threshing Thoughts (4:11-13)*

Moving forward, or perhaps I should say backward, we come to the present siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib. Micah again reminds us of the **now** context of his oracle and shows us that **many nations have gathered against** God’s people (v. 11a). This picture is consistent with Assyrian practice, who often forced subjugated nations to supply soldiers to fight their wars of conquest. The attitude of this invading army is also consistent with what we know about Sennacherib’s boasting in 2 Kings 18-19. Listen to Sennacherib’s boast:

³³Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria?

³⁴Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they rescued Samaria from my hand? ³⁵Who of all the gods of these countries has been able to save his land from me? How then can the LORD deliver Jerusalem from my hand? (2 Kgs. 18:33-35).

Sennacherib plans to desecrate Jerusalem (**let her be defiled – v. 11a**), just as Assyria has plundered other cities, including Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel. Sennacherib plans to add Yahweh to the scrap pile of helpless gods unable to protect their people from the might of Assyria.

However, Yahweh has different plans: **but they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, nor do they understand His counsel** (v. 12a). These pagan Assyrians are no different than the

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wicked men of Israel who do not understand that God was *devising disaster* against them (2:3). While the nations conspire and plot in vain (*cp.* Ps. 2:1), God is sovereignly directing their paths. In fact, God has a very different outcome for the Assyrian army than does Sennacherib. While the Assyrian king has dominion dreams, it is the *threshing thoughts* of God that will succeed.

God **will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor** (v. 12b) and the Assyrian army will be **threshed, beaten, and consecrated** for destruction (v. 13). This last term, “to consecrate” or “to devote” is a “technical term of holy war, referring to the ritual destruction of enemy property and the dedication of metal objects to the sanctuary” (Allen). For example, in the original conquest of Canaan under Joshua, Jericho was under God’s ban and was to be holy, wholly devoted to destruction (*cp.* Jos. 6:18-19). The sin of Achan in stealing some of the consecrated things from Jericho led to the defeat at Ai (Jos. 7).

The victory that Micah foretells here in verse 13 came to pass in a miraculous way:

³⁵That night the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! ³⁶So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there (2 Kgs. 19:35-36).

The mighty, invincible army of Assyria was struck down by the Angel of the LORD. Like the plague of the firstborn of Egypt, death came upon the enemy of God’s people. The historical account of the defeat is very succinct, but no doubt the people of Jerusalem were able to recover much plunder from the decimated army of Assyria and dedicate it to the worship of God in the Temple treasury, just as Micah said: **I will consecrate their gain to the LORD, and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth** (v. 13b).

4. *Sennacherib’s Siege (5:1)*

Blessing (v. 5), dominion (v. 8), redemption (v. 10), and victory (v. 13). These have been the endings of the first four oracles in our reverse time telescope. We’ve moved backwards from eternal glory to the church age to the restoration after captivity to the Babylonian captivity to the defeat of Sennacherib. In this fifth and final oracle, we are once again confronted with the **now** of a **siege**. Once more we are looking at *Sennacherib’s siege*.

But this time, there is no happy ending; no reversal of fortune. As we end the passage today, we are left without resolution. Instead, the passage ends in humiliation: **they will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek** (v. 5:1b). Certainly this was the situation that Hezekiah faced. He was humiliated by the arrogant words of Sennacherib’s spokesman who spoke in Hebrew, rather than Aramaic, so that all of Jerusalem would hear the insults (*cp.* 2 Kgs. 18:26-28). Hezekiah felt the humiliation personally, although it was really directed against his God:

³They told him, “This is what Hezekiah says: *This day is a day of distress and rebuke and disgrace*, as when children come to the point of birth and there is no strength to deliver them. ⁴It may be that the LORD your God will hear all the words of the field commander, whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to *ridicule the living God*, and that he will rebuke him for the words the LORD your God has heard. Therefore pray for the remnant that still survives” (2 Kgs. 19:3-4).

Hezekiah was not the first nor was he the last to be put in this situation. The ultimate humiliation, the ultimate application of “a rod on the cheek” was against Hezekiah’s descendent, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is Christ of whom the prophet Zechariah foretold, “Strike the shepherd,

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and the sheep will be scattered” (Zech. 13:7). It is Christ who suffered the humiliation of being beaten, and spat upon, and mocked, and crucified. It is Christ who bears the sins of many, even though He Himself is sinless. It is Christ who is the Savior of many, including good king Hezekiah, the beleaguered king of Judah in Micah 5:1.

Thus, it should be no surprise that the answer to the situation in Micah 5:1, the response of God to the suffering of His people, should be to provide a better king, Christ Himself. Next week we will look at the rest of Micah chapter 5, in which Micah describes the *mighty Messiah* who comes to deliver His people from sin and death.

Conclusion

The movement in Micah 4:1-5:1, from glory to the precipice of disaster, is a unique way to illustrate the sovereignty of God. By telling us the end of the story first, we can have confidence in being delivered from the current trial. By knowing the peace and eternal security of the *heavenly harmony* that awaits us, we can be assured that God will bring us through the present circumstance. Micah’s emphasis on future glory makes the *now* bearable.

And what a future glory it is! Perfect justice and righteousness, peace, prosperity, and security are promised to God’s people. And what a people God has gathered to Himself! God’s Church is glorious, global, teachable, obedient, and evangelical.

So, regardless of the trials of your current situation, keep your eyes on the future. It is guaranteed. Remember, by arranging his oracles in this reverse fashion, Micah is teaching us that the promises of eternity are much more powerful than the problems of the present.

Next week: Lesson 6 – Mighty Messiah – Micah 5:2-15

Close in Prayer.