

8. MICAH

735 – 700 BC

Micah prophesied during a similar period to Isaiah and Hosea. He predicted both the fall of Samaria in 722 and the fall of Jerusalem in 586.

The Messiah will gather Israel and rule from Zion

Micah 4:1-8

Micah 4:1-3 is almost identical to Isaiah 2:2-4. The context is the ‘latter days,’ a phrase that together with ‘on that day’ signals that the prophet is prophesying about the far future, namely the Messianic era when the nations will live according to instructions they receive from the Lord in Jerusalem. The nations will make voluntary pilgrimages to the temple to worship Israel’s God and to learn his ways so that they can walk in his paths. In this way, the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Jesus the Messiah, as God’s regent, will judge the nations, rule over them, and put an end to all warfare. He is not explicitly mentioned in this text, but Micah does say that Zion’s former dominion will be restored and kingship will return to Jerusalem.

In that day, when the Gentiles who survive the destruction of the world at the second coming are making their pilgrimages to Zion, the Lord will gather the weak and lame remnant of Israel and make them into a powerful nation and rule over them “forever,” the thousand years of Revelation 20:1-6. This is the beginning of a new era, the kingdom age. The Church is not in focus here, as in most of the OT prophecies.

Zion's victory over the nations

Micah 4:11-13

These verses refer to more than Israel's local enemies; the surrounding Muslim nations. 'Many nations' are assembled against Jerusalem to profane her; it is not the Assyrian siege. They want to defile her because she has the reputation of being the Holy City, the city of God. This suggests the battle of Armageddon; it is similar to the predictions made in Joel 3:12-13, Ezek 38-39, and Zech 12:1-9. The Lord works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, but they don't recognize his plan. The Lord will gather these nations as sheaves to the threshing floor so that he might come and give Israel victory over insurmountable odds. Israel will beat them to pieces and devote their wealth to the Messiah, who will be Lord over the whole earth.

We might add here Micah 7:11-13, 16-17 which speaks of a day when Israel will be extending its boundaries after the Lord's return, when the enemy will be trampled down like mire in the streets. The land promised to Abraham extended from the wadi of Egypt, which is in the Sinai Peninsula and now belongs to Egypt, to the River Euphrates. People will come to Israel from Egypt, Iraq, and neighboring lands. The Iraqi Jews, almost half a million of them, have already migrated to Israel.

Muslim neighbors will be the first people to acknowledge the Messiah when he comes because they are well acquainted with the fact that Jews and Christians are awaiting the Messiah. Over time all nations will make their pilgrimages to Jerusalem. They will turn in dread to the Lord God and they will be in awe of Israel and fear them.

The Messiah will rule over Israel

Micah 5:2-5a

One who is to be a ruler in Israel will come from a small village of Judah named Bethlehem. Despite this ignoble beginning, his existence

has been from antiquity, even from eternity. He is Jesus, the Messiah. He is both God and man. This was not such a strange idea to the Jewish prophets. Isaiah called the Messiah “Mighty God” and “Everlasting Father.”

Bethlehem was an insignificant place, and Israel at that time was not an independent and powerful nation. God would give them up until the time when “she who is in labor has given birth.” The mother is Zion and the son born to her is the new nation of Israel and its population (Isa 54:1-3, 66:7-8, Mic 4:9-10, 5:3). The birth spoken of here is not that of the Messiah, because his birth did not signal the time when Israel would be restored, but the birth of Israel did. Only then will the rest of his (Messiah’s) brothers return from their dispersion: Presently there are 7.3 million Jews in the US, 440,000 in France, 390,000 in Canada, 170,000 in Argentina, 150,000 in Russia, and 120,000 in both Germany and Australia. The time is not far away when the Messiah will return and:

“He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they will live securely,
for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.
And he will be their peace.

This passage describes the reign of Jesus the Messiah as he rules the world in the power and majesty of God. His people, Israel, will live in security and his greatness and kingdom will extend over the whole planet. He will at last bring peace to Israel and his universal rule will be characterized by peace and righteousness.

When wise men from the east came to King Herod and asked him where the king of the Jews who had recently been born was, Herod assembled the chief priests and scribes to ascertain the prophesied birthplace of the Messiah. They told him it was Bethlehem, and they quoted Micah 5:2 as their evidence.