

## AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

### THE PROPHECY OF

# MICAH

Micah was raised up to support Isaiah, and to confirm his predictions, while he invited to repentance, both by threatened judgments and promised mercies. A very remarkable passage, Micah 5 contains a summary of prophecies concerning the Messiah.

## CHAPTER 1

*The wrath of God against Israel. (1-7) Also against Jerusalem and other cities, Their precautions vain. (8-16)*

### ◀300 Micah 1:1

**Vs. 1-7:** The earth is called upon, with all that are therein, to hear the prophet. God's holy temple will not protect false professors. Neither men of high degree, as the mountains, nor men of low degree, as the valleys, can secure themselves or the land from the judgments of God. If sin be found in God's people he will not spare them; and their sins are most provoking to him, for they are most reproaching. When we feel the smart of sin, it behooves us to seek what is the sin we smart for. Persons and places most exalted, are most exposed to spiritual diseases. The vices of leaders and rulers shall be surely and sorely punished. The punishment answers the sin. What they gave to idols, never shall prosper, nor do them any good. What is got by one lust, is wasted on another.

### ◀300 Micah 1:8

**Vs. 8-16:** The prophet laments that Israel's case is desperate; but declare it not in Gath. Gratify not those that make merry with the sins or with the sorrows of God's Israel. Roll thyself in the dust, as mourners used to do;

let every house in Jerusalem become a house of Aphrah, “a house of dust.” When God makes the house dust it becomes us to humble ourselves to the dust under his mighty hand. Many places should share this mourning. The names have meanings which pointed out the miseries coming upon them; thereby to awaken the people to a holy fear of Divine wrath. All refuges but Christ, must be refuges of lies to those who trust in them; other heirs will succeed to every inheritance but that of heaven; and all glory will be turned into shame, except that honor which cometh from God only. Sinners may now disregard their neighbors’ sufferings, yet their turn to be punished will some come.

## CHAPTER 2

*The sins and desolations of Israel. (1-5) Their evil practices. (6-11)  
A promise of restoration. (12,13)*

### Micah 2:1

**Vs. 1-5:** Woe to the people that devise evil during the night, and rise early to carry it into execution! It is bad to do mischief on a sudden thought, much worse to do it with design and forethought. It is of great moment to improve and employ hours of retirement and solitude in a proper manner. If covetousness reigns in the heart, compassion is banished; and when the heart is thus engaged, violence and fraud commonly occupy the hands. The most haughty and secure in prosperity, are commonly most ready to despair in adversity. Woe to those from whom God turns away! Those are the sorest calamities which cut us off from the congregation of the Lord, or cut us short in the enjoyment of its privileges.

### Micah 2:6

**Vs. 6-11:** Since they say, “Prophesy not,” God will take them at their word, and their sin shall be their punishment. Let the physician no longer attend the patient that will not be healed. Those are enemies, not only to God, but to their country, who silence good ministers, and stop the means of grace. What bonds will hold those who have no reverence for God’s word? Sinners cannot expect to rest in a land they have polluted. You shall not only be obliged to depart out of this land, but it shall destroy you. Apply this to our state in this present world. There is corruption in the world through lust, and we should keep at a distance from it. It is not our rest: it was designed for our passage, but not for our portion; our inn, but not our home; here we have no continuing city; let us therefore arise and depart, let us seek a continuing city above. Since they will be deceived, let them be deceived. Teachers who recommend self-indulgence by their doctrine and example, best suit such sinners.

**Micah 2:12**

**Vs. 12, 13:** These verses may refer to the captivity of Israel and Judah. But the passage is also a prophecy of the conversion of the Jews to Christ. The Lord would not only bring them from captivity, and multiply them, but the Lord Jesus would open their way to God, by taking upon him the nature of man, and by the work of his Spirit in their hearts, breaking the fetters of Satan. Thus he has gone before, and the people follow, breaking, in his strength, through the enemies that would stop their way to heaven.

## CHAPTER 3

*The cruelty of the princes, and the falsehood of the prophets. (1-8)*  
*Their false security. (9-12)*

### ◀ Micah 3:1

**Vs. 1-8:** Men cannot expect to do ill, and fare well; but to find that done to them which they did to others. How seldom do wholesome truths reach the ears of those in high stations or in authority! Those who deceive others are preparing confusion for their own faces. The prophet had ardent love to God and to the souls of men; deep concern for his glory and their salvation, and zeal against sin. The difficulties he met with did not drive him from his work. He had this strength; not from and of himself, but he was full of power by the Spirit of the Lord. Those who act honestly, may act boldly. And those who come to hear the word of God, must be willing to be told of their faults, must take it kindly, and be thankful.

### ◀ Micah 3:9

**Vs. 9-12:** Zion's walls owe no thanks to those that build them up with blood and iniquity. The sin of man works not the righteousness of God. Even when men do that which in itself is good, but do it for filthy lucre, it becomes abomination both to God and man. Faith rests in the Lord as the soul's foundation: presumption only leans upon the Lord as a prop, and would use him to serve a turn. If men's having the Lord among them will not keep them from doing evil, it never can secure them from suffering evil for so doing. See the doom of wicked Jacob; Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field. This was exactly fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and is so at this day. If sacred places are polluted by sin, they will be wasted and ruined by the judgments of God.

## CHAPTER 4

*The peace of the kingdom of Christ. (1-8) The judgments to come upon Jerusalem, but the final triumph of Israel. (9-13)*

### ◀3001 Micah 4:1

**Vs. 1-8:** The nations have not yet so submitted to the Prince of Peace, as to beat their swords into ploughshares, nor has war ceased. But very precious promises these are, relating to the gospel church, which will be more and more fulfilled, for He is faithful that has promised. There shall be a glorious church for God set up in the world, in the last days, in the days of the Messiah. Christ himself will build it upon a rock. The Gentiles worshipped their idol gods; but in the period spoken of, the people will cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and delight in doing his will. The word “halteth,” describes those who walk not according to the Divine word. The collecting the captives from Babylon was an earnest of healing, purifying, and prospering the church; and the reign of Christ shall continue till succeeded by the everlasting kingdom of heaven. Let us stir up each other to attend the ordinances of God, that we may learn his holy ways, and walk in them, receiving the law from his hands, which, being written in our hearts by his Spirit, may show our interest in the Redeemer’s righteousness.

### ◀3002 Micah 4:9

**Vs. 9-13:** Many nations would assemble against Zion to rejoice in her calamities. They would not understand that the Lord had collected them as sheaves are gathered to be threshed; and that Zion would be strengthened to beat them to pieces. Nothing has yet taken place in the history of the Jewish church agreeing with this prediction. When God has conquering work for his people to do, he will furnish them with strength and ability for it. Believers should cry aloud under distresses, with the prayer of faith, not with despondency.

## CHAPTER 5

*The birth of Christ and conversion of the Gentiles. (1-6) The triumphs of Israel. (7-15)*

### ◀ Micah 5:1

**Vs. 1-6:** Having showed how low the house of David would be brought, a prediction of the Messiah and his kingdom is added to encourage the faith of God's people. His existence from eternity as God, and his office as Mediator, are noticed. Here is foretold that Bethlehem should be his birthplace. Hence it was universally known among the Jews, <sup>◀</sup>Matthew 2:5. Christ's government shall be very happy for his subjects; they shall be safe and easy. Under the shadow of protection from the Assyrians, is a promise of protection to the gospel church and all believers, from the designs and attempts of the powers of darkness. Christ is our Peace as a Priest, making atonement for sin, and reconciling us to God; and he is our Peace as a King, conquering our enemies: hence our souls may dwell at ease in him. Christ will find instruments to protect and deliver. Those that threaten ruin to the church of God, soon bring ruin on themselves. This may unequalled the past powerful effects of the preached gospel, its future spread, and the ruin of all antichristian powers. This is, perhaps, the most important single prophecy in the Old Testament: it respects the personal character of the Messiah, and the discoveries of himself to the world. It distinguishes his human birth from his existing from eternity; it foretells the rejection of the Israelites and Jews for a season, their final restoration, and the universal peace to prevail through the whole earth in the latter days. In the mean time let us trust our Shepherd's care and power. If he permits the assault of our enemies, he will supply helpers and assistance for us.

### ◀ Micah 5:7

**Vs. 7-15:** The remnant of Israel, converted to Christ in the primitive times, were among many nations as the drops of dew, and were made instruments in calling a large increase of spiritual worshippers. But to those who neglected or opposed this salvation, they would, as lions, cause terror, their doctrine condemning them. The Lord also declares that he would

cause not only the reformation of the Jews, but the purification of the Christian church. In like manner shall we be assured of victory in our personal conflicts, as we simply depend upon the Lord our salvation, worship him, and serve him with diligence.



## CHAPTER 6

*God's controversy with Israel. (1-5) The duties God requires. (6-8)  
The wickedness of Israel. (9-16)*

### Micah 6:1

**Vs. 1-5:** The people are called upon to declare why they were weary of God's worship, and prone to idolatry. Sin causes the controversy between God and man. God reasons with us, to teach us to reason with ourselves. Let them remember God's many favors to them and their fathers, and compare with them their unworthy, ungrateful conduct toward him.

### Micah 6:6

**Vs. 6-8:** These verses seem to contain the substance of Balak's consultation with Balaam how to obtain the favor of Israel's God. Deep conviction of guilt and wrath will put men upon careful inquiries after peace and pardon, and then there begins to be some ground for hope of them. In order to God's being pleased with us, our care must be for an interest in the atonement of Christ, and that the sin by which we displease him may be taken away. What will be a satisfaction to God's justice? In whose name must we come, as we have nothing to plead as our own? In what righteousness shall we appear before him? The proposals betray ignorance, though they show zeal. They offer that which is very rich and costly. Those who are fully convinced of sin, and of their misery and danger by reason of it, would give all the world, if they had it, for peace and pardon. Yet they do not offer aright. The sacrifices had value from their reference to Christ; it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin. And all proposals of peace, except those according to the gospel, are absurd. They could not answer the demands of Divine justice, nor satisfy the wrong done to the honor of God by sin, nor would they serve at all in place of holiness of the heart and reformation of the life. Men will part with any thing rather than their sins; but they part with nothing so as to be accepted of God, unless they do part with their sins. Moral duties are commanded because they are good for man. In keeping God's commandments there is a great reward, as well as after keeping them. God has not only made it known, but made it plain. The

good which God requires of us is, not the paying a price for the pardon of sin and acceptance with God, but love to himself; and what is there unreasonable, or hard, in this? Every thought within us must be brought down, to be brought into obedience to God, if we would walk comfortably with him. We must do this as penitent sinners, in dependence on the Redeemer and his atonement. Blessed be the Lord that he is ever ready to give his grace to the humble, waiting penitent.

 **Micah 6:9**

**Vs. 9-16:** God, having showed how necessary it was that they should do justly, here shows how plain it was that they had done unjustly. This voice of the Lord says to all, Hear the rod when it is coming, before you see it, and feel it. Hear the rod when it is come, and you are sensible of the smart; hear what counsels, what cautions it speaks. The voice of God is to be heard in the rod of God. Those who are dishonest in their dealings shall never be reckoned pure, whatever shows of devotion they may make. What is got by fraud and oppression, cannot be kept or enjoyed with satisfaction. What we hold closest we commonly lose soonest. Sin is a root of bitterness, soon planted, but not soon plucked up again. Their being the people of God in name and profession, while they kept themselves in his love, was an honor to them; but now, being backsliders, their having been once the people of God turns to their reproach.

## CHAPTER 7

*The general prevalence of wickedness. (1-7) Reliance on God, and triumph over enemies. (8-13) Promises and encouragements for Israel. (14-20)*

### Micah 7:1

**Vs. 1-7:** The prophet bemoans himself that he lived among a people ripening apace for ruin, in which many good persons would suffer. Men had no comfort, no satisfaction in their own families or in their nearest relations. Contempt and violation of domestic duties are a sad symptom of universal corruption. Those are never likely to come to good who are undutiful to their parents. The prophet saw no safety or comfort but in looking to the Lord, and waiting on God his salvation. When under trials, we should look continually to our Divine Redeemer, that we may have strength and grace to trust in him, and to be examples to those around us.

### Micah 7:8

**Vs. 8-13:** Those truly penitent for sin, will see great reason to be patient under affliction. When we complain to the Lord of the badness of the times, we ought to complain against ourselves for the badness of our hearts. We must depend upon God to work deliverance for us in due time. We must not only look to him, but look for him. In our greatest distresses, we shall see no reason to despair of salvation, if by faith we look to the Lord as the God of our salvation. Though enemies triumph and insult, they shall be silenced and put to shame. Though Zion's walls may long be in ruins, there will come a day when they shall be repaired. Israel shall come from all the remote parts, not turning back for discouragements. Though our enemies may seem to prevail against us, and to rejoice over us, we should not despond. Though cast down, we are not destroyed; we may join hope in God's mercy, with submission to his correction. No hindrances can prevent the favors the Lord intends for his church.

**Micah 7:14**

**Vs. 14-20:** When God is about to deliver his people, he stirs up their friends to pray for them. Apply spiritually the prophet's prayer to Christ, to take care of his church, as the great Shepherd of the sheep, and to go before them, while they are here in this world as in a wood, in this world but not of it. God promises in answer to this prayer, he will do that for them which shall be repeating the miracles of former ages. As their sin brought them into bondage, so God's pardoning their sin brought them out. All who find pardoning mercy, cannot but wonder at that mercy; we have reason to stand amazed, if we know what it is. When the Lord takes away the guilt of sin, that it may not condemn us, he will break the power of sin, that it may not have dominion over us. If left to ourselves, our sins will be too hard for us; but God's grace shall be sufficient to subdue them, so that they shall not rule us, and then they shall not ruin us. When God forgives sin, he takes care that it never shall be remembered any more against the sinner. He casts their sins into the sea; not near the shore-side, where they may appear again, but into the depth of the sea, never to rise again. All their sins shall be cast there, for when God forgives sin, he forgives all. He will perfect that which concerns us, and with this good work will do all for us which our case requires, and which he has promised. These engagements relate to Christ, and the success of the gospel to the end of time, the future restoration of Israel, and the final prevailing of true religion in all lands. The Lord will perform his truth and mercy, not one jot or tittle of it shall fall to the ground: faithful is He that has promised, who also will do it. Let us remember that the Lord has given the security of his covenant, for strong consolation to all who flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in Christ Jesus.