

MICAH: GOD'S PUNISHMENT AND HIS RESTORATION
VI: Israel's Spiritual History Before God's Messianic Kingdom
(Micah 4:9-5:1)

I. Introduction

- A. Micah, who was "a Judean from Moresheth in the SW of Palestine, preached to the common people of Judah." (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1283, "Introduction to the Book of Micah: The Prophet.")
- B. God's coming judgment on the people for their sin against Him and against each other would be unavoidable and severe, but in the end, His Abrahamic Covenant would be honored, and Israel would be blessed.
- C. Because of the problem of sin, Micah 4:9-5:1 predicted major spiritual troubles and conflicts for Israel in her history before she could enter the Messianic Kingdom, and we view this passage for insight and application:

II. Israel's Spiritual History Before God's Messianic Kingdom, Micah 4:9-5:1.

- A. The prophet Micah viewed Israel's future as comprised of the Babylonian Captivity followed by a final conflict with Israel's Gentile enemies where Israel would conquer her foes followed in turn by the Kingdom. There was no awareness of an interval of Church History between the Babylonian Captivity and the Kingdom.
- B. Accordingly, Micah predicted that Israel would be exiled to Babylon for her sin in Micah 4:9-10a:
 - 1. Though the most powerful empire at the time was Assyria and not Babylon, Micah predicted that the people of Judah would be taken captive to Babylon, Micah 4:10a. Such an event in light of the Mosaic Covenant at Deuteronomy 28:58-67 indicated that Judah would thus be punished for sin.
 - 2. This event would cause the nation to suffer similar to how a woman in labor would suffer: without a king who was also the nation's counsellor, this suffering would occur, and Judah's people would not be able to stop the agony but simply experience it, Micah 4:9-10a; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1485.
- C. However, also in accord with the Mosaic Covenant, Micah predicted that God would deliver Judah from Babylon when her punishment had been completed, Micah 4:10b with Leviticus 26:33-35 and Jeremiah 29:10.
- D. At Micah 4:11, Micah predicted a time when many Gentile nations would gather against Jerusalem to try to conquer and destroy the city, figuratively defiling it. However, the Gentiles would not then know of God's plan to defeat them in stark contrast to what occurred with Jerusalem's fall to Babylon, and those Gentiles would become "like sheaves of grain being broken up when threshed on a threshing floor," Micah 4:12; Ibid.
- E. Judah's conquest of those Gentiles would occur at the end of the Great Tribulation with Christ's Second Coming to earth: Jerusalem will be given the victory by God's help, her figurative horn being like iron and her figurative hooves being like brass to beat in pieces many Gentile peoples, Micah 4:13a. Israel will devote the gain of her spoils of war to the Lord of the whole earth, Micah 4:13b.
- F. However, at Micah 5:1, the prophet Micah began the verse with the expression, "But now . . ." (*we'attah*, Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 937; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1486) that suggests a "soon-coming event, not a distant-future one" (Ibid.), where Jerusalem is called "O daughter of troops" as she is then under siege and the judge of Israel is shamefully struck on the cheek. This judge cannot be Christ, for though He was struck on the cheek during His passion, it did not occur when Jerusalem was under military siege (Ibid.), but King Zedekiah of Judah was struck this way and his eyes were put out. (Jeremiah 52:8-11) Thus, Micah 5:1 returned from predicting events at Christ's return in Micah 4:11-13 to predict the soon-coming Babylonian fall of Jerusalem when Zedekiah vainly tried to flee for his life and was caught and abused by the Babylonians.

Lesson: *Due to her sins against the Lord, Judah would experience the trauma of the Babylonian invasion where Judah's king Zedekiah would faithlessly try to flee instead of properly surrender to Babylon, only to be abusively humiliated followed by God's gracious deliverance of the nation from the Babylonian Captivity after her time of punishment was ended. This defeat would be followed by a time when Jerusalem would face many Gentile enemies gathered around her to destroy her but when God would equip the nation to thresh her Gentile foes as grain is threshed in a threshing floor with Israel dedicating the spoil to the Lord. This latter history would differ greatly from Israel's former defeat due to her repentance that will occur due suffering in the Great Tribulation.*

Application: *(1) May we learn from Israel's history NOT to harbor sin against God lest we must go through His severe discipline, but to confess it to the Lord quickly that we might be blessed of Him! (2) If we HAVE sinned but we have also confessed it to the Lord for His forgiveness, may we be confident that God is not only with us, but that He will equip us to have victory in times of conflict that we face from ungodly foes much like Israel will experience at Christ's Second Coming to the earth.*