



## Micah - Chapter Five

- III Micah 3:1-5:15 - The Present Injustice and the Future Prospect of Just Rule in Jerusalem (continues/concludes)
- III.b Micah 4:1-5:15 - Jerusalem's Restoration among the Nations (continues/concludes)
- III.b.ii Micah 4:6-5:1 - Restoration Promised after Exile (continues/concludes)
- III.b.ii.3 Micah 4:9-5:1 - Nations Approach Zion for Battle (continues/concludes)

### Summary of Chapter Five

A new hope for Israel, and for the whole world, comes by means of a new David. His deeds are praised (vv.1-6), and the influence of the remnant among the nations is described (vv.7-9). The chapter concludes with divine removal of all idolatries (vv.10-15).

- <sup>1</sup> Now you are walled around with a wall;  
siege is laid against us;  
with a rod they strike the ruler of Israel  
upon the cheek.

### Micah 5:1

Micah 5:1 is 4:14 in the Hebrew Scriptures. Verse 2 is v.1 etc.

Now. As earlier in Micah 4:9 and 4:11, this word signals distress for Zion.

Now you are walled around with a wall; siege is laid against us suggests Zion's inability to establish an army to defend itself. Israel will be humbled by foreign powers, and even her judges will bear insults. The siege is probably that of Assyrian King Sennacherib in 701 BC.

Strike the ruler of Israel is a metaphor of humiliation for Israel's king now under siege: <<*Thus says King Sennacherib of Assyria: On what are you relying, that you undergo the siege of Jerusalem?*>> (2 Chronicles 32:10). There is also an indication that this is looking forward to the time of the Messiah: <<*Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is my associate,' says the Lord of hosts. Strike the shepherd, that the sheep may be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones*>> (Zechariah 13:7), and: <<*Jesus answered, 'I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said.'* When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, 'Is that how you answer the high priest?' Jesus answered, 'If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?'>> (John 18:20-23).

### III.b.iii Micah 5:2-15 - The Shepherd-King Arrives and the Remnant is Restored

The unit now moves to messianic intervention and victory (vv.2-6). The remnant both blesses and curses the nations (vv.7-9), and the Lord obliterates idolatries from his people (vv.10-15).

#### III.b.iii.1 Micah 5:2-6 - The Ruler from Bethlehem

The ancient prophecies of a Davidic king will come to pass when he is raised up in Bethlehem. He will be one who will not only rule over Israel but will be the king of the entire world.

<sup>2</sup> But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days.

## Micah 5:2

But you. Both here and in Micah 4:8, these words signal renewed kingship. In this time of humiliation under foreign powers, God will raise up a great ruler from a humble place - Bethlehem.

Bethlehem means House of Bread, and Jesus is the Bread of Life (John 6:35). Charles Spurgeon wrote “And now for that word Ephrathah. That was the old name of the place which the Jews retained and loved. The meaning of it is, ‘fruitfulness,’ or ‘abundance.’ Ah! well was Jesus born in the house of fruitfulness; for whence cometh my fruitfulness and thy fruitfulness, my brother, but from Bethlehem? Our poor barren hearts never produced one fruit or flower, till they were watered with the Saviour’s blood.”

Ephrathah is the name of the district in which Bethlehem is located and where David was born: <<*Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years*>> (1 Samuel 17:12), and is further indicated in his ancestral line from Ruth and Boaz: <<*Then all the people who were at the gate, along with the elders, said, ‘We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you produce children in Ephrathah and bestow a name in Bethlehem; and, through the children that the Lord will give you by this young woman, may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah’*>> (Ruth 4:11-12). It was named after one of the little clans of Judah. The unlikely choice of David as king foreshadows the unlikely choice of Bethlehem as the hometown of the greater David. Matthew 2:6, combining this with v.4, shows that Jewish scholars of Jesus’ day read this as a prediction of the Messiah’s birthplace: <<*Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?*>> (John 7:42).

The Messiah’s reign is at God’s behest, i.e. shall come forth for me, and his coming forth or ‘origins’, the plural of Hebrew *motsa’ah* meaning ‘coming out,’ is from of old, from ancient days. This has been taken to indicate either an ancient Davidic lineage or eternal and therefore divine origin of the predicted Messiah.

The first time-related expression from of old is Hebrew *Miqqedem*, and generally refers to ancient historical times, for example: <<*For in the days of David and Asaph long ago there was a leader of the singers, and there were songs of praise and thanksgiving to God*>> (Nehemiah 12:46), <<*I consider the days of old, and remember the years of long ago*>> (Psalm 77:5), and: <<*Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? There is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Saviour; there is no one besides me*>> (Isaiah 45:21).

However, it can also refer to eternity past as in: <<Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the earth>> (Psalm 74:12), and: <<Are you not from of old, O Lord my God, my Holy One? You shall not die. O Lord, you have marked them for judgement; and you, O Rock, have established them for punishment>> (Habakkuk 1:12).

The second time-related expression from ancient days is Hebrew *mime 'olam*, and refers to ancient historical times both in Micah 7:14 and 7:20, and elsewhere: <<Remember the days of old, consider the years long past; ask your father, and he will inform you; your elders, and they will tell you>> (Deuteronomy 32:7), <<Then they remembered the days of old, of Moses his servant. Where is the one who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is the one who put within them his holy spirit>> (Isaiah 63:11), <<On that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen, and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old>> (Amos 9:11), and: <<Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years>> (Malachi 3:4); thus this text is referring to the Messiah's ancient Davidic lineage, confirming that the ancient covenantal promises made to David still stand.

This glorious promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and Micah's prophetic voice declares that although Jesus came from Bethlehem, he did not begin there. His goings forth are from eternity past. The Bible reveals that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End in Revelation 22:13. This means from the very beginning, Jesus was there. There was never a time when Jesus did not exist. Before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, he existed as the Second Person of the Trinity: <<So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed>> (John 17:5), and: <<Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world>> (John 17:24).

These passages reveal that there was a relationship of love, fellowship, and shared glory that the Father and the Son shared in eternity past. The name Jesus was not known as a name for the Second Person of the Trinity until the angel Gabriel announced it to Mary in Luke 1:31. However, the eternal Son existed before he revealed himself as Jesus. Before Bethlehem, Jesus was the creator of all things: <<In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people>> (John 1:1-4), and: <<He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers – all

*things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together>> (Colossians 1:15-17).*

In the OT, Jesus appeared as God made visible or as ‘The Angel of the Lord.’ There are many instances in the OT where individuals are shown to have had a face to face encounter with the Lord, e.g. Genesis 16:7-13, Genesis 32:24-32, Joshua 5:13-15, Judges 6:11-24, Judges 13:8-24, and Daniel Chapter 3. In each situation, the person is given different titles, but in all cases the person is plainly referred to as the Lord himself, but appearing in a human form. From eternity past, God’s plan of the ages included Jesus: *<<Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love>> (Ephesians 1:3-4), and: <<He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake>> (1 Peter 1:20).*

Knowing that Jesus’ goings forth are from of old, from everlasting demonstrates some important points:

- It shows the glory of Jesus, that he is far more than a man.
- It shows the love of Jesus, that he would leave the glory of heaven for the sole benefit of humankind.
- It shows the nature of Jesus, that he would add humanity to his deity.
- It shows the sympathy of Jesus, that he remains fully human and fully God.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.

### Micah 5:3

He shall give them up until the time. Israel’s loss of king and subjection to enemies will prevail until the birth of the Lord’s ruler. Micah anticipates a future time, partially fulfilled in the Babylonian exile and return, ultimately fulfilled in the Great Tribulation and restoration of Israel, when the Lord will seem distant from Israel until the time for restoration is ready.

Then the rest of his kindred shall return. After the time of Israel’s trial the Lord will restore gloriously. The statement emphasises the unity of the people of God under the Messiah’s rule: *<<How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!>> (Psalm 133:1 NIV), and: <<The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and*

*you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me>> (John 17:22-23).*

<sup>4</sup> And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,  
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth;

<sup>5a</sup> and he shall be the one of peace.

### Micah 5:4-5a

And he shall stand and feed his flock. The Messiah's rule and protection of Yahweh's flock are accomplished by Yahweh's authority and power: *<<I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd>> (John 10:14-16).*

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. The breadth of his greatness ensures that those who return, Hebrew *yeshubun* (v.3), will also dwell, Hebrew *Yashabu*, without fear.

True peace among people is achieved by the Messiah, who overcomes conflict. It is not just that the ruler from Bethlehem brings peace; he is peace: *<<For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us>> (Ephesians 2:14).*

**The expression peace, the Hebrew word *shalom*, has a much richer connotation than the English word does, since it conveys, not merely the absence of conflict and turmoil, but also the notion of positive blessing, especially in terms of a right relationship with God, and, as a result, the idea that 'all is well' in one's life. This may be manifested most clearly amid persecution and tribulation.**

<sup>5b</sup> If the Assyrians come into our land  
and tread upon our soil,  
we will raise against them seven shepherds  
and eight installed as rulers.

<sup>6</sup> They shall rule the land of Assyria with the sword,  
and the land of Nimrod with the drawn sword;

they shall rescue us from the Assyrians  
if they come into our land  
or tread within our border.

### Micah 5:5b-6

The Assyrians of Micah's day represents the enemies of God's people in every age. After the pattern of the prophets, Micah blends near and distant ages in his prophecy. The threat of the Assyrian would come against both kingdoms shortly, but Micah also uses the idea of the Assyrian for any pagan nation or empire set against God's people.

Seven shepherds, eight rulers. This traditional formula: <<*Divide your means seven ways, or even eight, for you do not know what disaster may happen on earth*>> (Ecclesiastes 11:2), expresses a parallel between the Messiah's actions and those who faithfully lead in his place. This is evidenced in the main verbs they shall rule or shepherd, they/he shall rescue, extending the Messiah's rule even among these Gentiles.

### III.b.iii.2 Micah 5:7-15 - The Future Role of the Remnant

The people of God will face oppression on all sides but the Lord will strengthen them and they shall prevail against their adversaries. The tools of war will be destroyed by God, as will their objects of idolatry, and those who have opposed God and his people shall be judged.

- <sup>7</sup> Then the remnant of Jacob,  
surrounded by many peoples,  
shall be like dew from the Lord,  
like showers on the grass,  
which do not depend upon people  
or wait for any mortal.
- <sup>8</sup> And among the nations the remnant of Jacob,  
surrounded by many peoples,  
shall be like a lion among the animals of the forest,  
like a young lion among the flocks of sheep,  
which, when it goes through, treads down  
and tears in pieces, with no one to deliver.

## Micah 5:7-8

These verses, with parallel structures, describe:

1. The presence of the remnant among the nations.
2. Two comparisons.
3. An explanation of those comparisons.

Then the remnant of Jacob, shall be like dew from the Lord, like showers on the grass. When God delivers Zion it will not be a small deliverance. It will spread as wide as the dew and showers on the grass.

Which do not depend upon people or wait for any mortal. Like dew and rain, the beneficial influence of the remnant is given or withheld by the Lord alone.

Goes through, treads down, tears in pieces, with no one to deliver. The remnant, no longer a gentle rain, is now like a fierce and destructive lion: <<*Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He crouches down, he stretches out like a lion, like a lioness – who dares rouse him up?*>> (Genesis 49:9).

When God delivers Zion, it will not be a weak deliverance. It will strengthen Israel so that they will triumph over their enemies like a lion against sheep. This has its ultimate fulfilment in the Millennial Earth, when it is said that the lion will lie down with the lamb, but still, it is better to be the lion!

- <sup>9</sup> Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries,  
and all your enemies shall be cut off.

## Micah 5:9

This verse may be read as a prayer uttered by the remnant.

Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries. It is the power of God that protects his people: <<*Rise up, O Lord; O God, lift up your hand; do not forget the oppressed*>> (Psalm 10:12), and: <<*You have a mighty arm; strong is your hand, high your right hand. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you*>> (Psalm 89:13-14).

All your enemies shall be cut off. This action of the Lord is featured in the final section (vv.10-15).

## Introduction to Micah 5:10-15

The Lord cleanses his people from military and cultic idols. The paired verses include elements natural (vv.10-11), and supernatural (vv.12-13). A summary statement closes the section (vv.14-15).

10 On that day, says the Lord,  
I will cut off your horses from among you  
and will destroy your chariots;  
11 and I will cut off the cities of your land  
and throw down all your strongholds;  
12 and I will cut off sorceries from your hand,  
and you shall have no more soothsayers;  
13 and I will cut off your images  
and your pillars from among you,  
and you shall bow down no more  
to the work of your hands;  
14 and I will uproot your sacred poles from among you  
and destroy your towns.

#### Micah 5:10-14

On that day. The Lord answers the implicit prayer of v.9 to cut off things that compromise the holiness of his people.

Horses, chariots, and strongholds. Armies and fortifications, rather than the Lord, were often relied on as security against external enemies: <<*Alas for those who go down to Egypt for help and who rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the Lord!*>> (Isaiah 31:1), <<*Israel has forgotten his Maker, and built palaces; and Judah has multiplied fortified cities; but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour his strongholds*>> (Hosea 8:14), <<*I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations, and overthrow the chariots and their riders; and the horses and their riders shall fall, every one by the sword of a comrade*>> (Haggai 2:22b), and: <<*He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the warhorse from Jerusalem; and the battle-bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth*>> (Zechariah 9:10).

Sorceries and soothsayers. Seeking occult knowledge was explicitly forbidden to Israel: <<*No one shall be found among you who makes a son or daughter pass through fire, or who practises divination, or is a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer*>> (Deuteronomy 18:10).

Your images and your pillars. In representing the presence of the deity in this wrongful way, Israel was tempted to bow down to created things rather than to the creator: <<*All her images shall be beaten to pieces, all her wages shall be burned with fire, and all her idols I will lay waste; for as the wages of a prostitute she gathered them, and as the wages of a prostitute they shall again be used*>> (Micah 1:7), and: <<*Claiming to be wise, they became fools; and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles*>> (Romans 1:22-23).

Asherah or sacred poles are wooden images of the female fertility goddess of the Canaanites, regularly denounced by the prophets. A grim reminder of these pagan ways in Israel has been found at the site of Kuntillat Ajrud, perhaps the southernmost outpost of Judah during the early 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC. Remarkable discoveries of inscriptions and drawings were made here, including one that reads, 'I bless you by Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah.' This refers to the Lord and his consort goddess, an idea that is utterly contrary to the revealed biblical beliefs, and is thus a clear example of pagan influence on God's people.

In restored Zion, the Lord will not allow any of the idolatries Israel once indulged in. Instead, he will cut off all of those things, whether they are basically good, such as horses or cities, or intrinsically evil, i.e. sorceries or sacred pillars.

<sup>15</sup> And in anger and wrath I will execute vengeance  
on the nations that did not obey.

#### Micah 5:15

I will execute vengeance. The Lord alone, as the sovereign ruler, has the right to rescue his people and punish the nations that did not obey. The nature of the disobedience is not mentioned, but a contrast is established in the wider context. The nations returning to the Lord receive instruction: <<*In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills. Peoples shall stream to it, and many nations shall come and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.'* For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem>> (Micah 4:1-2), while those that will not submit to his rule receive destruction.