
a ***Grace Notes*** course

Micah

From Commentary on the Old Testament

C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch

adapted for Grace Notes training by Warren Doud

Grace Notes

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Micah

Introduction

Person of the Prophet.—*Micah*, מִיכָה, an abbreviated form of מִיכָיָהוּ (Micaiah), as he is called in Jer. 26:18, which is also a contraction of מִיכָיָהוּ, “who is as Jehovah?”—i.e., one dedicated to Jehovah the incomparable God (Greek, Μιχαίας; Vulg. *Michaeas* or *Micha*, Neh. 11:17)—is called *hammorashtī*, the Morashitite, i.e., sprung from Moresheth-Gath in the plain of Judah (see at Mic. 1:14), to distinguish him from the elder prophet Micah the son of Imlah (1 Kings 22:8ff.), as well as from other persons of the same name, of whom ten are met with in the Old Testament, apart from Maacah the wife of Rehoboam, a grand-daughter of Absalom (1 Kings 15:2, 10, 13; 2 Chron. 11:20ff.), who is also called מִיכָיָהוּ in 2 Chron. 13:2 (see Caspari on *Micha*, p. 3ff.). Our Micah was therefore a Judaeon, and prophesied, according to the heading to his book, in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah; so that he was contemporaneous with Isaiah. He prophesied “concerning Samaria and Jerusalem,” the capitals of the two kingdoms, that is to say, concerning all Israel, the fate of which was determined by the circumstances and fates of the two capitals. The correctness of this statement, and at the same time the genuineness of the heading, are confirmed by the contents of the book. Micah not only predicts, in Mic. 1:6, 7, the destruction of Samaria, which took place in the sixth year of Hezekiah; but he also mentions Asshur, the great enemy of Israel at that time, as the representative of the power of the world in its hostility to the kingdom of God (Mic. 5:4); and he agrees so thoroughly with Isaiah in his description of the prevailing moral corruption, as well as in his Messianic prophecies, that we are warranted in inferring the contemporaneous labours of the two prophets (compare Mic. 2:11 with Isa. 28:7; Mic. 3:5–7 with Isa. 29:9–12; Mic. 3:12 with Isa. 32:13, 14; and Mic. 4:1–5 with Isa. 2:2–5; Mic. 5:2–4 with

Isa. 7:14 and 9:5). To this we may add the account in Jer. 26:18, 19, that certain men of the elders of Judah, when seeking to vindicate Jeremiah, who was condemned to death on account of his prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, quoted word for word Mic. 3:12, to show that in the days of Hezekiah Micah had predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, without having been put to death by king Hezekiah and all Judah. It is true that Hitzig, Ewald, and others, have founded an argument upon this against the correctness of the heading to our book, according to which Micah prophesied not only under Hezekiah, but also under Jotham and Ahaz, interpreting it as meaning that the elders of Judah knew from good historical tradition the time when the particular words in Mic. 3–5 had first been uttered. But they are wrong in this. For even if Micah had uttered this prophecy for the first time in the reign of Hezekiah, it would by no means follow that he had not also prophesied before that, namely, in the reign of Hezekiah. The relation in which Mic. 4:1–5 stands to Isa. 2:2–5 is sufficient of itself to point to the times of Jotham (see at Mic. 4:1). Again, Mic. 6:16 does not suit the times of Hezekiah, but only those of Ahaz, who walked to such an extent in the ways of the kings of Israel (2 Kings 16:3; 2 Chron. 28:2), that Judah could be charged with holding by the statutes of Omri and all the deeds of the house of Ahab. Moreover, the assumption that the elders of Judah in the time of Jehoiakim knew from good traditional authority the precise time in which Micah uttered that threat, is quite an unfounded one. They simply knew that Micah’s prophetic writings sprang from the time of Hezekiah; and of the kings under whom Micah prophesied according to the statement of the writings themselves (Mic. 1:1), they mention only Hezekiah, because he was the only one who “constituted a spiritual authority” (Hengstenberg). But the fact that Micah’s prophecies were committed to writing in the time of Hezekiah by no means precludes the supposition that either the prophecies themselves, or certain portions of them, were

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uttered orally to the people before that time. Hitzig's attempt to prove that all the three addresses in our book were composed in the time of Hezekiah, is founded upon a false historical interpretation, and upon unscriptural ideas of the nature of prophecy.

We know nothing more about the circumstances of Micah's life, than what may be gathered from his writings. According to these, he no doubt prophesied in Jerusalem, the capital of his native land. This is evident from the fact that he chiefly condemns the moral corruption of the great and mighty men of the kingdom, and makes Zion and Jerusalem for the most part the centre of his prophecies. There is not sufficient ground for Ewald's assertion, that there are many signs which indicate an inhabitant of the plain. The introduction of the names of particular places in Judah in Mic. 1:10–15 furnishes no proof of any "peculiar interest in the Jewish country, more especially the Jewish lowland, as being his home." Only a portion of the places mentioned in this passage were situated in the lowland. Moreover, Isaiah also enumerates a whole list of places in Judah (Isa. 10:28–32), and is minutely acquainted with the circumstances of Zebulun and Naphtali, and the neighbourhood of the Sea of Galilee (Isa. 8:23), although he was settled in Jerusalem, and had probably been born there. Still more precarious is the inference that has been drawn from Micah's somewhat rough and rugged style. For all that can be adduced in support of this is confined to the rapid and abrupt transitions from threatening to promise, in which he resembles Hosea (vid., Hos. 2:1–11, 12, 13; 3:9–12; 4:1ff.), and generally from one subject to another (e.g., Mic. 7:1–7; 7:11–13), but more especially from one person to another, or from one number and gender to another (Mic. 1:10; 6:16; 7:15–19). This may be all explained from the vivacity of his won individuality, and the excited state of his mind; and simply indicators the boldness of his words, but not any want of culture in his style. His words are never deficient in clearness or evenness; whilst in abundance of figures, similes (Mic. 1:8, 16; 2:12, 13; 4:9, etc.), and

rhetorical tropes, as well as in speciality, paronomasia, in play upon words (Mic. 1:10–15), and dialogue (Mic. 2:7–11; 6:1–8; 7:7–20), his style resembles that of his highly cultivated contemporary Isaiah. The traditional accounts respecting his descent from the tribe of Ephraim, his death, and his grave, contained in Ps. Dorotheus and Ps. Epiphanius (collected in Carpzovii, *Introd.* iii. pp. 373–4), have partly originated in the confounding of our Micah with the elder Micah the son of Imlah, who lived in the reign of Ahab, and are partly inferences from the heading to our book.

2. The Book of Micah.—The contents of the book consist of three prophetic addresses, which are clearly distinguished from one another in form by similarity of introduction (all three commencing with *שמעו*, Mic. 1:2; 3:1; 6:1), and substantially by their contents, which pass through the various stages of reproof, threat, and promise, and are thereby rounded off; so that all attempts at any other division, such as that of Ewald to connect Mic. 3 with the first address, or to arrange the book in two parts (Mic. 1–5 and 6, 7), are obviously arbitrary. Ch. 3 can only be connected with Mic. 1 and 2 so as to form one address, on the groundless assumption that Mic. 2:12, 13 are a later gloss that has crept into the text; and though the *וְאָמַר* before *וְשָׁמַעוּ* in Mic. 3:1 does indeed connect the second address more closely with the first than with the third, it by no means warrants our dividing the whole book into two parts. In the three addresses, Mic. 1, 2, 3–5, and 6, 7, we have not "three prophecies of Micah, delivered to the people at three different times," as Hitzig and Maurer still suppose, but merely a condensation rhetorically arranged of the essential contents of his verbal utterances, as committed to writings by Micah himself at the end of his prophetic course in the time of Hezekiah. For these addresses are proved to be merely portions or sections of a single whole, by the absence of all reference to the concrete circumstances of any particular portion of time, and still more by their organic combination, as seen in the clearly marked and carefully

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planned progressive movement apparent in their contents. In the *first* address, after a general announcement of judgment on account of the sins of Israel (Mic. 1:2-5), Micah predicts the destruction of Samaria (vv. 6, 7), and the devastation of Judah with the deportation of its inhabitants (vv. 8-16), and justifies this threat by an earnest and brief reproof of the existing acts of injustice and violence on the part of the great men (Mic. 2:1-5), and a sharp correction of their abettors the false prophets. (vv. 6-11); after which this address closes with a brief promise of the eventual restoration of the remnant of Israel to favour (vv. 12, 13). The *second* address closes with a brief promise of the eventual restoration of the remnant of Israel to favour (vv. 12, 13). The *second* address spreads itself out still more elaborately in the first half (Mic. 3) over the sins and crimes of the heads of the nation, viz., the princes, the false prophets, the unjust judges and bad priests; and because of these sins threatens the destruction and utter devastation of Zion, and the temple hill. As an antithesis to this threat, the second half (Mic. 4 and 5) contains a promise, commencing with the opening of a prospect of the glorification of Zion and Israel at the end of the days (Mic. 4:1-7), advancing to an assurance of the restoration of the former dominion of the daughter of Zion, after the people have first been carried away to Babel, and rescued again out of the hand of their enemies, and of her triumph in the last conflict with the nations of the world (vv. 8-14), and culminating in the announcement of the birth of the great Ruler in Israel, who will arise out of Bethlehem, and feed His people in the majesty of Jehovah (Mic. 5:1-5), and not only protect the rescued remnant of Jacob against the attacks of the imperial kingdom, but exalt it into a beneficent, and at the same time fearful, power to the heathen nations (vv. 6-8), and establish a kingdom of blessed peace (vv. 9-14). The *third* address sets forth the way to salvation in the dramatic dress of a law-suit between Jehovah and His people, by exhibiting the divine benefits for which Israel had repaid its God with ingratitude, and by a repeated

allusion to the prevailing sins and unrighteousness which God must punish (Mic. 6), and also by showing how the consciousness of misery will lead to the penitential confession of guilt and to conversion, and by encouraging to believing trust in the compassion upon His people, rebuild Zion, and humble the foe, and by renewing the miracles of the olden time fill all nations with fear of His omnipotence (Mic. 7:1-17); after which the prophet closes his book with praise for the sin-forgiving grace of the Lord (vv. 18-2).

From this general survey of the contents of the three addresses, their internal connection may be at once perceived. In the first the threatening of judgment predominates; in the second the announcement of the Messianic salvation; in the third there follows the *paraenesis* or admonition to repentance and humiliation under the chastising hand of the Lord, in order to participate in the promised salvation. As this admonition rests upon the threat of judgment and promise of salvation in the two previous addresses, so does the allusion to the judgment contained in the words, "Then will they cry to Jehovah, and He will not answer them" (Mic. 3:4), presuppose the announcement in Mic. 1 of the judgment about to burst upon the land, without which it would be perfectly unintelligible. Consequently there can be no doubt whatever that Micah has simply concentrated the quintessence of his oral discourses into the addresses contained in his book. This quintessence, moreover, shows clearly enough that our prophet was not at all behind his contemporary Isaiah, either in the clearness and distinctness of his Messianic announcements, or in the power and energy with which he combated the sins and vices of the nation. There is simply this essential difference, so far as the latter point is concerned, that he merely combats the religious and moral corruptness of the rulers of the nation, and does not touch upon their conduct on its political side. (For the exegetical literature, see my *Lehrbuch der Einleitung*, p. 296.)

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Micah 1

I. Israel's Banishment into Exile, and Restoration—Ch. 1 and 2

Micah 1–2. The prophet's first address is throughout of a threatening and punitive character; it is not till quite the close, that the sun of divine grace breaks brightly shining through the thunder clouds of judgment. The announcement of the judgment upon Samaria as well as upon the kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem forms the first part (Mic. 1:2–16); the reproof of the sins, especially of the unrighteousness of the great and mighty of the nation, the second part (Mic. 2:1–11); and a brief but very comprehensive announcement of the salvation that will dawn upon the remnant of all Israel after the judgment, the conclusion of the address (Mic. 2:12, 13).

The Judgment Upon Samaria and Judah—Ch. 1

Micah 1. Micah, commencing with the appeal to all nations to observe the coming of the Lord for judgment upon the earth (vv. 2–4), announces to the people of Israel, on account of its sins and its apostasy from the Lord, the destruction of Samaria (vv. 5–7) and the spreading of the judgment over Judah; and shows how, passing from place to place, and proceeding to Jerusalem, and even farther, it will throw the kingdom into deep lamentation on account of the carrying away of its inhabitants.

Micah 1:1–7. The heading in v. 1 has been explained in the introduction. Vv. 2–4 form the introduction to the prophet's address. V. 2. *"Hear, all ye nations: observe, O earth, and that which fills it: and let the Lord Jehovah be a witness against you, the Lord out of His holy palace.* V. 3. *For, behold, Jehovah cometh forth from His place, and cometh down, and marcheth over the high places of the earth.* V. 4. *And the mountains will melt under Him, and the valleys split, like wax before the fire, like water poured out upon a slope."* The introductory words, "Hear, ye nations all," are taken by Micah from his earlier namesake the son of Imlah (1 Kings

22:28). As the latter, in his attack upon the false prophets, called all nations as witnesses to confirm the truth of his prophecy, so does Micah the Morashite commence his prophetic testimony with the same appeal, so as to announce his labours at the very outset as a continuation of the activity of his predecessor who had been so zealous for the Lord. As the son of Imlah had to contend against the false prophets as seducers of the nation, so has also the Morashtite (compare Mic. 2:6, 11; 3:5, 11); and as the former had to announce to both kingdoms the judgment that would come upon them on account of their sins, so has also the latter; and he does it by frequently referring to the prophecy of the elder Micah, not only by designating the false prophets as those who walk after the *rūäch* and lie, *sheqer* (Mic. 2:11), which recals to mind the *rūäch sheqer* of the prophets of Ahab (1 Kings 22:22, 23), but also in his use of the figures of the horn of iron in Mic. 4:13, 14 (compare the horns of iron of the false prophet Zedekiah in 1 Kings 22:11), and of the smiting upon the cheek in Mic. 4:14 (compare 1 Kings 22:14). *'Ammīm kullâm* does not mean all the tribes of Israel; still less does it mean warlike nations. *'Ammīm* never has the second meaning, and the first it has only in the primitive language of the Pentateuch. But here both these meanings are precluded by the parallel אַרְצָךְ וּמְלֵאָה; for this expression invariably signifies the whole earth, with that which fills it, except in such a case as Jer. 8:16, where *'erets* is restricted to the land of Israel by the preceding *hâ'ârets*, or Ezek. 12:19, where it is so restricted by the suffix *'artsâh*. The appeal to the earth and its fulness is similar to the appeals to the heaven and the earth in Isa. 1:2 and Deut. 32:1. All nations, yea the whole earth, and all creatures upon it, are to hear, because the judgment which the prophet has to announce to Israel affects the whole earth (vv. 3, 4), the judgment upon Israel being connected with the judgment upon all nations, or forming a portion of that judgment. In the second clause of the verse, "the Lord Jehovah be witness against you," it is doubtful who is addressed in the expression "against you." The words cannot

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well be addressed to all nations and to the earth, because the Lord only rises up as a witness against the man who has despised His word and transgressed His commandments. For being a witness is not equivalent to witnessing or giving testimony by words,—say, for example, by the admonitory and corrective address of the prophet which follows, as C. B. Michaelis supposes,—but refers to the practical testimony given by the Lord in the judgment (vv. 3 ff), as in Mal. 3:5 and Jer. 42:5. Now, although the Lord is described as the Judge of the world in vv. 3 and 4, yet, according to vv. 5ff., He only comes to execute judgment upon Israel. Consequently we must refer the words “to you” to Israel, or rather to the capitals Samaria and Jerusalem mentioned in v. 1, just as in Nahum 1:8 the suffix simply refers to the Nineveh mentioned in the heading, to which there has been no further allusion in vv. 2–7. This view is also favoured by the fact that Micah summons all nations to hear his word, in the same sense as his earlier namesake in 1 Kings 22:28. What the prophet announces in word, the Lord will confirm by deed,—namely, by executing the predicted judgment,—and indeed “the Lord out of His holy temple,” i.e., the heaven where He is enthroned (Ps. 11:4); for (v. 3) the Lord will rise up from thence, and striding over the high places of the earth, i.e., as unbounded Ruler of the world (cf. Amos 4:13 and Deut. 32:13), will come down in fire, so that the mountains melt before Him, that is to say, as Judge of the world. The description of this theophany is founded upon the idea of a terrible storm and earthquake, as in Ps. 18:8ff. The mountains melt (Judg. 5:4 and Ps. 68:9) with the streams of water, which discharge themselves from heaven (Judg. 5:4), and the valleys split with the deep channels cut out by the torrents of water. The similes, “like wax,” etc. (as in Ps. 68:3), and “like water,” etc., are intended to express the complete dissolution of mountains and valleys. The actual facts answering to this description are the destructive influences exerted upon nature by great national judgments.

Micah 1:5–7. This judicial interposition on the part of God is occasioned by the sin of Israel. V. 5. *“For the apostasy of Jacob (is) all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. Who is Jacob’s apostasy? is it not Samaria? And who Judah’s high places? is it not Jerusalem?”* V. 6. *Therefore I make Samaria into a stone-heap of the field, into plantations of vines; and I pour her stones into the valley, and I will lay bare her foundations.* V. 7. *And all her stone images will be beaten to pieces, and all her lovers’ gifts be burned with fire, and all her idols will I make into a waste: for she has gathered them of prostitute’s hire, and to prostitute’s hire shall they return.”* “All this” refers to the coming of Jehovah to judgment announced in vv. 3, 4. This takes place on account of the apostasy and the sins of Israel. כָּ (for) used to denote reward or wages, as in 2 Sam. 3:27 compared with v. 30. Jacob and Israel in v. 5a are synonymous, signifying the whole of the covenant nation, as we may see from the fact that in v. 5b Jacob and not Israel is the epithet applied to the ten tribes in distinction from Judah. מִי, who?—referring to the author. The apostasy of Israel originates with Samaria; the worship on the high places with Jerusalem. The capitals of the two kingdoms are the authors of the apostasy, as the centres and sources of the corruption which has spread from them over the kingdoms. The allusion to the *bâmōth* of the illegal worship of the high places, which even the most godly kings were unable to abolish (see at 1 Kings 15:14), shows, moreover, that אַשְׁמָרָה denotes that religious apostasy from Jehovah which was formally sanctioned in the kingdom of the ten tribes by the introduction of the calf-worship. But because this apostasy commenced in the kingdom of the ten tribes, the punishment would fall upon this kingdom first, and Samaria would be utterly destroyed. Stone-heaps of the field and vineyard plantations harmonize badly, in Hitzig’s view: he therefore proposes to alter the text. But there is no necessity for this. The point of comparison is simply that Samaria will be so destroyed, that not a single trace of a city will be left, and the site thereof will become like

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a ploughed field or plain. הַשָּׂדֶה is added to עַי, a heap of ruins or stones, to strengthen it. Samaria shall become like a heap, not of ruins of building stones, but of stones collected from the field. לְמִטְעֵי כָרֶם, i.e., into arable land upon which you can plant vineyards. The figure answers to the situation of Samaria upon a hill in a very fruitful region, which was well adapted for planting vineyards (see at Amos 3:9). The situation of the city helps to explain the casting of its stones into the valley. Laying bare the foundations denotes destruction to the very foundation (cf. Ps. 137:7). On the destruction of the city all its idols will be annihilated. *Pesilim*, idols, as in Isa. 10:10; not wooden idols, however, to which the expression *yukkattū*, smitten to pieces, would not apply, but stone idols, from *pāsal* (Ex. 34:1). By the lovers' gifts (*ethnân*, see at Hos. 9:1) we are to understand, not "the riches of the city or their possessions, inasmuch as the idolaters regarded their wealth and prosperity as a reward from their gods, according to Hos. 2:7, 14" (Rashi, Hitzig, and others), but the temple gifts, "gifts suspended in the temples and sacred places in honour of the gods" (Rosenmüller), by which the temple worship with its apparatus were maintained; so that by *'ethnân* we may understand the entire apparatus of religious worship. For the parallelism of the clauses requires that the word should be restricted to this. עֲצָבִים are also idolatrous images. "To make them into a waste," i.e., not only to divest them of their ornament, but so utterly to destroy them that the place where they once stood becomes waste. The next clause, containing the reason, must not be restricted to the *'ātsabbīm*, as Hitzig supposes, but refers to the two clauses of the first hemistich, so that *pesilim* and *'ātsabbīm* are to be supplied as objects to *qibbātsâh* (she gathered), and to be regarded as the subject to *yāshūbhū* (shall return). Samaria gathered together the entire apparatus of her idolatrous worship from prostitute's gifts (the wages of prostitution), namely, through gifts presented by the idolaters. The acquisition of all this is described as the gain of prostitute's

wages, according to the scriptural view that idolatry was spiritual whoredom. There is no ground for thinking of literal wages of prostitution, or money which flowed into the temples from the voluptuous worship of Aphrodite, because Micah had in his mind not literal (heathenish) idolatry, but simply the transformation of the Jehovah-worship into idolatry by the worship of Jehovah under the symbols of the golden calves. These things return back to the wages of prostitution, i.e., they become this once more (cf. Gen. 3:19) by being carried away by the enemies, who conquer the city and destroy it, and being applied to their idolatrous worship. On the capture of cities, the idols and temple treasures were carried away (cf. Isa. 46:1, 2; Dan. 1:3).

Micah 1:8–16. The judgment will not stop at Samaria, however, but spread over Judah. The prophet depicts this by saying that he will go about mourning as a prisoner, to set forth the misery that will come upon Judah (vv. 8, 9); and then, to confirm this, he announces to a series of cities the fate awaiting them, or rather awaiting the kingdom, by a continued play upon words founded upon their names (vv. 10–15); and finally he summons Zion to deep mourning (v. 16). V. 8. "Therefore will I lament and howl, I will go spoiled and naked: I will keep lamentation like the jackals, and mourning like the ostriches. V. 9. For her stripes are malignant; for it comes to Judah, reaches to the gate of my people, to Jerusalem." עַל־זֹאת points back to what precedes, and is then explained in v. 9. The prophet will lament over the destruction of Samaria, because the judgment which has befallen this city will come upon Judah also. Micah does not speak in his own name here as a patriot (Hitzig), but in the name of his nation, with which he identifies himself as being a member thereof. This is indisputably evident from the expression שִׁילָל וְעָרוֹם אֵילָכָה, which describes the costume of a prisoner, not that of a mourner. The form אֵילָכָה with ם appears to have been simply suggested by אֵילָלָה, which is formed like הֵיָדָד in Isa. 16:9, 10, and other

similar words (see Olshausen, *Gramm.* p. 342). The Masoretes have substituted שָׁלָל, after Job 12:17, but without the slightest reason. It does not mean “barefooted,” ἀνυπόδετος (LXX), for which there was already יָחַף in the language (2 Sam. 15:30; Isa. 20:2, 3; Jer. 2:25), but plundered, spoiled. עָרוֹם, naked, i.e., without upper garment (see my comm. on 1 Sam. 19:24), not merely *vestitu solido et decente privatus*. Mourners do indeed go barefooted (*yâchēph*, see 2 Sam. 15:30), and in deep mourning in a hairy garment (*saq*, 2 Sam. 3:31; Gen. 37:34, etc.), but not plundered and naked. The assertion, however, that a man was called *’ârôm* when he had put on a mourning garment (*saq*, sackcloth) in the place of his upper garment, derives no support from Isa. 20:2, but rather a refutation. For there the prophet does not go about *’ârôm v’yâchēph*, i.e., in the dress of a prisoner, to symbolize the captivity of Egypt, till after he has loosened the hairy garment (*saq*) from his loins, i.e., taken it off. And here also the plundering of the prophet and his walking naked are to be understood in the same way. Micah’s intention is not only to exhibit publicly his mourning fore the approaching calamity of Judah, but also to set forth in a symbolical form the fate that awaits the Judaeans. And he can only do this by including himself in the nation, and exhibiting the fate of the nation in his own person. Wailing like jackals and ostriches is a loud, strong, mournful cry, those animals being distinguished by a mournful wail; see the comm. on Job 30:29, which passage may possibly have floated before the prophet’s mind. Thus shall Judah wail, because the stroke which falls upon Samaria is a malignant, i.e., incurable (the suffix attached to מְבוֹתֶיהָ refers to *Shōmerōn*, Samaria, in vv. 6 and 7. For the singular of the predicate before a subject in the plural, see Ewald, § 295, *a*, and 317, *a*). It reaches to Judah, yea, to Jerusalem. Jerusalem, as the capital, is called the “gate of my people,” because in it *par excellence* the people went out and in. That עַד is not exclusive here, but

inclusive, embracing the *terminus ad quem*, is evident from the parallel “even to Judah;” for if it only reached to the border of Judah, it would not have been able to come to Jerusalem; and still more clearly so from the description in vv. 10ff. The fact that Jerusalem is not mentioned till after Judah is to be interpreted rhetorically, and not geographically. Even the capital, where the temple of Jehovah stood, would not be spared.

Micah 1:11, 12. The penetration of the judgment into Judah is now clearly depicted by an individualizing enumeration of a number of cities which will be smitten by it. V. 10. “Go not to Gath to declare it; weeping, weep not. At Beth-Leafra (*dust-home*) I have strewed dust upon myself. V. 11. Pass thou away, O inhabitress of Shafir (*beautiful city*), stripped in shame. The inhabitress of Zaanan (*departure*) has not departed; the lamentation of Beth-Haëzel (*near-house*) takes from you the standing near it. V. 12. For the inhabitress of Maroth (*bitterness*) writhes for good; for evil has come down from Jehovah to the gate of Jerusalem.” The description commences with words borrowed from David’s elegy on the death of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:20), “Publish it not in Gath,” in which there is a play upon the words in *bēgath* and *taggîdû*. The Philistines are not to hear of the distress of Judah, lest they should rejoice over it. There is also a play upon words in בְּבוֹ אֶל-תְּבִבּוֹ. The sentence belongs to what precedes, and supplies the fuller definition, that they are not to proclaim the calamity in Gath with weeping, i.e., not to weep over it there.¹ After this reminiscence of the mourning of David for Saul, which expresses the greatness of the grief, and is all the more significant, because in the approaching catastrophe Judah is also to lose its king (cf. 4:9), so that David is to experience the fate of Saul (Hengstenberg), Micah mentions places in which Judah will mourn, or, at any rate, experience something very painful. From v. 10b to v. 15 he mentions ten places, whose names, with a very slight alteration, were adapted for *jeux de mots*, with which to depict what would happen to them or

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take place within them. The number ten (the stamp of completeness, pointing to the fact that the judgment would be a complete one, spreading over the whole kingdom) is divided into twice five by the statement, which is repeated in v. 12, that the calamity would come to the fate of Jerusalem; five places being mentioned before Jerusalem (vv. 10–12), and five after (vv. 13–15). This division makes Hengstenberg’s conjecture a very natural one, viz., that the five places mentioned before Jerusalem are to be sought for to the north of Jerusalem, and the others to the south or south-west, and that in this way Micah indicates that the judgment will proceed from the north to the south. On the other hand, Caspari’s opinion, that the prophet simply enumerates certain places in the neighbourhood of Moresheth, his own home, rests upon no firm foundation.

בֵּית לְעֶפְרָה is probably the *Ophra* of Benjamin (עֶפְרָה, Josh. 18:23), which was situated, according to Eusebius, not far from Bethel (see comm. on Josh. *l.c.*). It is pointed with *pathach* here for the sake of the paronomasia with עֶפְרָה. The *chethib* הַתְּפִלְשָׁתִי is the correct reading, the *keri* הַתְּפִלְשִׁי being merely an emendation springing out of a misunderstanding of the true meaning. הַתְּפִלְשִׁי does not mean to revolve, but to bestrew one’s self. Bestrewing with dust or ashes was a sign of deep mourning (Jer. 6:26; 2 Sam. 13:19). The prophet speaks in the name of the people of what the people will do. The inhabitants of Shafir are to go stripped into captivity. עָבַר, to pass by, here in the sense of moving forwards. The plural לְכֶם is to be accounted for from the fact that *yōshebheheth* is the population. *Shâphîr*, i.e., beautiful city, is not the same as the *Shâmîr* in Josh. 15:48, for this was situated in the south-west of the mountains of Judah; nor the same as the *Shâmîr* in the mountains of Ephraim (Judg. 10:1), which did not belong to the kingdom of Judah; but is a place to the north of Jerusalem, of which nothing further is known. The statement in the *Onomast. s.v.* Σαφείρ ἐν γῆ ὀρεινῇ between

Eleutheropolis and Askalon—is probably intended to apply to the *Shâmîr* of Joshua; but this is evidently erroneous, as the country between Eleutheropolis and Askalon did not belong to the mountains of Judah, but to the Shephelah. עֶרְיָה-בִשָּׁת, a combination like עֶנְוָה-צָדֵק in Ps. 45:5, equivalent to stripping which is shame, shame-nakedness = ignominious stripping. עֶרְיָה is an accusative defining the manner in which they would go out. The next two clauses are difficult to explain. צִאָּן, a play upon words with יִצְאָה, is traceable to this verb, so far as its meaning is concerned. The primary meaning of the name is uncertain; the more modern commentators combine it with צִאָּן, in the sense of rich in flocks. The situation of *Zaanan* is quite unknown. The supposed identity with *Zenân* (see at Josh. 15:37) must be given up, as *Zenân* was in the plain, and *Zaanan* was most probably to the north of Jerusalem. The meaning of the clause can hardly be any other than this, that the population of *Zaanan* had not gone out of their city to this war from fear of the enemy, but, on the contrary, had fallen back behind their walls (Ros., Casp., Hitzig). בֵּית הָאֶצֶל is most likely the same as אֶצֶל in Zech. 14:5, a place in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, to the east of the Mount of Olives, as *Beth* is frequently omitted in the names of places (see Ges. *Thes. p.* 193). *Etsel* signifies side, and as an adverb or preposition, “by the side of.” This meaning comes into consideration there. The thought of the words *mispad bēth*, etc., might be: “The lamentation of *Beth-Haezel* will take away its standing (the standing by the side of it, *etslō*) from you (Judaeans), i.e., will not allow you to tarry there as fugitives (cf. Jer. 48:45). The distress into which the enemy staying there has plunged *Beth-Haezel*, will make it impossible for you to stop there” (Hitzig, Caspari). But the next clause, which is connected by כִּי, does not suit this explanation (v. 12b). The only way in which this clause can be made to follow suitably as an explanation is by taking the

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words thus: "The lamentation of Beth-Haezel will take its standing (the stopping of the calamity or judgment) from you, i.e., stop near it, as we should expect from its name; for (v. 12) Maroth, which stands further off, will feel pain," etc. With this view, which Caspari also suggests, Hengstenberg (on Zech. 14:5) agrees in the main, except that he refers the suffix in עֲמָדָתוֹ to מְסַפֵּד, and renders the words thus: "The lamentation of Beth-Haezel will take its stopping away from you, i.e., the calamity will not stop at Beth-Haezel (at the near house), i.e., stop near it, as we should expect from its name; for (v. 12) Maroth, which stands further off, will feel pain," etc. With this view, which Caspari also suggests, Hengstenberg (on Zech. 14:5) agrees in the main, except that he refers the suffix in עֲמָדָתוֹ to מְסַפֵּד, and renders the words thus: "The lamentation of Beth-Haezel will take its stopping away from you, i.e., will not allow you the stopping of the lamentation." Grammatically considered, this connection is the more natural one; but there is this objection, that it cannot be shown that עָמַד is used in the sense of the stopping or ceasing of a lamentation, whereas the supposition that the suffix refers to the calamity simply by *constructio ad sensum* has all the less difficulty, inasmuch as the calamity has already been hinted at in the verb נָגַן in v. 9, and in v. 10a also it forms the object to be supplied in thought. *Maroth* (lit., something bitter, bitternesses) is quite unknown; it is simply evident, from the explanatory clause כִּי יָרַד וּגְוֹ, that it was situated in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The inhabitants of Maroth writhe (*châlâh*, from *chûl*, to writhe with pain, like a woman in child-birth), because they are also smitten with the calamity, when it comes down to the gate of Jerusalem. לְטוֹב, "on account of the good," which they have lost, or are about to lose.

Micah 1:13–16. And the judgment will not even stop at Jerusalem, but will spread still further over the land. This spreading is depicted in vv. 13–15 in the same manner as

before. V. 13. "Harness the horse to the chariot, O inhabitress of Lachish! It was the beginning of sin to the daughter Zion, that the iniquities of Israel were found in her. V. 14. Therefore wilt thou give dismissal-presents to Moresbeth-Gath (i.e., the betrothed of Gath); the houses of Achzib (lying fountain) become a lying brook for Israel's kings. V. 15. I will still bring thee the heir, O inhabitress of Mareshah (hereditary city); the nobility of Israel will come to Adullam. V. 16. Make thyself bald, and shave thyself upon the sons of thy delights: spread out thy baldness like the eagle; for they have wandered away from thee." The inhabitants of Lachish, a fortified city in the Shephelah, to the west of Eleutheropolis, preserved in the ruins of *Um Lakis* (see at Josh. 10:3), are to harness the horses to the chariot (*rekhes*, a runner; see at 1 Kings 5:8: the word is used as ringing with *lâkhîsh*), namely, to flee as rapidly as possible before the advancing foe. כָּרְתוּ, ἀπ. λεγ. "to bind ... the horse to the chariot," answering to the Latin *currum jungere equis*. Upon this city will the judgment fall with especial severity, because it has grievously sinned. It was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion, i.e., to the population of Jerusalem; it was the first to grant admission to the iniquities of Israel, i.e., to the idolatry of the image-worship of the ten tribes (for שָׁעַר יִשְׂרָאֵל, see v. 5 and Amos 3:14), which penetrated even to the capital. Nothing more is known of this, as the historical books contain no account of it. For this reason, namely, because the sin of Israel found admission into Jerusalem, she (the daughter Zion) will be obliged to renounce Moresbeth-Gath. This is the thought of v. 14a, the drapery of which rests upon the resemblance in sound between *Moresbeth* and *me'orâsâh*, the betrothed (Deut. 22:23). *Shillûchîm*, dismissal, denotes anything belonging to a man, which he dismisses or gives up for a time, or for ever. It is applied in Ex. 18:2 to the sending away of wife and children to the father-in-law for a time; and in 1 Kings 9:16 to a dowry, or the present which a father gives to his daughter when she is married and leaves his house. The meaning "divorce," i.e.,

sēpher kerīthuth (Deut. 24:1, 3), has been arbitrarily forced upon the word. The meaning is not to be determined from *shillēäch* in Jer. 3:8, as Hitzig supposes, but from 1 Kings 9:16, where the same expression occurs, except that it is construed with ל, which makes no material difference. For נתן על signifies to give to a person, either to lay upon him or to hand to him; נתן לו, to give to him. The object given by Zion to Moresheth as a parting present is not mentioned, but it is really the city itself; for the meaning is simply this: Zion will be obliged to relinquish all further claim to Moresheth, to give it up to the enemy. *Mōresheth* is not an appellative, as the old translators suppose, but the proper name of Micah's home; and Gath is a more precise definition of its situation—"by Gath," viz., the well-known Philistian capital, analogous to Bethlehem-Judah in Judg. 17:7-9; 19:1, or Abel-Maim (Abel by the water) in 2 Chron. 16:4. According to Jerome (comm. in Mich. Prol.), *Morasthi, qui usque hodie juxta Eleutheropolin, urbem Palaestinae, haud grandis est viculus* (cf. Robinson, *Pal.* ii. p. 423). The context does not admit of our taking the word in an appellative sense, "possession of Gath," since the prophet does not mean to say that Judah will have to give up to the enemy a place belonging to Gath, but rather that it will have to give up the cities of its own possession. For, as Maurer correctly observes, "when the enemy is at the gate, men think of defending the kingdom, not of enlarging it." But if the addition of the term *Gath* is not merely intended to define the situation of Moresheth with greater minuteness, or to distinguish it from other places of the same name, and if the play upon words in *Moresheth* was intended to point to a closer relation to Gath, the thought expressed could only be, that the place situated in the neighbourhood of Gath had frequently been taken by the Philistines, or claimed as their property, and not that they were in actual possession of Gath at this time.

The play upon words in the second clause of the verse also points to the loss of places in Judaea: "the houses of *Achzib* will become *Achzab* to the

kings of Israel." גַּתְּיָב, a lie, for גַּתְּיָב, is a stream which dries up in the hot season, and deceives the expectation of the traveller that he shall find water (Jer. 15:18; cf. Job 6:15ff.). *Achzib*, a city in the plain of Judah, whose name has been preserved in the ruins of *Kussabeh*, to the south-west of Beit-Jibrin (see at Josh. 15:44). The houses of Achzib are mentioned, because they are, properly speaking, to be compared to the contents of the river's bed, whereas the ground on which they stood, with the wall that surrounded them, answered to the river's bed itself (Hitzig), so that the words do not denote the loss or destruction of the houses so much as the loss of the city itself. The "kings of Israel" are not the kings of Samaria and Judah, for Achzib belonged to the kingdom of Judah alone, but the kings of Judah who followed one another (cf. Jer. 19:13); so that the plural is to be understood as relating to the monarchy of Israel (Judah). *Mareshah* will also pass into other hands. This is affirmed in the words, "I will bring the heir to thee again" (אֶבְיָא for אֶבְיָא, as in 1 Kings 21:29). The first heir of Mareshah was the Israelites, who received the city, which had been previously occupied by the Canaanites, for their possession on the conquest of the land. The second heir will be the enemy, into whose possession the land is now to pass. *Mareshah*, also in the lowland of Judah, has been preserved, so far as the name is concerned, in the ruins of *Marash* (see at Josh. 15:44, and Tobler, *Dritte Wanderung*, pp. 129, 142-3). To the north of this was *Adullam* (see at Josh. 12:15), which has not yet been discovered, but which Tobler (p. 151) erroneously seeks for in *Bêt Dûla*. Micah mentions it simply on account of the cave there (1 Sam. 22:1), as a place of refuge, to which the great and glorious of Israel would flee ("the glory of Israel," as in Isa. 5:13). The description is rounded off in v. 16, by returning to the thought that Zion would mourn deeply over the carrying away of the people, with which it had first set out in v. 8. In קָרַחְתִּי נְגִי Zion is addressed as the mother of the people. קָרַח, to shave smooth, and נָגַז, to cut off

the hair, are synonyms, which are here combined to strengthen the meaning. The children of thy delights, in whom thou hast thy pleasure, are the members of the nation. Shaving the head bald, or shaving a bald place, was a sign of mourning, which had been handed down as a traditional custom in Israel, in spite of the prohibition in Deut. 14:1 (see at Lev. 19:28). The bald place is to be made to spread out like that of a *nesher*, i.e., not the true eagle, but the vulture, which was also commonly classed in the eagle family,—either the bearded vulture, *vultur barbatus* (see Oedmann, *Verm. Samml.* i. p. 54ff.), or more probably the carrion vulture, *vultur percnopterus L.*, common in Egypt, and also in Palestine, which has the front part of the head completely bald, and only a few hairs at the back of the head, so that a bald place may very well be attributed to it (see Hasselquist, *Reise*, p. 286ff.). The words cannot possibly be understood as referring to the yearly moulting of the eagle itself.

If we inquire still further as to the fulfilment of the prophecy concerning Judah (vv. 8–16), it cannot be referred, or speaking more correctly, it must not be restricted, to the Assyrian invasion, as Theod., Cyril, Marck, and others suppose. For the carrying away of Judah, which is hinted at in v. 11, and clearly expressed in v. 16, was not effected by the Assyrians, but by the Chaldeans; and that Micah himself did not expect this judgment from the Assyrians, but from Babel, is perfectly obvious from Mic. 4:10, where he mentions Babel as the place to which Judah was to be carried into exile. At the same time, we must not exclude the Assyrian oppression altogether; for Sennacherib had not only already conquered the greater part of Judah, and penetrated to the very gates of Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:13, 14, 19; Isa. 36–38), but would have destroyed the kingdom of Judah, as his predecessor Shalmaneser had destroyed the kingdom of Israel, if the Lord had not heard the prayer of His servant Hezekiah, and miraculously destroyed Sennacherib's army before the walls of Jerusalem. Micah prophesies throughout this chapter, not of certain distinct judgment, but of judgment in

general, without any special allusions to the way in which it would be realized; so that the proclamation embraces all the judgments that have fallen upon Judah from the Assyrian invasion down to the Roman catastrophe.

Micah 2

Guilt and Punishment of Israel. Its Future Restoration

Micah 2. After having prophesied generally in Mic. 1 of the judgment that would fall upon both kingdoms on account of their apostasy from the living God, Micah proceeds in Mic. 2 to condemn, as the principal sins, the injustice and oppressions on the part of the great (vv. 1, 2), for which the nation was to be driven away from its inheritance (vv. 3–5). He then vindicates this threat, as opposed to the prophecies of the false prophets, who confirmed the nation in its ungodliness by the lies that they told (vv. 6–11); and then closes with the brief but definite promise, that the Lord would one day gather together the remnant of His people, and would multiply it greatly, and make it His kingdom (vv. 12, 13). As this promise applies to all Israel of the twelve tribes, the reproof and threat of punishment are also addressed to the house of Jacob as such (v. 7), and apply to both kingdoms. There are no valid grounds for restricting them to Judah, even though Micah may have had the citizens of that kingdom more particularly in his mind.

Micah 2:1–5. The violent acts of the great men would be punished by God with the withdrawal of the inheritance of His people, or the loss of Canaan. V. 1. *“Woe to those who devise mischief, and prepare evil upon their beds! In the light of the morning they carry it out, for their hand is their God. V. 2. They covet fields and plunder; them, and houses and take them; and oppress the man and his house, the man and his inheritance.”* The woe applies to the great and mighty of the nation, who by acts of injustice deprive the common people of the inheritance conferred upon them by the Lord (cf. Isa. 5:8). The prophet describes them as those who devise

plans by night upon their beds for robbing the poor, and carry them out as soon as the day dawns. **אָנן** denotes the sketching out of plans (see Ps. 36:5); and **פָּעַל רָע**, to work evil, the preparation of the ways and means for carrying out their wicked plans. **פָּעַל**, the preparation, is distinguished from **עָשָׂה**, the execution, as in Isa. 41:4, for which **יָצַר** and **עָשָׂה** are also used (e.g., Isa. 43:7). "Upon their beds," i.e., by night, the time of quiet reflection (Ps. 4:5; cf. Job 4:13). "By the light of the morning," i.e., at daybreak, without delay. **כִּי יֵשׁ וְגוֹ**, lit., "for their hand is for a god," i.e., their power passes as a god to them; they know of no higher power than their own arm; whatever they wish it is in their power to do (cf. Gen. 31:29; Prov. 3:27; Hab. 1:11; Job 12:6). Ewald and Rückert weaken the thought by adopting the rendering, "because it stands free in their hand;" and Hitzig's rendering, "if it stands in their hand," is decidedly false. *Kī* cannot be a conditional particle here, because the thought would thereby be weakened in a manner quite irreconcilable with the context. In v. 2 the evil which they plan by night, and carry out by day, is still more precisely defined. By force and injustice they seize upon the property (fields, houses) of the poor, the possessions which the Lord has given to His people for their inheritance. *Châmad* points to the command against coveting (Ex. 20:14 [17]; cf. Deut. 5:18). The second half of the verse (v. 2) contains a conclusion drawn from the first: "and so they practise violence upon the man and his property." *Bêth* answers to *bottîm*, and *nachlâh* to the *Sâdôth*, as their hereditary portion in the land—the portion of land which each family received when Canaan was divided.

Micah 2:3. "Therefore thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I devise evil concerning this family, from which ye shall not withdraw your necks, and not walk loftily, for it is an evil time. V. 4. In that day will men raise against you a proverb, and lament a lamentation. It has come to pass, they say; we are waste, laid waste; the inheritance of my people he exchanges: how does he withdraw it

from me! To the rebellious one he divides our field." The punishment introduced with *lâkhên* (therefore) will correspond to the sin. Because they reflect upon evil, to deprive their fellow-men of their possessions, Jehovah will bring evil upon this generation, lay a heavy yoke upon their neck, out of which they will not be able to necks, and under which they will not be able to walk loftily, or with extended neck. **הַמְשַׁפְּחָה הַזֹּאת** is not this godless family, but the whole of the existing nation, whose corrupt members are to be exterminated by the judgment (see Isa. 29:20ff.). The yoke which the Lord will bring upon them is subjugation to the hostile conqueror of the land and the oppression of exile (see Jer. 27:12). *Hâlakh rômâh*, to walk on high, i.e., with the head lifted up, which is a sign of pride and haughtiness. *Rômâh* is different from **קוֹמְמִיּוֹת**, an upright attitude, in Lev. 27:13. **כִּי עַתָּה רָעָה**, as in Amos 5:13, but in a different sense, is not used of moral depravity, but of the distress which will come upon Israel through the laying on of the yoke. Then will the opponents raise derisive songs concerning Israel, and Israel itself will bewail its misery. The verbs *yissâ'*, *nâhâh*, and *'âmar* are used impersonally. *Mâshâl* is not synonymous with *nêhî*, a mournful song (Ros.), but signifies a figurative saying, a proverb-song, as in Isa. 14:4, Hab. 2:6. The subject to **יִשָּׂא** is the opponents of Israel, hence **עַלְיֵכֶם**; on the other hand, the subject to *nâhâh* and *'âmar* is the Israelites themselves, as **נִשְׁדָּנָה** teaches. **נִהְיָה** is not a feminine formation from **נָהַי**, a mournful song, *lamentum lamenti*, i.e., a mournfully mournful song, as Rosenmüller, Umbreit, and the earlier commentators suppose; but the *niphâl* of **הִיָּה** (cf. Dan. 8:27): *actum est!* it is all over!—an exclamation of despair (Le de Dieu, Ewald, etc.); and it is written after *'âmar*, because **נִהְיָה** as an exclamation is equivalent in meaning to an object. The omission of the copula *Vav* precludes our taking *'âmar* in connection with what follows (Maurer). The following clauses are a still further explanation

of נְהִיָּה: we are quite laid waste. The form נְשַׁדְּנוּ for נְשַׁדְּנוּ is probably chosen simply to imitate the tone of lamentation better (Hitzig). The inheritance of my people, i.e., the land of Canaan, He (Jehovah) changes, i.e., causes it to pass over to another possessor, namely, to the heathen. The words receive their explanation from the clauses which follow: How does He cause (sc., the inheritance) to depart from me! Not how does He cause me to depart. לְשׁוֹבֵב is not an infinitive, *ad reddendum*, or *restituendum*, which is altogether unsuitable, but *nomen verbale*, the fallen or rebellious one, like שׁוֹבֵבָה in Jer. 31:22; 49:4. This is the term applied by mourning Israel to the heathenish foe, to whom Jehovah apportions the fields of His people. The withdrawal of the land is the just punishment for the way in which the wicked great men have robbed the people of their inheritance.

Micah 2:5. “Therefore wilt thou have none to cast a measure for the lot in the congregation of Jehovah.” With *lâkhên* (therefore) the threat, commenced with *lâkhên* in v. 3, is resumed and applied to individual sinners. The whole nation is not addressed in לְךָ, still less the prophet, as Hitzig supposes, but every individual among the tyrannical great men (vv. 1, 2). The singular is used instead of the plural, to make the address more impressive, that no one may imagine that he is excepted from the threatened judgment. For a similar transition from the plural to the singular, see Mic. 3:10. The expression, to cast the measure *begôrâl*, i.e., in the nature of a lot (equivalent to for a lot, or as a lot), may be explained on the ground that the land was divided to the Israelites by lot, and then the portion that fell to each tribe was divided among the different families by measure. The words are not to be taken, however, as referring purely to the future, as Caspari supposes, i.e., to the time when the promised land would be divided afresh among the people on their return. For even if the prophet does proclaim in vv. 12, 13 the reassembling of Israel and its restoration to its

hereditary land, this thought cannot be arbitrarily taken for granted here. We therefore regard the words as containing a general threat, that the ungodly will henceforth receive no further part in the inheritance of the Lord, but that they are to be separated from the congregation of Jehovah.

Micah 2:6–11. As such a prophecy as this met with violent contradiction, not only from the corrupt great men, but also from the false prophets who flattered the people, Micah indicates it by showing that the people are abusing the long-suffering and mercy of the Lord; and that, by robbing the peaceable poor, the widows, and the orphans, they are bringing about the punishment of banishment out of the land. V. 6. “Drip not (prophecy not), they drip: if they drip not this, the shame will not depart. V. 7. Thou, called house of Jacob, is the patience of Jehovah short, then? or is this His doing? Are not my words good to him that walketh uprightly?”

הִטִּיף, to drip, to cause words to flow, used of prophesying, as in Amos 7:16. The speakers in v. 6a are not the Jews generally, or the rich oppressors who have just been punished and threatened. The word *yattîphû* does not agree with this, since it does not mean to chatter, but to prophesy, as v. 11 and also the primary passage Deut. 32:2 show. But Micah could not call the rich men’s speaking prophesying. It is rather false prophets who are speaking,—namely, those who in the word *‘al-tattîphû* (prophecy not) would prohibit the true prophets from predicting the judgments of the Lord. The second hemistich is rendered by most of the modern commentators, “they are not to chatter (preach) of such things; the reproaches cease not,” or “there is no end to reproaching” (Ewald, Hitzig, Maurer, and Caspari). But this is open to the following objections: (1) That הִטִּיף לְךָ in v. 11 means to prophesy to a person (not concerning or of anything); (2) that *sûg* or *nâsag* means to depart, not to cease; (3) that even the thought, “the reproaches to not cease,” is apparently unsuitable, since Micah could not well call a prohibition against prophesying an incessant reproach; and to this we may add, (4)

the grammatical harshness of taking **לֹא יִטִּיפוּ** as an imperative, and the following **לֹא יִסַּג** as an indicative (a simple declaration). Still less can the rendering, “they (the true prophets) will not chatter about this, yet the reproach will not depart” (Ros., Rückert), be vindicated, as such an antithesis as this would necessarily be indicated by a particle. The only course that remains, therefore, is that adopted by C. B. Michaelis and Hengstenberg, viz., to take the words as conditional: if they (the true prophets) do not prophesy to these (the unrighteous rich in vv. 1, 2: Hengstenberg), or on account of these things (Michaelis), the shame will not depart, i.e., shameful destruction will burst incessantly upon them. On the absence of the conditional **אִם**, see Ewald, p. 357, *b*. Such addresses as these do not please the corrupt great men; but they imagine that such threats are irreconcilable with the goodness of Jehovah. This is the connection of v. 7, in which the prophet meets the reproach cast upon his threatening words with the remark, that God is not wrathful, and has no love for punishing, but that He is stirred up to wrath by the sins of the nation, and obliged to punish. **הֲאִמְרוּ** is not an exclamation, “O, what is said! = O for such talk as this!” (Ewald, Umbreit, Caspari); for it cannot be shown that the participle is ever used in this way, and it cannot be supported from **הֲפִכְכֶם** in Isa. 29:16, especially as here a second vocative would follow. Nor is it a question: *Num dicendum?* Dare one say this?” (Hitzig). For although **הֲ** might be an interrogative particle (cf. Ezek. 28:9), the passive participle cannot express the idea of daring, in support of which Hitzig is quite wrong in appealing to Lev. 11:47 and Ps. 22:32. **הֲאִמְרוּ** is not doubt a vocative, but it is to be taken in connection with *bēth-Ya’aqōb*: thou who art called house of Jacob. There is very little force in the objection, that this would have required **יְהִי הֲאִמְרוּ לְךָ בִּי**, since **אָמַר**, when used in the sense of being called or being named, is always construed with **לְ** of the person bearing

the name. The *part. paūl* of *’amar* only occurs here; and although the *niphāl*, when used in this sense, is generally construed with **לְ**, the same rule may apply to **אָמַר** as to **קָרָא** in the sense of naming,—namely, that in the passive construction the **לְ** may either be inserted or omitted (cf. Isa. 56:7; 54:5; Deut. 3:13), and **הֲאִמְרוּ** may just as well be used in the sense of *dicta* (*domus*) as **הֲנִקְרָאִים** in Isa. 48:1 in the sense of *vocati = qui appellantur*. The whole nation is addressed, although the address points especially to the unrighteous great men. Is Jehovah indeed wrathful? i.e., has He not patience, does He not exercise long-suffering? *Qātsar rūāch* must not be explained according to Ex. 6:9, but according to Prov. 14:27. Or are these (*’elleh*, the punishments threatened) His deeds? i.e., is He accustomed, or does He only like to punish? The answer to these questions, or speaking more correctly, their refutation, follows in the next question, which is introduced with the assuring **הֲלוֹא**, and in which Jehovah speaks: My words deal kindly with him that walks uprightly. The Lord not only makes promises to the upright, but He also grants His blessing. The words of the Lord contain their fulfilment within themselves. In **הֲיִשָּׂר הוֹלֵךְ**, it is for the sake of emphasis that *yāshār* stands first, and the article properly belongs to *hōlēkh*; but it is placed before *yāshār* to bind together the two words into one idea. The reason why the Lord threatens by His prophets is therefore to be found in the unrighteousness of the people.

Micah 2:8. “*But yesterday my people rises up as an enemy: off from the garment ye draw the cloak from those who pass by carelessly, averted from war. V. 9. The women of my people ye drive away out of the house of their delights; from their children ye take my ornament for ever.*” *’Ethmūl*, yesterday, lately, not = long ago, but, as *yēqōmēm* shows, denoting an action that is repeated, equivalent to “again, recently.” **קוֹמַם** is not used here in a causative sense, “to set up,” but as an intensified *kal*, to take a standing = to

stand up or rise up. The causative view, They set up my people as an enemy (Ewald), yields no fitting sense; and if the meaning were, "My people causes me to rise up as its enemy" (Caspari), the suffixes could not be omitted. If this were the thought, it would be expressed as clearly as in Isa. 63:10. There is no valid ground for altering the text, as Hitzig proposes. It is not stated against whom the people rise up as an enemy, but according to the context it can only be against Jehovah. This is done by robbing the peaceable travellers, as well as the widows and orphans, whereby they act with hostility towards Jehovah and excite His wrath (Ex. 22:21ff.; Deut. 27:19). *מִמּוֹלַעַת*, from before, i.e., right away from, the garment. *Salmâh* is the upper garment; *אֶדְרָת* = *אֶדְרָת* the broad dress-cloak. They take this away from those who pass carelessly by. *שׁוֹבֵי* is an intransitive participle: averted from the war, averse to conflict, i.e., peaceably disposed (see Ps. 120:7). We have not only to think of open highway robbery, but also of their taking away the cloak in the public street from their own poor debtors, when they are walking peaceably along, suspecting nothing, for the purpose of repaying themselves. The "wives of my people" are widows, whom they deprive of house and home, and indeed widows of the people of Jehovah, in whose person Jehovah is injured. These children are fatherless orphans (*עֲלֵלִיָּה* with a singular suffix: the children of the widow). *Hădârî*, my ornament, i.e., the ornament which I have given them. The reference, as *מַעַל* shows, is to the garment or upper coat. The expression "for ever" may be explained from the evident allusion to the Mosaic law in Ex. 22:25, according to which the coat taken from the poor as a pledge was to be returned before sunset, whereas ungodly creditors retained it for ever.

Micah 2:10, 11. Such conduct as this must be followed by banishment from the land. V. 10. "Rise up, and go; for this is not the place of rest: because of the defilement which brings destruction, and mighty destruction. V. 11. If

there were a man, walking after wind, who would lie deceit, 'I will prophesy to thee of wine and strong drink,' he would be a prophet of this people." The prophet having overthrown in vv. 7-9 the objection to his threatening prophecies, by pointing to the sins of the people, now repeats the announcement of punishment, and that in the form of a summons to go out of the land into captivity, because the land cannot bear the defilement consequent upon such abominations. The passage is based upon the idea contained in Lev. 18:25, 28, that the land is defiled by the sins of its inhabitants, and will vomit them out because of this defilement, in connection with such passages as Deut. 12:9, 10, where coming to Canaan is described as coming to rest. *זֵאת* (this) refers to the land. This (the land in which ye dwell) is not the place of rest (*hamm^enûchâh*, as in Zech. 9:1 and Ps. 132:14). If "this" were to be taken as referring to their sinful conduct, in the sense of "this does not bring or cause rest," it would be difficult to connect it with what follows, viz., "because of the defilement;" whereas no difficulty arises if we take "this" as referring to the land, which the expression "rise up and go" naturally suggests. *טְמֵאָה* = *טְמֵאָה*, defilement; *וְהָחֵבַל* is to be taken in a relative sense, "which brings destruction," and is strengthened by *וְהָחֵבַל*, with an explanatory ו: and indeed terrible destruction. *חֵבַל*, *perditio*; and *נִמְרָץ* as in 1 Kings 2:8. The destruction consists in the fact that the land vomits out its inhabitants (Lev. 18:25). Such prophecies are very unwelcome to the corrupt great men, because they do not want to hear the truth, but simply what flatters their wicked heart. They would like to have only prophets who prophesy lies to them. *הוֹלֵךְ רֵיחַ*, walking after the wind; the construction is the same as *הוֹלֵךְ צְדָקוֹת* in Isa. 33:15, and *rûäch* is a figure signifying what is vain or worthless, as in Isa. 26:18; 41:29, etc. The words *אֶטְיִי לְךָ גּוֹר* are the words of a false prophet: I prophesy to thee with regard to wine. The meaning is not "that there will be an abundant supply of wine," or

“that the wine will turn out well” (Rosenmüller and others); but wine and strong drink (for *shēkhâr*, see Delitzsch on Isa. 5:11) are figures used to denote earthly blessings and sensual enjoyments, and the words refer to such promises as Lev. 26:4, 5, 10, Deut. 28:4, 11, Joel 2:24; 4:18ff., which false prophets held out to the people without any regard to their attitude towards God. “This people,” because the great men represent the nation. With this explanation pointing back to v. 6, the threatening is brought to a close.

Micah 2:12, 13. In vv. 12, 13 there follows, altogether without introduction, the promise of the future reassembling of the people from their dispersion. v. 12. *“I will assemble, assemble thee all together, O Jacob; gather together, gather together the remnant of Israel; I will bring him together like the sheep of Bozrah, like a flock in the midst of their pasture: they will be noisy with men. V. 13. The breaker through comes up before them; they break through, and pass along through the gate, and go out by it; and their King goes before them, and Jehovah at their head.”* Micah is indeed not a prophet, prophesying lies of wine and strong drink; nevertheless he also has salvation to proclaim, only not for the morally corrupt people of his own time. They will be banished out of the land; but the captivity and dispersion are not at an end. For the remnant of Israel, for the nation when sifted and refined by the judgments, the time will come when the Lord will assemble them again, miraculously multiply them, and redeem them as their King, and lead them home. The sudden and abrupt transition from threatening to promise, just as in Hos. 2:2; 6:1; 11:9, has given rise to this mistaken supposition, that vv. 12, 13 contain a prophecy uttered by the lying prophets mentioned in v. 10 (Abenezra, Mich., Ewald, etc.). But this supposition founders not only on the *שְׂאֲרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*, inasmuch as the gathering together of the remnant of Israel presupposes the carrying away into exile, but also on the entire contents of these verses. Micah could not possibly introduce a false prophet as speaking in the

name of Jehovah, and saying, “I will gather;” such a man would at the most have said, “Jehovah will gather.” Nor could he have put a true prophecy like that contained in vv. 12, 13 into the mouth of such a man. For this reason, not only Hengstenberg, Caspari, and Umbreit, but even Maurer and Hitzig, have rejected this assumption; and the latter observes, among other things, quite correctly, that “the idea expressed here is one common to the true prophets (see Hos. 2:2), which Micah himself also utters in Mic. 4:6.” The emphasis lies upon the assembling, and hence *אָסַף* and *אֶקְבֹּץ* are strengthened by infinitive absolutes. But the assembling together presuppose a dispersion among the heathen, such as Micha has threatened in Mic. 1:11, 16; 2:4. And the Lord will gather together all Jacob, not merely a portion, and yet only the remnant of Israel. This involves the thought, that the whole nation of the twelve tribes, or of the two kingdoms, will be reduced to a remnant by the judgment. *Jacob* and *Israel* are identical epithets applied to the whole nation, as in Mic. 1:5, and the two clauses of the verse are synonymous, so that *יַעֲקֹב בְּלֶדְךָ* coincides in actual fact with *שְׂאֲרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*. The further description rests upon the fact of the leading of Israel out of Egypt, which is to be renewed in all that is essential at a future time. The following clauses also predict the miraculous multiplication of the remnant of Israel (see Hos. 2:1, 2; Jer. 31:10), as experienced by the people in the olden time under the oppression of Egypt (Ex. 1:12). The comparison to the flock of Bozrah presupposes that Bozrah’s wealth in flocks was well known. Now, as the wealth of the Moabites in flocks of sheep is very evident from 2 Kings 3:4, many have understood by *בְּצֹרָה* not the Edomitish Bozrah, but the Moabitish Bostra (e.g., Hengstenberg). Others, again, take *botsrâh* as an appellative noun in the sense of hurdle or fold (see Hitzig, Caspari, and Dietrich in Ges. *Lex.* after the Chaldee). But there is not sufficient ground for either. The Bostra situated in the Hauran does not occur at all in the Old Testament, not even in Jer. 48:24, and the

appellative meaning of the word is simply postulated for this particular passage. That the Edomites were also rich in flocks of sheep is evident from Isa. 24:6, where the massacre which Jehovah will inflict upon Edom and Bozrah is described as a sacrificial slaughtering of lambs, he-goats, rams, and oxen; a description which presupposes the wealth of Bozrah in natural flocks. The comparison which follows, "like a flock in the midst of its pasture," belongs to the last verse, and refers to the multiplication, and to the noise made by a densely packed and numerous flock. The same tumult will be made by the assembled Israelites on account of the multitude of men. For the article in הַדְּבָרֹו, which is already determined by the suffix, see at Josh. 7:21. In v. 13 the redemption of Israel out of exile is depicted under the figure of liberation from captivity. Was Egypt a slave-house (Mic. 6:4; cf. Ex. 20:2); so is exile a prison with walls and gates, which must be broken through. הַפֹּרֵץ, the breaker through, who goes before them, is not Jehovah, but, as the counterpart of Moses the leader of Israel out of Egypt, the captain appointed by God for His people, answering to the head which they are said to choose for themselves in Hos. 2:2, a second Moses, viz., Zerubbabel, and in the highest sense Christ, who opens the prison-doors, and redeems the captives of Zion (vid., Isa. 42:7). Led by him, they break through the walls, and march through the gate, and go out through it out of the prison. "The three verbs, they break through, they march through, they go out, describe in a pictorial manner progress which cannot be stopped by any human power" (Hengstenberg). Their King Jehovah goes before them at their head (the last two clauses of the verse are synonymous). Just as Jehovah went before Israel as the angel of the Lord in the pillar of cloud and fire at the exodus from Egypt (Ex. 13:21), so at the future redemption of the people of God will Jehovah go before them as King, and lead the procession (see Isa. 52:12).

The fulfilment of this prophecy commenced with the gathering together of Israel to its God

and King by the preaching of the gospel, and will be completed at some future time when the Lord shall redeem Israel, which is now pining in dispersion, out of the fetters of its unbelief and life of sin. We must not exclude all allusion to the deliverance of the Jewish nation out of the earthly Babylon by Cyrus; at the same time, it is only in its typical significance that this comes into consideration at all,—namely, as a preliminary stage and pledge of the redemption to be effected by Christ out of the spiritual Babylon of this world.

Micah 3

II. Zion's Deepest Degradation and Highest Exaltation—Ch. 3–5

Micah 3–5. The prophet's second address is of a predominantly Messianic character. The announcement of the utter desolation of Zion on account of the corruption of both the civil rulers and the spiritual leaders of the nation, with which this address opens in Mic. 3, serves to a certain extent simply as a foil for the prophecy which follows in Mic. 4 and 5 of the salvation with which the remnant of Israel, that has been rescued throughout the judgment, will be blessed in the future. This salvation is depicted first of all in all its fulness (Mic. 4:1–7); then in its gradual development, in the re-erection of the former dominion of the daughter of Zion, by her redemption out of Babylon, and her victory over the powers of the world (Mic. 4:8–14); and lastly, in its realization by the Ruler proceeding out of Bethlehem, and by the power and blessing of His rule (Mic. 5).

Sins of the Leaders of the Nation, and Destruction of Jerusalem—Ch. 3

Micah 3. The threatening of punishment contained in this chapter is specially directed against the heads and leaders of Israel, and proclaims, in three strophes of four verses each, (*a*) to the princes, who turn right into wrong and flay the people (vv. 1–4), and (*b*) to the false prophets, who lead the people astray and confirm them in their sin by lying prophecies of peace (vv. 5–8), retribution for their wicked

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conduct; and (c) to all three classes of the divinely-appointed chiefs of the nation—the princes, the priests, and the prophets—the destruction of Jerusalem, and the turning of Zion and the temple mountain into a ploughed field and wooded heights on account of their degeneracy (vv. 9–12).

Micah 3:1–4. First strophe.—V. 1. *“And I said, Hear ye, O heads of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel: Is it not for you to know the right? V. 2. Ye who hate good, and love evil; who draw off their skin from them, and their flesh from their bones. V. 3. And who have eaten the flesh of my people, and stripped off their skin from them; and broken their bones, and cut them in pieces, as if in the pot, and like flesh in the midst of the caldron. V. 4. Then will they cry to Jehovah, and He will not hearken; and let Him hide His face from them at the same time, as they have made their actions evil.”* By the expression “And I said” (*vâ’ōmar*), the following address is indicated as a continuation of the preceding one. The reproofs of this chapter are also a still further expansion of the woe pronounced in Mic. 2:1, 2 upon the godless chiefs of the nation. The heads of Jacob are addressed, that is to say, the princes of the tribes and families of Israel, and the *qetsinim*, lit., deciders (answering to the Arabic *qāḍy*, a judge) of the house of Israel, i.e., the heads of families and households, upon whom the administration of justice devolved (cf. Isa. 1:10; 22:3). *הֲלוֹא לָכֶם*, is it not your duty and your office to know justice? *Da’ath* is practical knowledge, which manifests itself in practice; *mishpāt*, the public administration of justice. Instead of this, they do the opposite. The description of this conduct is appended by participles, in the form of apposition to the heads and princes addressed in v. 1. Hating good and loving evil refer to the disposition, and indicate the radical corruption of these men. *רָעָה*, generally misfortune, here evil; hence the Masoretes have altered it into *רָע*; but the very fact that it deviates from the ordinary rule shows that it is the original word. Instead of administering justice to the people, they take off their skin, and tear the flesh from the bones.

The suffixes attached to *עוֹרָם* and *שָׁרְרָם* point back to *בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל* in v. 1. The words answer to the German expression, “to pull the skin over the ears.” In v. 3 the expression is still stronger; but the address is continued in the form of a simple description, and instead of the participles, *אָשַׁר* is used with the finite verb.

They not only flay the people, i.e., rob them of all their means of subsistence, but even devour them—treat them like cattle, which men first of all flay, then break their bones, but the flesh into pieces, and boil it in the pot. In this figure, which is carried out into the most minute details, we must not give any special meaning to the particular features, such as that “the skin, and boiling portions, which are cut up and put into the pot, are figures signifying the pledged clothing and coveted fields (Mic. 2:2, 8).” The prophet paints in very glaring colours, to make an impression upon the ungodly. Therefore, in the time of judgment, God will not hear their crying to Him for help, but will hide His face from them, i.e., withdraw His mercy from them. *אָשַׁר* and *הֵהִיא בָּעֵת הַהִיא* point back to the evil time announced in Mic. 2:3. For v. 4a, compare Prov. 1:28. *Veyastēr* in v. 4b is an optative. The prophet continues the announcement of the punishment in the form of a desire. *כַּאֲשֶׁר*, as = according to the way in which, as in 1 Sam. 28:18, Num. 27:14, etc., i.e., answering to their evil doings.

Micah 3:5–8. In the second strophe, Micah turns from the godless princes and judges to the prophets who lead the people astray, with whom he contrasts the true prophets and their ways. V. 5. *Thus saith Jehovah concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who bite with their teeth, and preach peace; and whoever should put nothing into their mouths, against him they sanctify war. V. 6. Therefore night to you because of the visions, and darkness to you because of the soothsaying! and the sun will set over the prophets, and the day blacken itself over them. V. 7. And the seers will be ashamed, and the soothsayers blush, and all cover their beard, because (there is) no answer of God. V. 8. But I, I*

am filled with power, with the Spirit of Jehovah, and with judgment and strength, to show to Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." As the first strophe attaches itself to Mic. 2:1, 2, so does the second to Mic. 2:6 and 11, carrying out still further what is there affirmed concerning the false prophets. Micah describes them as people who predict peace and prosperity for a morsel of bread, and thereby lead the people astray, setting before them prosperity and salvation, instead of preaching repentance to them, by charging them with their sins. Thus they became accomplices of the wicked rulers, with whom they are therefore classed in v. 11, together with the wicked priests. הַמְתַּעֲבִים, *leading astray* (cf. Isa. 3:12; 9:15) my people, namely, by failing to charge them with their sins, and preach repentance, as the true prophets do, and predicting prosperity for bread and payment. The words, "who bite with their teeth," are to be connected closely with the next clause, "and they preach peace," in the sense of "who preach peace if they can bite with their teeth," i.e., if they receive something to bite (or eat). This explanation, which has already been expressed by the Chaldee, is necessarily required by the antithesis, "but whoever puts nothing into their mouth," i.e., gives them nothing to eat, notwithstanding the fact that in other passages *nāshakh* only signifies to bite, in the sense of to wound, and is the word generally applied to the bite of a snake (Amos 5:19; Gen. 49:17; Num. 21:6, 8). If, however, we understand the biting with the teeth as a figurative representation of the words of the prophets who always preach prosperity, and of the injury they do to the real welfare of the people (Ros., Casp., and others), the obvious antithesis of the two double clauses of v. 5b is totally destroyed. The harsh expression, to "bite with the teeth," in the sense of "to eat," is perfectly in harmony with the harsh words of vv. 2 and 3. *Qiddēsh milchâmâh*, to sanctify war, i.e., to preach a holy war (cf. Joel 4:9), or, in reality, to proclaim the vengeance of God. For this shall night and darkness burst upon them. Night and darkness denote primarily the calamity which would come upon

the false prophets (*unto you*) in connection with the judgment (Mic. 2:4). The sun which sets to them is the sun of salvation or prosperity (Amos 8:9; Jer. 15:9); and the day which becomes black over them is the day of judgment, which is darkness, and not light (Amos 5:18). This calamity is heightened by the fact that they will then stand ashamed, because their own former prophecies are thereby proved to be lies, and fresh, true prophecies fail them, because God gives no answer. "Convicted by the result, they are thus utterly put to shame, because God does not help them out of their trouble by any word of revelation" (Hitzig). *Bōsh*, to be ashamed, when connected with *châphēr* (cf. Jer. 15:9; Ps. 35:26ff., etc.), signifies to become pale with shame; *châphēr*, to blush, with *min causae*, to denote the thing of which a man is ashamed. *Qōsemīm* (diviners) alternates with *chōzīm* (seers), because these false prophets had no visions of God, but only divinations out of their own hearts. *'Atâh sâphâm*: to cover the beard, i.e., to cover the face up to the nose, is a sign of mourning (Lev. 13:45), here of trouble and shame (cf. Ezek. 24:17), and is really equivalent to covering the head (Jer. 14:4; Esth. 6:12). *Ma'ânēh*, the construct state of the substantive, but in the sense of the participle; some codd. have indeed מַעֲנֶה. In v. 8 Micah contrasts himself and his own doings with these false prophets, as being filled with power by the Spirit of Jehovah (i.e., through His assistance) and with judgment. *Mishpât*, governed by מִלְּךָ, is the divine justice which the prophet has to proclaim, and *gebhūrâh* strength, manliness, to hold up before the people their sins and the justice of God. In this divine strength he can and must declare their unrighteousness to all ranks of the people, and predict the punishment of God (vv. 9–12). **Micah 3:9–12.** Third strophe.—V. 9. "Hear this, I pray, O ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, who abhor right, and bend all that is straight. V. 10. Building Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with wickedness. V. 11. Their heads, they judge for reward; and their priests, they teach for hire; and their prophets,

they divine for money, and lean upon Jehovah, saying, Is not Jehovah among us? evil will not come upon us." With the words "Hear this, I pray," the address returns to its starting-point in v. 1, but only to announce to the leaders of the people the threat of punishment for which the way has been prepared by vv. 2-7. To this end their God-forgetting conduct is briefly summed up once more in vv. 10, 11. The summons to hear is really attached to the end of v. 8. They are to hear the sin of Jacob (vv. 9-11); but they are also to hear the punishment for their sin, to which the word "this" points. The civil rulers only are addressed in v. 9, — namely, those who were charged with the administration of justice and of the affairs of the state, but who did the very opposite, who abhorred justice, and made the straight crooked, because they passed sentence for bribes (v. 11). They thereby build Zion with blood, etc., i.e., obtain the means of erecting splendid buildings by cruel extortions, and partly also by actual judicial murders, as Ahab (1 Kings 21 compared with Mic. 6:16), and after him Jehoiakim, had done (Jer. 22:13-17). The Chaldeans built with blood in a different sense (Hab. 2:12). The participle *bōneh* (building) is also in apposition to *râ'shē bēth* (heads of the house, etc.), and the singular without the article is to be taken collectively. They do not, however, truly build the city by this, they simply labour for its destruction (v. 12). But before saying this, Micah once more sums up briefly all the sins of the leading ranks. The teaching of the priests for reward refers to the fact that they had to give instruction as to the ritual requirements of the law, and were to do this gratuitously (cf. Lev. 10:11; Deut. 17:11; 33:10), and that in disputed cases the judges were to pronounce sentence accordingly. At the same time, these men (not the prophets merely, but also the priests and the heads of the nation as the administrators of justice) placed their reliance upon Jehovah, upon the assurance that He was in the midst of them enthroned in His temple at Jerusalem, and that He would protect the city and its inhabitants from misfortune, without ever reflecting that Jehovah as the Holy

One demands sanctification of life, and exterminates the sinners out of His people.

Micah 3:12. "Therefore will Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem become stone heaps, and the mountain of the house become forest heights." *Lâkhēn* (therefore) applies primarily to v. 11, directing the threat of punishment by *בגללכם* to all the sinners mentioned there; but it also points back to vv. 9, 10, expressing what is there indicated by "this." *Zion* is not "the site on which the city stood," or *Jerusalem*, "the mass of houses in the city," as Maurer and Caspari suppose; but *Zion* is that portion of the city which contained the royal palace, and *Jerusalem* the rest of the city (cf. Mic. 4:8). The mountain of the house, i.e., the temple hill, is also specially mentioned, for the purpose of destroying all false trust in the temple (cf. Jer. 7:4). The predicates are divided rhetorically, and the thought is this: the royal palace, the city, and the temple shall be so utterly destroyed, that of all the houses and palaces only heaps of rubbish will remain, and the ground upon which the city stood will be partly used as a ploughed field, and partly overgrown with bushes (cf. Isa. 32:13, 14). On *sâdeh* as an accusative of effect (as a field = becoming a field), see Ewald, § 281, *e*; and for the plural form *רָעָה*, see Ewald, § 177, *a*.

Habbayith (the house) is probably chosen intentionally instead of *bēth Yehōvâh* (the house of Jehovah), because the temple ceased to be the dwelling-place of Jehovah as soon as it was destroyed. Hence in Ezekiel (Ezek. 10:18ff., 11:22ff.) the *Schechinah* departs before the Babylonians destroy it. With regard to the fulfilment of this threat, see the points discussed at Mic. 4:10.

Glorification of the House of the Lord, and Restoration of the Dominion of Zion—Ch. 4

Micah 4. Zion will eventually be exalted from the deepest degradation to the highest glory. This fundamental thought of the announcement of salvation contained in Mic. 4 and 5 is carried out thus far in Mic. 4: the first section (vv. 1-7)

depicts the glorification of the temple mountain by the streaming of the heathen nations to it to hear the law of the Lord, and the blessing which Israel and the nations will derive therefrom; and the second section (vv. 8–14) describes the restoration of the dominion of Zion from its fallen condition through the redemption of the nation out of Babel, and its victorious conflict with the nations of the world.

Micah 4

Micah 4:1–5. The promise of salvation opens, in closest connection with the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple, with a picture of the glory awaiting in the remotest future the temple mountain, which has now become a wild forest-height. V. 1. *“And it comes to pass at the end of the days, that the mountain of Jehovah’s house will be established on the head of the mountains, and it will be exalted above the hills, and nations stream to it. V. 2. And many nations go, and say, Up, let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us of His ways, and we may walk in His paths: for from Zion will law go forth, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. V. 3. And He will judge between many nations, and pronounce sentence on strong nations afar off; and they forge their swords into coulters, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation will not lift up sword against nation, nor will they learn war any more. V. 4. And they will sit, every one under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and no one will make them afraid: for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it.”*² By the phrase “at the end of the days,” which always denotes the Messianic era when used by the prophets (see at Hos. 3:5), the predicted exaltation of the temple mountain is assigned to the period of the completion of the kingdom of God. The mountain of the house of Jehovah is the temple mountain, strictly speaking, Moriah, as the distinction made between the mountain of the house and Zion in Mic. 3:12 clearly shows; but as a subordinate peak of Zion, it is embraced along with Zion in what follows (compare v. 2 with v. 7) as the seat of Jehovah’s rule, from which the law proceeds. נָבוֹן does not

mean placed or set up, but established, founded. By connecting the participle with יְהִיָּה, the founding is designated as a permanent one. בְּרֹאשׁ הַהָרִים, upon (not at) the top of the mountains, as in Judg. 9:7, 1 Sam. 26:13, Ps. 72:16; whereas such passages as Mic. 2:13, Amos 6:7, and 1 Kings 21:9 are of a different character, and have no bearing upon the point. The temple mountain, or Zion, will be so exalted above all the mountains and hills, that it will appear to be founded upon the top of the mountains. This exaltation is of course not a physical one, as Hofmann, Drechsler, and several of the Rabbins suppose, but a spiritual (ethical) elevation above all the mountains. This is obvious from v. 2, according to which Zion will tower above all the mountains, because the law of the Lord issues from it. The assumption of a physical elevation cannot be established from Ezek. 40:2 and Rev. 21:10, for in the visions described in both these passages the earthly elevation is a symbol of a spiritual one. “Through a new revelation of the Lord, which is made upon it, and which leaves the older revelations far behind, whether made upon Sinai or upon itself, Zion becomes the greatest and loftiest mountain in the world” (Caspari), and the mountain seen from afar, to which “nations” stream, and not merely the one nation of Israel.

נָבוֹן is more precisely defined in v. 2 as גֹּיִם רַבִּים. The attractive power which this mountain exerts upon the nations, so that they call upon one another to go up to it (v. 2), does not reside in its height, which towers above that of all other mountains, but in the fact that the house of the God of Jacob stands upon it, i.e., that Jehovah is enthroned there, and teacher how to walk in His ways. הוֹרָה מִן, to teach out of the ways, so that the ways of God form the material from which they derive continual instruction. The desire for salvation, therefore, is the motive which prompts them to this pilgrimage; for they desire instruction in the ways of the Lord, that they may walk in them. The ways of Jehovah are the ways which God takes in His

dealing with men, and by which men are led by Him; in reality, therefore, the ordinances of salvation which He has revealed in His word, the knowledge and observance of which secure life and blessedness. The words “for the law goes forth from Zion,” etc., are words spoken not by the nations, but by the prophet, and assign the reason why the heathen go with such zeal to the mountain of Jehovah. The accent is laid upon מְצִיּוֹן (from Zion), which stands at the head, and מִירוּשָׁלַם (from Jerusalem), which is parallel to it. Thence does *tōrâh*, i.e., instruction in the ways of God, proceed,—in other words, the law as the rule of a godly life, and *deḇhar Yehōvâh* (the word of Jehovah), or the word of revelation as the source of salvation. It is evident from this that the mountain of the house of God is not thought of here as the place of worship, but as the scene of divine revelation, the centre of the kingdom of God. Zion is the source of the law and word of the Lord, from which the nations draw instruction how to walk in the ways of God, to make it their own, take it to their homes, and walk according to it. The fruit of this adoption of the word of the Lord will be, that they will not longer fight out their disputes with weapons of war, but let Jehovah judge and settle them, and thus acknowledge Him as their King and Judge. שָׁפֵט signifies to act as judge; הוֹכִיחַ (lit., to set right), to settle and put a stop to a dispute. “Many nations,” in contrast with the one nation, which formerly was alone in acknowledge Jehovah as its King and Judge. This is strengthened still further by the parallel “strong, mighty nations afar off.” In consequence of this they will turn their weapons into instruments of peaceful agriculture, and wage no more war; in fact, they will learn war no more, no longer exercise themselves in the use of arms. For the words וְכִבְּתוּ וְגוֹ compare Joel 4:10, where the summons to the nations to a decisive conflict with the kingdom of God is described as turning the instruments of agriculture into weapons of war. With the cessation of war, universal peace will ensue, and Israel will have no further

enemies to fear, so that every one will have undisturbed enjoyment of the blessings of peace, of which Israel had had a foretaste during the peaceful reign of Solomon. The words “sit under his vine” are taken from 1 Kings 5:5 (cf. Zech. 3:10), and אָיִן מִקְרִיד from the promise in Lev. 26:6. All this, however incredible it might appear, not only for the Israel of that time, but even now under the Christian dispensation, will assuredly take place, for the mouth of Jehovah the true God has spoken it.

Micah 4:5. It will not be through any general humanitarian ideas and efforts, however, that the human race will reach this goal, but solely through the omnipotence and faithfulness of the Lord. The reason assigned for the promise points to this. V. 5. “For all nations walk every man in the name of his God, but we walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever and ever.” This verse does not contain an exhortation, or a resolution to walk in the name of God, which involves an exhortation, in the sense of “if all nations walk, etc., then we will,” etc.; for an admonition or a resolution neither suits the connection, in the midst of simple promises, nor the words themselves, since we should at any rate expect נִלְכֶה instead of נִלְךְ. The sameness in the form of the verbs נִלְכֶה and נִלְךְ requires that they should be understood in the same way. Walking in the name of God does not mean regulating the conduct according to the name of a God, i.e., according to the nature which expresses itself in the name, or worshipping him in a manner corresponding to his nature (Caspari), but walking in the strength of God, in which the nature of this God is displayed. This is the meaning of the phrase in 1 Sam. 17:45 and Zech. 10:12, where “I strengthen them in Jehovah” forms the basis of “and in His name will they walk” (compare Prov. 18:10, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower”). But the gods of all the nations, i.e., of all the heathen, are worthless beings, without life, without strength. Jehovah, on the contrary, is the only true God, the almighty Creator and Governor of the world. And the heathen, with

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their worthless gods, can do nothing to Him and the nation which walks in His name, his strength. If, therefore, Israel rejoices for ever and ever in the strength of its God, the heathen nations cannot disturb the peace which He will create for Israel and all who accept His word. In this way is the promise in vv. 3 and 4 explained in v. 5. But this explanation assumes that, even at the time when many nations stream to the mountain of the Lord, there will still be nations that do not seek Jehovah and His word,—a thought which is still further expanded in v. 5:4ff., and involves this consolation, that such opponents of the people of God as shall be still in existence will not be able to interfere with the salvation which has been prepared for it by its God.

Micah 4:6, 7. From this salvation even the Israel that may be in misery or scattered abroad will not be excluded. V. 6. *“In that day, is the saying of Jehovah, will I assemble that which limps, and gather together that which has been thrust out, and which I have afflicted. V. 7. And I will make that which limps into a remnant, and that which is far removed into a strong nation; and Jehovah will rule over them from henceforth, even for ever.”* “In that day” points back to the end of the days in v. 1. At the time when many nations shall go on pilgrimage to the highly exalted mountain of the Lord, and therefore Zion-Jerusalem will not only be restored, but greatly glorified, the Lord will assemble that which limps and is scattered abroad. The feminines הַצֵּלְפָּה and הַנְּדָחָה are neuters, and to be understood collectively. Limping denotes the miserable condition into which the dispersed have been brought (cf. Ps. 35:15; 38:18). And this misery is inflicted by God. The limping and dispersed are those whom Jehovah has afflicted, whom He has punished for their sins. The gathering together of the nation has already been promised in Mic. 2:12; but there the assembling of all Israel was foretold, whereas here it is merely the assembling of the miserable, and of those who are scattered far and wide. There is no discrepancy in these two promises. The difference may easily be

explained from the different tendencies of the two addressed. “All Jacob” referred to the two separate kingdoms into which the nation was divided in the time of the prophet, viz., Israel and Judah, and it was distinctly mentioned there, because the banishment of both had been foretold. This antithesis falls into the background here; and, on the other hand, prominence is given, in connection with what precedes, to the idea of happiness in the enjoyment of the blessings of the holy land. The gathering together involves reinstatement in the possession and enjoyment of these blessings. Hence only the miserable and dispersed are mentioned, to express the thought that no one is to be excluded from the salvation which the Lord will bestow upon His people in the future, though now he may be pining in the misery of the exile inflicted upon them. But just as the whole of the nation of Israel to be gathered together, according to Mic. 2:12, consists of the remnant of the nation only, so does the gathering together referred to here point only to the restoration of the remnant, which is to become a strong nation, over which Jehovah reigns as King in Zion. מְלֶכֶּךָ is emphatic, expressing the setting up of the perfected monarchy, as it has never yet existed, either in the present or the past.³ This dominion will never be interrupted again, as it formerly was, by the banishment of the nation into exile on account of its sins, but will endure מֵעַתָּה (henceforth), i.e., from the future, which is regarded as present, even for ever.

So far as the realization of this exceedingly glorious promise is concerned, the expression standing at the head, *be’achārith hayyāmim* (at the end of the days), already points to the Messianic times: and the substance of the promise itself points to the times of the completion of the Messianic kingdom, i.e., to the establishment of the kingdom of glory (Matt. 19:28). The temple mountain is a type of the kingdom of God in its New Testament form, which is described by all the prophets after the forms of the Old Testament kingdom of God. Accordingly, the going of the nations to the

mountain of the house of Jehovah is, as a matter of fact, the entrance of the heathen who have been brought to the faith into the kingdom of Christ. This commenced with the spread of the gospel among the Gentiles, and has been continued through all the ages of the Christian church. But however many nations have hitherto entered into the Christian church, the time has not yet come for them to be so entirely pervaded with the spirit of Christ, as to allow their disputes to be settled by the Lord as their King, or to renounce war, and live in everlasting peace. Even for Israel the time has not yet come for the limping and exiled to be gathered together and made into a strong nation, however many individual Jews have already found salvation and peace within the bosom of the Christian church. The cessation of war and establishment of eternal peace can only take place after the destruction of all the ungodly powers on earth, at the return of Christ to judgment and for the perfecting of His kingdom. But even then, when, according to Rom. 11:25ff., the *pleroma* of the Gentiles shall have entered into the kingdom of God, and Israel as a nation (πᾶσ' Ἰσραήλ = יִשְׂרָאֵל in Mic. 2:12) shall have turned to its Redeemer, and shall be assembled or saved, no physical elevation of the mountain of Zion will ensue, nor any restoration of the temple in Jerusalem, or return of the dispersed of Israel to Palestine. The kingdom of glory will be set up on the new earth, in the Jerusalem which was shown to the holy seer on Patmos in the Spirit, on a great and lofty mountain (Rev. 21:10). In this holy city of God there will be no temple, "for the Lord, the Almighty God, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof" (Rev. 21:22). The word of the Lord to the Samaritan woman concerning the time when men would neither worship God on this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, but worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:21, 23), applies not only to the kingdom of God in its temporal development into the Christian church, but also to the time of the completion of the kingdom of God in glory.

Micah 4:8-10. The prophecy turns from the highest glorification of Zion to the throne of Zion, which had been founded by David, and swept away with the destruction of Jerusalem (Mic. 3:12), and predicts its restoration in the future. Consequently the reign of Jehovah upon Mount Zion, promised in v. 7, is still further defined as effected through the medium of the Davidico-Messianic dominion. V. 8. *"And thou flock-tower, hill of the daughter Zion, to thee will the former dominion reach and come, the reign over the daughter Jerusalem."* This announcement is attached primarily to vv. 6 and 7. As the remnant of Israel gathered together out of the dispersion will become a strong nation, so shall the reign of the daughter Zion be also restored. The address to the flock-tower, the hill of the daughter Zion, shows that these two notions express the same thing, looked at from two sides, or with two different bearings, so that the flock-tower is more precisely defined as the "hill of the daughter Zion." Now, as the daughter Zion is the city of Zion personified as a virgin, the hill of the daughter Zion might be understood as denoting the hill upon which the city stood, i.e., Mount Zion. But this is precluded by Isa. 32:14, where hill and watch-tower (*'ophel vâbhachan*) are mentioned in parallelism with the palace (*'armôn*), as places or buildings which are to serve as dens for ever. From this it is obvious that *'ophel* was a place either at the side or at the top of Zion. If we compare with this 2 Chron. 27:3 and 33:14, according to which Jotham built much against the wall of the Ophel (*hâ'ophel*), and Manasseh encircled the Ophel with a wall, and made it very high, Ophel must have been a hill, possibly a bastion, on the south-eastern border of Zion, the fortification of which was of great importance as a defence to the city of Zion against hostile attacks.⁴ Consequently *migdal-'êder* cannot be the flock-tower in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, which is mentioned in Gen. 35:21, but can only be a (or rather the) tower of the Davidic palace, or royal castle upon Zion, namely the town mentioned in Neh. 3:25, which stood out against the upper king's house, by the court of

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the prison (cf. v. 26). For the prison, which also belonged to the king's house, according to Jer. 32:2, formed a portion of the royal castle, according to the custom of the East. And that it had a lofty tower, is evident from Song of Sol. 4:4: "Thy neck is like David's tower, built for an armoury: a thousand shields hang thereon, all heroes' weapons;" according to which the tower of the royal castle was ornamented with the weapons or shields of David's heroes (1 Chron. 12:1). And the tower of the king's castle was so far specially adapted to represent the sovereignty of David, "that by its exaltation above Zion and Jerusalem, by the fact that it ruled the whole city, it symbolized the Davidic family, and its rule over the city and all Israel" (Caspari). This tower, which is most likely the one called *bachan* (the watch-tower) in Isaiah (*l.c.*), is called by Micah the flock-tower, probably as a play upon the flock-tower by which the patriarch Jacob once pitched his tent, because David, the ancestor of the divinely-chosen royal house, had been called from being the shepherd of a flock to be the shepherd of the nation of Israel, the flock of Jehovah (Jer. 13:17; cf. 2 Sam. 7:8; Ps. 78:70). This epithet was a very natural one for the prophet to employ, as he not only describes the Messiah as a shepherd in Mic. 5:3, but also represents Israel as the sheep of Jehovah's inheritance in Mic. 7:14, and the flock-tower is the place where the shepherd takes up his position to see whether any danger threatens his flock (cf. 2 Chron. 26:10; 27:4). עֲדִיךָ תֵּאֲתָהּ, "unto thee shall it come."⁵ אֶלְיָךְ affirms more than אֶלְיָךְ, to thee: expressing the conquest of every obstacle that blocks up the way to the goal. תֵּאֲתָהּ is separated from what follows, and exhibited as independent not only by the *athnach*, but also by the change of tense occurring in בָּאָהּ: "to thee will it come," sc. what the prophet has in his mind and mentions in the next clause, but brings into special prominence in וּבָאָהּ. הַמֶּלֶךְ הַרְאֵשְׁנָה, the former (first) reign, is the splendid rule of David and Solomon. This predicate presupposes that the sovereignty has departed

from Zion, i.e., has been withdrawn from the Davidic family, and points back to the destruction of Jerusalem predicted in Mic. 3:12. This sovereignty is still more precisely defined as kingship over the daughter of Jerusalem (ל before בַּת is a periphrasis of the *gen. obj.*). Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom, represents as the object sovereignty over the whole kingdom. This is to be restored to the hill of Zion, i.e., to the royal castle upon the top of it. **Micah 4:9, 10.** But before this takes place, the daughter Zion will lose her king, and wander into captivity to Babylon; but there she will be redeemed by the Lord out of the power of her enemies. V. 9. "Now why dost thou cry a cry? Is there no king in thee, or is thy counsellor perished, that pangs have seized thee like the woman in labour? V. 10. Writhe and break forth, O daughter Zion, like a woman in labour! For how wilt thou go out of the city and dwell in the field, and come to Babel? there wilt thou be rescued; there will Jehovah redeem thee out of the hand of thine enemies." From this glorious future the prophet now turns his eye to the immediate future, to proclaim to the people what will precede this glorification, viz., first of all, the loss of the royal government, and the deportation of the people to Babylon. If Micah, after announcing the devastation of Zion in Mic. 3:12, has offered to the faithful a firm ground of hope in the approaching calamities, by pointing to the highest glory as awaiting it in the future, he now guards against the abuse which might be made of this view by the careless body of the people, who might either fancy that the threat of punishment was not meant so seriously after all, or that the time of adversity would very speedily give place to a much more glorious state of prosperity, by depicting the grievous times that are still before them. Beholding in spirit the approaching time of distress as already present, he hears a loud cry, like that of a woman in labour, and inquires the cause of this lamentation, and whether it refers to the loss of her king. The words are addressed to the daughter Zion, and the meaning of the rhetorical question is simply this: Zion will lose

her king, and be thrown into the deepest mourning in consequence. The loss of the king was a much more painful thing for Israel than for any other nation, because such glorious promises were attached to the throne, the king being the visible representative of the grace of God, and his removal a sign of the wrath of God and of the abolition of all the blessings of salvation which were promised to the nation in his person. Compare Lam. 4:20, where Israel calls the king its vital breath (Hengstenberg). *יִעֲצָר* (counsellor) is also the king; and this epithet simply gives prominence to that which the Davidic king had been to Zion (cf. Isa. 9:5, where the Messiah is designated as “Counsellor” *par excellence*). But Zion must experience this pain: writhe and break forth. *Gōchī* is strengthened by *chūlī*, and is used intransitively, to break forth, describing the pain connected with the birth as being as it were a bursting of the whole nature (cf. Jer. 4:31). It is not used transitively in the sense of “drive forth,” as Hitzig and others suppose; for the determination that Jerusalem would submit, and the people be carried away, could not properly be represented as a birth or as a reorganization of things. With the words *כִּי עֲתָה* *וּגֵר* the prophet leaves the figure, and predicts in literal terms the catastrophe awaiting the nation. *עֲתָה* (now), repeated from v. 9, is the ideal present, which the prophet sees in spirit, but which is in reality the near or more remote future. *קִרְיָה*, without an article, is a kind of proper name, like *urbs* for Rome (Caspari). In order to set forth the certainty of the threatened judgment, and at the same time the greatness of the calamity in the most impressive manner, Micah fills up the details of the drama: viz., *going out of the city, dwelling in the field, without shelter, delivered up to all the chances of weather, and coming to Babel, carried thither without delay. Going out of the city presupposes the conquest of the city by the enemy; since going out to surrender themselves to the enemy (2 Kings 24:12; 1 Sam. 11:3) does not fit in with the prophetic description, which*

is not a historical description in detail.

Nevertheless Israel shall not perish. There (*shām*, i.e., even in Babel) will the Lord its God deliver it out of the hand of its foes.

The prediction that the daughter Zion, i.e., the nation of Israel which was governed from Zion, and had its centre in Zion—the covenant nation which, since the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, existed in Judah only—should be carried away to Babylon, and that at a time when Assyria was in the field as the chief enemy of Israel and the representative of the imperial power, goes so far beyond the bounds of the political horizon of Micah’s time, that it cannot be accounted for from any natural presentiment. It is true that it has an analogon in Isa. 34:6, 7, where Isaiah predicts to king Hezekiah in the most literal terms the carrying away of all his treasures, and of his sons (descendants), to Babylon. At the same time, this analogy is not sufficient to explain the prediction before us; for Isaiah’s prophecy was uttered during the period immediately following the destruction of the Assyrian forces in front of Jerusalem and the arrival of Babylonian ambassadors in Jerusalem, and had a point of connection in these events, which indicated the destruction of the Assyrian empire and the rise of Babylon in its stead, at all events in the germ; whereas no such connecting link exists in the case of Micah’s prophecy, which was unquestionably uttered before these events. It has therefore been thought, that in Mic. 3:12 Micah predicts the destruction of Jerusalem, and here in v. 10 the carrying away of Judah to *Babylon* by the *Assyrians*; and this opinion, that Micah expected the judgment upon Jerusalem and Judah to be executed by the Assyrians, and not by the Babylonians, has been supported partly by such passages as Mic. 5:4, 5, and Jer. 26:18, 19, and partly by the circumstance that Micah threatens his own corrupt contemporaries with the judgment which he predicts on account of their sins; whereas in his time the Assyrians were the only possible executors of a judgment upon Israel who were then standing on the stage of history (Caspari). But these arguments are not decisive.

All that can be inferred from Mic. 5:4, 5, where Asshur is mentioned as the representative of all the enemies of Israel, and of the power of the world in its hostility to the people of God in the Messianic times, is that at the time of Micah the imperial power in its hostility to the kingdom of God was represented by Assyria; but it by no means follows that Assyria would always remain the imperial power, so that it could only be from her that Micah could expect the destruction of Jerusalem, and the carrying away of Judah to Babylon. Again, Jer. 26:18, 19—where the chief men of Judah, in order to defend the prophet Jeremiah, quote Micah's prophecy, with the remark that king Hezekiah did not put him to death in consequence, but feared the Lord and besought His face, so that the Lord repented of the evil which He had spoken concerning Jerusalem—simply proves that these chief men referred Micah's words to the Assyrians, and attributed the non-fulfilment of the threatened judgment by the Assyrians to Hezekiah's penitence and prayer, and that this was favoured by the circumstance that the Lord answered the prayer of the king, by assuring him that the Assyrian army should be destroyed (Isa. 37:21ff.). But whether the opinion of these chief men as to the meaning and fulfilment of Micah's prophecy (Mic. 3:12) was the correct one or not, cannot be decided from the passage quoted. Its correctness is apparently favoured, indeed, by the circumstance that Micah threatened the people of his own time with the judgment (*for your sakes* shall Zion be ploughed into a field, etc.). Now, if he had been speaking of a judgment upon Judah through the medium of the Babylonians, "he would (so Caspari thinks) not only have threatened his contemporaries with a judgment which could not fall upon them, since it was not possible till after their time, inasmuch as the Assyrians were on the stage in his day; but he would also have been most incomprehensibly silent as to the approaching Assyrian judgment, of which Isaiah spoke again and again." This argument falls to the ground with the untenable assumptions upon which it is founded. Micah neither mentions the

Assyrians nor the Babylonians as executing the judgment, nor does he say a word concerning the time when the predicted devastation or destruction of Jerusalem will occur. In the expression בְּגִלְלָתְכֶם, for your sakes (Mic. 3:12), it is by no means affirmed that it will take place in his time through the medium of the Assyrians. The persons addressed are the scandalous leaders of the house of Israel, i.e., of the covenant nation, and primarily those living in his own time, though by no means those only, but all who share their character and ungodliness, so that the words apply to succeeding generations quite as much as to his contemporaries. The only thing that would warrant our restricting the prophecy to Micah's own times, would be a precise definition by Micah himself of the period when Jerusalem would be destroyed, or his expressly distinguishing his own contemporaries from their sons and descendants. But as he has done neither the one nor the other, it cannot be said that, inasmuch as the destruction of Jerusalem and the carrying away of the people was not effected by the Assyrians, but by the Babylonians (Chaldaeans), he would have been altogether silent as to the approaching Assyrian judgment, and only threatened them with the Chaldaean catastrophe, which did not take place till a long time afterwards. His words refer to all the judgments, which took place from his own time onwards till the utter destruction of Jerusalem and the carrying away of the people to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. The one-sided reference of the prophecy to the Assyrians is simply based upon an incorrect idea of the nature of prophecy, and its relation to the fulfilment, and involves the prophet Micah in an irreconcilable discrepancy between himself and his contemporary the prophet Isaiah, who does indeed predict the severe oppression of Judah by the Assyrians, but at the same time foretels the failure of the plans of these foes to the people of Jehovah, and the total destruction of their army.

This contradiction, with the consequence to which it would inevitably lead,—namely, that if

one of the prophets predicted the destruction of Jerusalem by the Assyrians, whereas the other prophesied that it would not be destroyed by them, the two contemporary prophets would necessarily lead the people astray, and render both the truth of their contradictory utterances and their own divine mission doubtful,—cannot be removed by the assumption that Isaiah uttered the prophecies in Mic. 28–32 at a somewhat later period, after Micah had published his book, and the terribly severe words of Micah in Mic. 3:12 had produced repentance. For Isaiah had predicted that the Assyrian would not conquer Jerusalem, but that his army would be destroyed under its walls, not only in Isa. 28–32, at the time when the Assyrians are approaching with threatening aspect under Shalmaneser or Sennacherib, but much earlier than that,—namely, in the time of Ahaz, in Isa. 10:5–12:6. Moreover, in Isa. 28–32 there is not a single trace that Micah's terrible threatening had produced such repentance, that the Lord was able to withdraw His threat in consequence, and predict through Isaiah the rescue of Jerusalem from the Assyrian. On the contrary, Isaiah scourges the evil judges and false prophets quite as severely in Isa. 28:7ff. and 29:9–12 as Micah does in Mic. 3:1–3 and 5–8. And lastly, although the distinction between conditional prophecies and those uttered unconditionally is, generally speaking, correct enough, and is placed beyond all doubt by Jer. 18:7–10; there is nothing in the addresses and threatenings of the two prophets to indicate that Micah uttered his threats conditionally, i.e., in case there should be no repentance, whereas Isaiah uttered his unconditionally. Moreover, such an explanation is proved to be untenable by the fact, that in Micah the threat of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the desolation of the temple mountain (Mic. 3:12) stands in the closest connection with the promise, that at the end of the days the mountain of God's house will be exalted above all mountains, and Jehovah reign on Zion as king for ever (Mic. 4:1–3 and 7). If this threat were only conditional, the promise would also have only a conditional validity; and the final glorification

of the kingdom of God would be dependent upon the penitence of the great mass of the people of Israel,—a view which is diametrically opposed to the real nature of the prophecies of both, yea, of all the prophets. The only difference between Isaiah and Micah in this respect consists in the fact that Isaiah, in his elaborate addresses, brings out more distinctly the attitude of the imperial power of Assyria towards the kingdom of God in Israel, and predicts not only that Israel will be hard pressed by the Assyrians, but also that the latter will not overcome the people of God, but will be wrecked upon the foundation-stone laid by Jehovah in Zion; whereas Micah simply threatens the sinners with judgment, and after the judgment predicts the glorification of Zion in grand general terms, without entering more minutely into the attitude of the Assyrians towards Israel.

In the main, however, Micah goes hand in hand with his contemporary Isaiah. In Isa. 32:14, Isaiah also foretells the devastation, or rather the destruction, of Jerusalem, notwithstanding the fact that he has more than once announced the deliverance of the city of God from Asshur, and that without getting into contradiction with himself. For this double announcement may be very simply explained from the fact that the judgments which Israel had yet to endure, and the period of glory to follow, lay, like a long, deep diorama, before the prophet's mental eye; and that in his threatenings he plunged sometimes more, sometimes less, deeply into those judgments which lay in perspective before him (see Delitzsch on *Isaiah*, at Isa. 32:20). The same thing applies to Micah, who goes to a great depth both in his threats and promises, not only predicting the judgment in all its extremity,—namely, the utter destruction of Jerusalem, and the carrying away of the people to Babel,—but also the salvation in its ultimate perfection, viz., the glorification of Zion. We must therefore not restrict his threats in Mic. 3:12 and 4:10 even to the Chaldaean catastrophe, nor the promise of Israel's deliverance in Babel out of the hands of its foes to the liberation of the Jews from Babylon,

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which was effected by Cyrus, and their return to Palestine under Zerubbabel and Ezra; but must also extend the threat of punishment to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans and the attendant dispersion of the Jews over all the world, and the redemption out of Babel promised in Mic. 4:10 to that deliverance of Israel which, in the main, is in the future still. These two judgments and these two deliverances are comprehended in an undivided unity in the words of the prophet, Babel being regarded not only in its historical character, but also in its typical significance, as the beginning and the hearth of the kingdom of the world. Babel has this double significance in the Scriptures from the very commencement. Even the building of the city with a tower intended to reach to heaven was a work of human pride, and an ungodly display of power (Gen. 11:4ff.); and after its erection Babel was made by Nimrod the beginning of the empire of the world (Gen. 10:10). It was from these two facts that Babel became the type of the imperial power, and not because the division of the human race into nations with different languages, and their dispersion over the whole earth, had their origin there (see A. ch. Lämmert, *Babel, das Thier und der falsche Prophet*. Goth. 1862, p. 36ff.); and it is in this typical significance of Babel that we have to seek not only for the reason for the divine purpose to banish the people of God to Babel, when they were given up to the power of the kingdom of the world, but also for a point of connection for the prophetic announcement when this purpose had been communicated to the prophet's mind. Micah accordingly predicts the carrying away of the daughter Zion to Babel, and her deliverance there out of the power of her enemies, not because Babel along with Nineveh was the metropolis of the world-empire of his time, or a chief city of that empire, but because Babel, from its very origin, was a type and symbol of the imperial power. That the words of Micah, in their deepest sense, should be so interpreted, is not only warranted, but necessitated, by the announcement which follows in vv. 11–13 of the victorious conflict of

Zion with many nations, which points far beyond the conflicts of the Jews in the times succeeding the captivity.

Micah 4:11–13. The daughter Zion, when rescued from Babel, overcomes all hostile powers in the strength of her God. V. 11. *“And now many nations have assembled together against thee, who say, Let her be profaned, and let our eyes look upon Zion. V. 12. But they know not the thoughts of Jehovah, and understand not His counsel; for He has gathered them together like sheaves for the threshing-floor. V. 13. Rise up and thresh, O daughter Zion: for I make thy horn iron, and I make thy hoofs brass; and thou wilt crush many nations: and I ban their gain to Jehovah, and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth.”* With וְעָתָה, corresponding to עָתָה in v. 9, there commences a new scene, which opens to the prophet's mental eye. Many nations have assembled together against the daughter Zion (עַל־יָדָךְ pointing back to צִיּוֹן in v. 10), with the intention of profaning her, and feasting their eyes upon the profaned one. It is the holiness of Zion, therefore, which drives the nations to attack her. תִּהְיֶנָּה, let her be or become profaned: not by the sins or bloodguiltiness of her inhabitants (Jer. 3:2; Isa. 24:5), for this is not appropriate in the mouths of heathen; but through devastation or destruction let her holiness be taken from her. They want to show that there is nothing in her holiness, and to feast their eyes upon the city thus profaned. תִּחַזְקוּ with ב, to look upon a thing with interest, here with malicious pleasure. On the singular tachaz, followed by the subject in the plural, see Ewald § 317, a. To this design on the part of the heathen, the prophet (v. 12) opposes the counsel of the Lord. Whilst the heathen assemble together against Zion, with the intention of profaning her by devastation, the Lord has resolved to destroy them in front of Zion. The destruction which they would prepare for Zion will fall upon themselves, for the Lord gathers them together like sheaves upon the threshing-floor, to thresh, i.e., destroy, them. כִּי does not mean “that,” but “for.” The

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sentence explains the assertion that they do not understand the counsel of the Lord. כְּעֶמֶר, with the generic article, equivalent to “like sheaves.” This judgment Zion is to execute upon the heathen. The figurative expression, “Rise up, and thresh,” etc., rests upon the oriental custom of threshing out corn with oxen, i.e., of having it trodden out with their hoofs (see Paulsen, *Ackerbau der Morgenländer*, § 41). In this, of course, only the strength of the hoofs was considered. But as the horn of the ox is a figure frequently used for destructive power (see Deut. 33:17, 1 Kings 22:11, Amos 6:13, etc.), the prophet combines this figure, to strengthen the idea of crushing power, and express the thought that the Lord will equip Zion perfectly with the strength requisite to destroy the nations. וְהִחַרְמָתִי is the first person, and must not be altered into or regarded as the second, as it has been in the LXX and Syriac, and by Jerome. The prophet does not speak in the name of the theocratic nation, as Jerome supposes, but continues to represent Jehovah as speaking, as in אֲשִׁים, with which, however, instead of לִי, the noun לִיהוָה is used, to give greater clearness to the thought that it is Jehovah, the God and Lord of the whole earth, who will destroy the nations that have rebelled against Him and His kingdom, wresting their possessions from them, and taking them back to Himself. For everything laid under the ban belonged to the Lord, as being most holy (Lev. 27:28). חַיִּל, property, wealth, the sum and substance of the possessions. Israel is not to enrich itself by plundering the defeated foe, but Jehovah will sanctify the possessions of the heathen to Himself, to whom they belong as Lord of the whole earth, by laying them under the ban: that is to say, He will apply them to the glorification of His kingdom.

There has been a diversity of opinion as to the historical allusion, or the fulfilment of these verses. So much, however, is obvious at the very outset, namely, that they cannot be made to refer to the same event as v. 9, that is to say, to the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians,

without bringing the prophet into the most striking contradiction to himself. For, since v. 10 predicts not a partial deportation, but the complete carrying away of Israel to Babel, and v. 13 the perfect deliverance of Jerusalem, the people wandering out of Jerusalem into captivity (v. 10) cannot possibly be the enemies who lead it away, beating it utterly before Jerusalem, and banning their possessions to the Lord. There is more to favour the allusion to the victorious conflicts of the Maccabees with the Syrians, for which Theodoret, Calvin, Hengstenberg, and others decide, since these conflicts occurred in the period intervening between the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity (v. 10) and the coming of the Messiah (Mic. 5:12). But even this allusion corresponds far too little to the words of the promise for us to be able to regard it as correct. Although, for example, the war of the Maccabees was a religious war in the strict sense of the word, since the Syrians, and with them the small neighbouring nations of the Jews, set themselves to attack Judah as the nation of God, and to exterminate Judaism, the *gōyīm rabbīm* who have assembled against Zion, and whom the Lord gathers together thither (vv. 11, 12), point to a much greater even than the attacks made by the Syrians and the surrounding tribes upon Jerusalem in the time of the Maccabees. *Gōyī, rabbīm* (many nations) points back to *gōyīm rabbīm* and *'ammīm rabbīm* in vv. 2 and 3, so that, both here and there, all the nations of the world that are hostile to God are included. Again, the defeat which they suffer before Jerusalem is much greater than the victory which the Maccabees achieved over their enemies. On the other hand, the circumstance that the Babylonian captivity is predicted in v. 10, and the birth of the Messiah in Mic. 5:1, 2, and that the victorious conflicts of the Maccabees with the Syrians and the heathen neighbours of the Jews lie in the interim between these events, furnishes no sufficient proof that these conflicts must be referred to in vv. 11–13, simply because the assumption that, in vv. 9–14, the attacks of the Chaldaeans, the Graeco-Syrians, and the

Romans upon Zion are foretold in the order in which they followed one another in history, has no firm basis in the threefold recurrence of *'attâh* (now) in vv. 9, 11, and 14. As an event is introduced with *'attâh* in v. 9, which does not follow the one predicted in v. 8 in chronological sequence, but, on the contrary, the prophet comes back in *ve'attâh* from the more remote to the more immediate future, it cannot be inferred from the *'attâh* in v. 14 that the oppression mentioned there must follow the victory over many nations predicted in vv. 11–13 in chronological order, or that the siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Romans are referred to in v. 14. Moreover, the proclamation in v. 10 already goes beyond the Chaldaean catastrophe, and the liberation of the Jews from the Chaldaean exile, so that if the *ve'attâh* in v. 12 announces a conflict with Zion which will follow the events predicted in vv. 9 and 10, we must not restrict the conflict to the wars of the Maccabees. We must therefore understand these verses as referring to the events already predicted by Joel (Joel 3), and afterwards by Ezekiel (Ezek. 38:39) and Zechariah (12), and in Rev. 20:8ff.: i.e., to the last great attack which the nations of the world will make upon the church of the Lord, that has been redeemed from Babel and sanctified, with the design of exterminating the holy city of God from the face of the earth, and to which the attacks of the Syrians, and the rest of the nations surrounding Judah, upon the covenant nation in the times of the Maccabees, furnished but a feeble prelude. This view is favoured by the unmistakable similarity between our verses and both Joel and Ezekiel.

The *נֶאֱסָפוּ עָלֶיךָ גּוֹיִים רַבִּים* in v. 11, compared with *קִבְצָם* in v. 12, points clearly back to *קִבְצָתִי* in Joel 3:2, compared with *וְנִקְבְּצוּ* in v. 11; and the figure in v. 12, of the gathering together of the nations like sheaves for the threshing-floor, to the similar figures of the ripening of the harvest and the treading of the full wine-press in Joel 3:13. And the use of *gōyīm rabbīm* in Micah is no reason for supposing that it differs in meaning from the

kol-haggōyīm of Joel, since Micah uses *gōyīm rabbīm* in vv. 2 and 3 for the totality of the nations of the world. Ezekiel, also, simply speaks of *gōyīm rabbīm* as assembling together with Gog to attack the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 38:6, 9, 15); and in his case also, this attack of the nations upon Jerusalem is appended to the redemption of Israel effected at Babel. Again, the issue of this attack is the same in Micah as in Joel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah,—namely, the complete overthrow of the hostile nations by the people of Israel, who fight in the strength of the Lord, by which Jehovah manifests Himself to all nations as Lord of the whole earth, and proves Himself to be the Holy One (compare v. 13 with Joel 3:12, 13, and Ezek. 38:16; 39:3ff.). Lastly, a decisive proof of the correctness of this allusion is to be found in the circumstance, that the attack of the nations is directed against Zion, which has now become holy, that it proceeds from hatred and enmity to His holiness, and has for its object the desecration of the city of God. This feature is by no means applicable to Jerusalem and Judah in the time of the Maccabees, but can only apply to the time when Israel, redeemed from Babel, forms a holy church of God, i.e., to the last period of the development of the kingdom of God, which began with Christ, but has not yet reached its fullest manifestation. “From the fact, however, that Zion, when sanctified, is to be delivered out of much greater danger than that from which it will not be delivered in the immediate future, and also that the refined and sanctified Zion will conquer and destroy an incomparably greater hostile force than that to which it will now soon succumb, it follows, in the clearest and most conclusive way, that in the nearest future it must be given up to the power of the world, because it is now unholy” (Caspari). This thought prepares the way for the transition to Mic. 5:1, where the prophecy returns to the oppression foretold in vv. 9 and 10.

Micah 5

Micah 5:1 (Heb. Bib. 4:14). “Now wilt thou gather in troops, thou daughter of troops; they

lay siege against us; with the staff they smite the judge of Israel upon the cheek." With 'attâh (now) the prophet's address turns once more to the object introduced with 'attâh in Mic. 4:9. For we may see clearly enough from the omission of the cop. *Vav*, which could not be left out if it were intended to link on Mic. 5:1 to Mic. 4:11–13, that this 'attâh points back to 4:9, and is not attached to the *v'*attâh in 4:11, for the purpose of introducing a fresh occurrence to follow the event mentioned in 4:11–13. "The prophecy in Mic. 4:11–13 explains the ground of that in vv. 9, 10, and the one in Mic. 5:1 sounds like a conclusion drawn from this explanation. The explanation in vv. 11–13 is enclosed on both sides by that which it explains. By returning in Mic. 5:1 to the thoughts expressed in Mic. 4:9, the prophet rounds off the strophe in 4:9–5:1" (Caspari). The words are addressed to the daughter Zion, who alone is addressed with every 'attâh, and generally throughout the entire section. *Bath-gēgūd*, daughter of the troop, might mean: thou nation accustomed or trained to form troops, thou warlike Zion. But this does not apply to what follows, in which a siege alone is mentioned. This turn is given to the expression, rather "for the purpose of suggesting the thought of a crowd of people pressing anxiously together, as distinguished from *gēdūd*, an invading troop." The verb *hithgōdēd* does not mean here to scratch one's self or make incisions (Deut. 14:1, etc.), but, as in Jer. 5:7, to press or crowd together; and the thought is this: Now crowd together with fear in a troop, for he (sc., the enemy) sets, or prepares, a siege against us. In עָלֵינוּ the prophet includes himself in the nation as being a member of it. He finds himself in spirit along with the people besieged Zion. The siege leads to conquest; for it is only in consequence of this that the judge of Israel can be smitten with the rod upon the cheek, i.e., be shamefully ill treated (compare 1 Kings 22:24; Ps. 3:8; Job 16:10). The judge of Israel, whether the king or the Israelitish judges comprehended in one, cannot be thought of as outside the city at the time when the city is besieged. Of all the different effects of the siege

of the city the prophet singles out only this one, viz., the ill-treatment of the judge, because "nothing shows more clearly how much misery and shame Israel will have to endure for its present sins" (Caspari). "The judge of Israel" is the person holding the highest office in Israel. This might be the king, as in Amos 2:3 (cf. 1 Sam. 8:5, 6, 20), since the Israelitish king was the supreme judge in Israel, or the true possessor of the judicial authority and dignity. But the expression is hardly to be restricted to the king, still less is it meant in distinction from the king, as pointing back to the time when Israel had no king, and was only governed by judges; but the judge stands for the king here, on the one hand with reference to the threat in Mic. 3:1, 9, 11, where the heads and princes of Israel are described as unjust and ungodly judges, and on the other hand as an antithesis to *mōshēl* in v. 2. As the Messiah is not called king there, but *mōshēl*, ruler, as the possessor of supreme authority; so here the possessor of judicial authority is called *shōphēt*, to indicate the reproach which would fall upon the king and the leaders of the nation on account of their unrighteousness. The threat in this verse does not refer, however, to the Roman invasion. Such an idea can only be connected with the assumption already refuted, that Mic. 4:11–13 point to the times of the Maccabees, and no valid argument can be adduced to support it. In the verse before us the prophet reverts to the oppression predicted in Mic. 4:9 and 10, so that the remarks already made in 4:10 apply to the fulfilment of what is predicted here. The principal fulfilment occurred in the Chaldaean period; but the fulfilment was repeated in every succeeding siege of Jerusalem until the destruction of the city by the Romans. For, according to v. 3, Israel will be given up to the power of the empire of the world until the coming of the Messiah; that is to say, not merely till His birth or public appearance, but till the nation shall accept the Messiah, who has appeared as its own Redeemer.

Birth of the Ruler in Israel, and His Peaceful Rule—Ch. 5:2–15 (Heb. Bib. 1–14)

Micah 5:2–15. (Heb. Bib. 1–14). At the time of Zion's deepest degradation the ruler in Israel will arise out of Bethlehem, who will not only secure for His people deliverance from their foes, but raise them into a beneficent and yet dreaded power to all nations, founding a kingdom of peace, and glorifying Israel into a holy nation.

Micah 5:2–4. The previous announcement of the glory to which Zion is eventually to attain, is now completed by the announcement of the birth of the great Ruler, who through His government will lead Israel to this, the goal of its divine calling. V. 2. *“And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, too small to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee will He come forth to me who will be Ruler over Israel; and His goings forth are from the olden time, from the days of eternity.”* The אֶתְּהָא, with which this new section of the proclamation of salvation opens, corresponds to the אֶתְּהָא in Mic. 4:8. Its former government is to return to Zion (Mic. 4:8), and out of little Bethlehem is the possessor of this government to proceed, viz., the Ruler of Israel, who has sprung from eternity. This thought is so attached to v. 1, that the divine exaltation of the future Ruler of Israel is contrasted with the deepest degradation of the judge. The names *Bethlehem Ephratah* (*'Ephrâth* and *'Ephrâthâh*, i.e., the fertile ones, or the fruit-fields, being the earlier name; by the side of which *Bêth-lechem*, bread-house, had arisen even in the patriarchal times: see Gen. 35:19; 48:7; Ruth 4:11) are connected together to give greater solemnity to the address, and not to distinguish the Judæan Bethlehem from the one in Zebulun (Josh. 19:15), since the following words, “among the thousands of Judah,” provide sufficiently for this. In the little town the inhabitants are addressed; and this explains the masculines אֶתְּהָא, אֶתְּהָא, and אֶתְּהָא, as the prophet had them in his mind when describing the smallness of the little town, which is called κόμην in John 7:42. אֶתְּהָא, literally “small with regard to the

being among the *'ălâphîm* of Judah,” i.e., too small to have a place among them. Instead of the more exact מִהַיִּוֹת, מִהַיִּוֹת is probably chosen, simply because of the following לְהַיִּוֹת.⁶

'Alâphîm, thousands—an epithet used as early as Num. 1:16; 10:4, to denote the families, *mishpâchôth*, i.e., larger sections into which the twelve tribes of Israel were divided (see the comm. on Num. 1:16 and Ex. 18:25)—does not stand for *sârê 'ălâphîm*, the princes of the families; since the thought is simply this, that Bethlehem is too small for its population to form an independent *'elep*. We must not infer from this, however, that it had not a thousand inhabitants, as Caspari does; since the families were called *'ălâphîm*, not because the number of *individuals* in them numbered a thousand, but because the number of their families or heads of families was generally somewhere about a thousand (see my *biblische Archäologie*, § 140). Notwithstanding this smallness, the Ruler over Israel is to come forth out of Bethlehem. אֶתְּהָא does not denote descent here, as in Gen. 17:6 for example, so that Bethlehem would be regarded as the father of the Messiah, as Hofmann supposes, but is to be explained in accordance with Jer. 30:21, “A Ruler will go forth out of the midst of it” (cf. Zech. 10:4); and the thought is simply this, “Out of the population of the little Bethlehem there will proceed and arise.” לִי (to me) refers to Jehovah, in whose name the prophet speaks, and expresses the thought that this coming forth is subservient to the plan of the Lord, or connected with the promotion of His kingdom, just as in the words of God to Samuel in 1 Sam. 16:1, “I have provided me a King among his sons,” to which Micah most probably alluded for the purpose of showing the typical relation of David to the Messiah. לְהַיִּוֹת מוֹשֵׁל is really the subject to אֶתְּהָא, the infinitive לְהַיִּוֹת being used as a relative clause, like לְכַסּוֹת in Hos. 2:11, in the sense of “who is destined to be ruler.” But instead of simply saying אֶתְּהָא מוֹשֵׁל יֵשְׁרָאֵל, Micah gives the sentence the turn he does, for the

purpose of bringing sharply out the contrast between the natural smallness of Bethlehem and the exalted dignity to which it would rise, through the fact that the Messiah would issue from it. בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, not *in*, but *over* Israel, according to the general meaning of מִשָּׁל ב. The article is omitted before *mōshēl*, because the only thing of primary importance was to give prominence to the idea of ruling; and the more precise definition follows immediately afterwards in וּמוֹצְאֵתָיו וְגו'. The meaning of this clause of the verse depends upon our obtaining a correct view not only of מוֹצְאוֹת, but also of the references to time which follow. מוֹצְאָה, the fem. of מוֹצֵץ, may denote the place, the time, the mode, or the act of going out. The last meaning, which Hengstenberg disputes, is placed beyond all doubt by Hos. 6:3, 1 Kings 10:28, Ezek. 12:4, and 2 Sam. 3:25. The first of these senses, in which מוֹצֵץ occurs most frequently, and in which even the form מוֹצְאוֹת is used in the *keri* in 2 Kings 10:27, which is the only other passage in which this form occurs, does not suit the predicate מִיְמֵי עוֹלָם here, since the *days* of eternity cannot be called *places* of departure; nor is it required by the correlate מִמָּוֶד, i.e., out of Bethlehem, because the idea which predominates in Bethlehem is that of the population, and not that of the town or locality; and in general, the antithesis between hemistich *a* and *b* does not lie in the idea of place, but in the insignificance of Bethlehem as a place of exit for Him whose beginnings are in the days of eternity. We take מוֹצְאוֹת in the sense of goings forth, exits, as the meaning “times of going forth” cannot be supported by a single passage. Both עוֹלָם and קֶדֶם are used to denote hoary antiquity; for example in Mic. 7:14 and 20, where it is used of the patriarchal age. Even the two together are so used in Isa. 51:9, where they are combined for the sake of emphasis. But both words are also used in Prov. 8:22 and 23 to denote the eternity preceding the creation of the world, because man, who

lives in time, and is bound to time in his mode of thought, can only picture eternity to himself as time without end. Which of these two senses is the one predominating here, depends upon the precise meaning to be given to the whole verse.

It is now generally admitted that the Ruler proceeding from Bethlehem is the Messiah, since the idea that the words refer to Zerubbabel, which was cherished by certain Jews, according to the assertion of Chrysostom, Theodoret, and others, is too arbitrary to have met with any acceptance. Coming forth out of Bethlehem involves the idea of descent. Consequently we must not restrict מוֹצְאֵתָיו (His goings forth) to the appearance of the predicted future Ruler in the olden time, or to the revelations of the Messiah as the Angel of Jehovah even in the patriarchal age, but must so interpret it that it at least affirms His origin as well. Now the origin of the Angel of the Lord, who is equal to God, was not in the olden time in which He first of all appeared to the patriarchs, but before the creation of the world—in eternity. Consequently we must not restrict מִקְדָּם מִיְמֵי עוֹלָם (from of old, from the days of eternity) to the olden time, or exclude the idea of eternity in the stricter sense. Nevertheless Micah does not announce here the eternal proceeding of the Son from the Father, or of the Logos from God, the *generatio filii aeterna*, as the earlier orthodox commentators supposed. This is precluded by the plural מוֹצְאוֹת, which cannot be taken either as the *plur. majestatis*, or as denoting the abstract, or as an indefinite expression, but points to a repeated going out, and forces us to the assumption that the words affirm both the origin of the Messiah before all worlds and His appearances in the olden time, and do not merely express the thought, that “from an inconceivably remote and lengthened period the Ruler has gone forth, and has been engaged in coming, who will eventually issue from Bethlehem” (Hofmann, *Schriftbeweis*, ii. 1, p. 9).⁷ The announcement of the origin of this Ruler as being before all worlds unquestionably

presupposes His divine nature; but this thought was not strange to the prophetic mind in Micah's time, but is expressed without ambiguity by Isaiah, when he gives the Messiah the name of "the Mighty God" (Isa. 9:5; see Delitzsch's comm. *in loc.*). We must not seek, however, in this affirmation of the divine nature of the Messiah for the full knowledge of the Deity, as first revealed in the New Testament by the fact of the incarnation of God in Christ, and developed, for example, in the prologue to the Gospel of John. Nor can we refer the "goings forth" to the eternal proceeding of the Logos from God, as showing the inward relation of the Trinity within itself, because this word corresponds to the מֵצֵיִךְ of the first hemistich. As this expresses primarily and directly nothing more than His issuing from Bethlehem, and leaves His descent indefinite, מוֹצֵאתוֹ can only affirm the going forth from God at the creation of the world, and in the revelations of the olden and primeval times.

The future Ruler of Israel, whose goings forth reach back into eternity, is to spring from the insignificant Bethlehem, like His ancestor, king David. The descent of David from Bethlehem forms the substratum not only for the prophetic announcement of the fact that the Messiah would come forth out of this small town, but also for the divine appointment that Christ was born in Bethlehem, the city of David. He was thereby to be made known to the people from His very birth as the great promised descendant of David, who would take possession of the throne of His father David for ever. As the coming forth from Bethlehem implies birth in Bethlehem, so do we see from Matt. 2:5, 6, and John 7:42, that the old Jewish synagogue unanimously regarded this passage as containing a prophecy of the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem. The correctness of this view is also confirmed by the account in Matt. 2:1-11; for Matthew simply relates the arrival of the Magi from the East to worship the newborn King in accordance with the whole arrangement of his Gospel, because he saw in

this even a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies.⁸

Micah 5:3. *"Therefore will He give them up until the time when a travailing woman hath brought forth, and the remnant of His brethren will return, together with the sons of Israel. V. 4. And He will stand and feed in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah His God, and they will dwell, for now will He be great to the ends of the earth."* "Therefore" (לִאֲחֵנִי): i.e., "because the great divine Ruler of Israel, from whom alone its redemption can proceed, will spring from the little Bethlehem, and therefore from the degraded family of David" (Caspari). This is the correct explanation; for the reason why Israel is to be given up to the power of the nations of the world, and not to be rescued earlier, does not lie in the appearance of the Messiah as such, but in His springing from little Bethlehem. The birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem, and not in Jerusalem the city of David, presupposes that the family of David, out of which it is to spring, will have lost the throne, and have fallen into poverty. This could only arise from the giving up of Israel into the power of its enemies. Micah had already stated clearly enough in what precedes, that this fate would fall upon the nation and the royal house of David, on account of its apostasy from the Lord; so that he could overlook this here, and give prominence to the other side alone, namely to the fact that, according to the counsel of God, the future Deliverer and Ruler of Israel would also resemble His royal ancestor David in the fact that He was not to spring from Zion the royal city built on high, but from the insignificant country town of Bethlehem, and that for this very reason Israel was to remain so long under the power of the nations of the world. The suffix attached to מְצִיָּנָה points to מְצִיָּנָה in v. 1; and נָתַן is applied, as in 1 Kings 14:16, to the surrender of Israel into the power of its enemies as a punishment for its sins. This surrender is not the last of many oppressions, which are to take place in the period before the birth of the Messiah (the Roman oppression), but a calamity lasting from the present time, or

the coming of the judgment threatened in Mic. 3, until the time of the Messiah's coming; and יְהִיָּם points back not merely to v. 1, but also to Mic. 4:9, 10. The travailing woman (*yōlēdâh*) is not the community of Israel (Theodoret, Calvin, Vitranga, and others), but the mother of the Messiah (Cyril, and most of the Christian expositors, including even Ewald and Hitzig). The supposition that the congregation is personified here, is precluded not only by the fact that in the very same sentence the *sons of Israel* are spoken of in the plural, but still more by the circumstance that in that case the bringing forth would be only a figurative representation of the joy following the pain, in which the obvious allusion in the words to the Messiah, which is required by the context, and especially by the suffix to אֶחָיו, which refers to the Messiah, and presupposes that His birth is referred to in יוֹלְדָה יוֹלְדָה, would entirely fall away. But Micah had all the more ground for speaking of this, inasmuch as Isaiah had already predicted the birth of the Messiah (Isa. 7:14). יוֹלְדָה has no article, and the travailing woman is thereby left indefinite, because the thought, "till He is born," or "till a mother shall bring Him forth," upon which alone the whole turns, did not require any more precise definition.

In the second clause of the verse there commences the description of the blessing, which the birth of the Messiah will bring to Israel. The first blessing will be the return of those that remain of Israel to the Lord their God. אֶחָיו, the brethren of the Ruler born at Bethlehem, are the Judaeans as the members of the Messiah's own tribe; just as, in 2 Sam. 19:13, David calls the Judaeans his brethren, his flesh and bone, in contrast with the rest of the Israelites. יְהִיָּם אֶחָיו, the remnant of his brethren, are those who are rescued from the judgment that has fallen upon Judah; *yether*, as in Zeph. 2:9 and Zech. 14:2, denoting the remnant, in distinction from those who have perished (= שְׁאֵרִית, Mic. 2:12; 4:7, etc.). יָשׁוּבוּן, to return, not from exile to Canaan, but to Jehovah, i.e., to be

concerted. עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, not "to the sons of Israel;" for although שׁוּב, construed with עַל, is met with in the sense of outward return (e.g., Prov. 26:11) as well as in that of spiritual return to the Lord (2 Chron. 30:9), the former explanation would not give any suitable meaning here, not only because "the sons of Israel," as distinguished from the brethren of the Messiah, could not possibly denote the true members of the nation of God, but also because the thought that the Judaeans are to return, or be converted, to the Israelites of the ten tribes, is altogether unheard of, and quite at variance with the idea which runs through all the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament,—namely, that after the division of the kingdom, Judah formed the kernel of the covenant nation, with which the rebellious Israelites were to be united once more. עַל signifies here together with, at the same time as (Hofmann, Caspari), as in Jer. 3:18 with the verb יָלְכוּ, and in Ex.

35:22 with בּוֹא; and "the sons of Israel" are the Israelites of the ten tribes, and, in this connection, those that are left of the ten tribes. There is no ground for the objection offered by Hengstenberg to this explanation, namely, that "it is absurd that the ten tribes should appear to be the principal persons redeemed;" for this is not implied in the words. The meaning "together with," for עַל, is not derived from the primary meaning, thereupon, in addition to, *insuper*, as Ewald supposes (§ 217, *i*), nor from the idea of accompanying, as Ges. and Dietrich maintain. The persons introduced with עַל are never the principal objects, as the two passages quoted sufficiently prove. The women in Ex. 35:22 (עַל הַנְּשִׁים) are not the principal persons, taking precedence of the men; nor is the house of Israel placed above the house of Judah in Jer. 3:18. The use of עַל in the sense of together with has been developed rather from the idea of protecting, shielding, as in Gen. 32:12, slaying the mothers upon, i.e., together with, the children, the mothers being thought of as screening the children, as Hos. 10:14 and other

passages clearly show. Consequently the person screening the other is the principal person, and not the one covered or screened. And so here, the brethren of the Messiah, like the sons of Judah in Jer. 3:18, which passages is generally so like the one before us that it might be regarded as an exposition of it, are those who first receive the blessing coming from the Messiah; and the sons of Israel are associated with them as those to whom this blessing only comes in fellowship with them. In v. 3 there follows what the Messiah will do for Israel when it has returned to God. He will feed it (מִדָּן simply belongs to the pictorial description, as in Isa. 61:5) in the strength of Jehovah. The feeding, as a frequent figure for governing, reminds of David, whom the Lord had called from the flock to be the shepherd of His people (2 Sam. 5:2). This is done in the strength of Jehovah, with which He is invested, to defend His flock against wolves and robbers (see John 10:11, 12).⁹ This strength is not merely the divine authority with which earthly rulers are usually endowed (1 Sam. 2:10), but מִדָּן, i.e., the exaltation or majesty of the name of Jehovah, the majesty in which Jehovah manifests His deity on earth. The Messiah is *El gibbōr* (the Mighty God, Isa. 9:5), and equipped with the spirit of might (*rūāch gēbhūrāh*, Isa. 11:2). “Of His God;” for Jehovah is the God of this Shepherd or Ruler, i.e., He manifests Himself as God to Him more than to any other; so that the majesty of Jehovah is revealed in what He does. In consequence of this feeding, they (the sons of Israel) sit (*yāshābhū*), without being disturbed (cf. Mic. 4:4; Lev. 26:5, 6; 2 Sam. 7:10), i.e., will live in perfect undisturbed peace under His pastoral care. For He (the Messiah) will now (עַתָּה, now, referring to the time when He feeds Israel, in contrast with the former oppression) be great (*auctoritate et potentia valebit*: Maurer) to the ends of the earth, i.e., His authority will extend over the whole earth. Compare the expression in Luke 1:32, οὗτος ἔσται μέγας, which has sprung from the passage before us, and the parallel in Mal. 1:14.

Micah 5:5, 6. Under His rule Israel will attain to perfect peace. V. 5. “*And He will be peace. When Asshur shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces, we set up against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men.*” V. 6. “*And they feed the land of Asshur with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in his gates; and He rescues from Asshur when he comes into our land and enters into our border.*” הַזֶּה (this man), viz., He who feeds His people in the majesty of God, will be peace, i.e., not merely *pacis auctor*, but He who carries peace within Himself, and gives it to His people. Compare Eph. 2:14, “He is our peace,” which points back to this passage. In this relation the Messiah is called the Prince of peace in Isa. 9:5, as securing peace for Israel in a higher and more perfect sense than Solomon. But in what manner? This is explained more fully in what follows: viz., (1) by defending Israel against the attacks of the imperial power (vv. 5b, 6); (2) by exalting it into a power able to overcome the nations (vv. 7–9); and (3) by exterminating all the materials of war, and everything of an idolatrous nature, and so preventing the possibility of war (vv. 10–15). Asshur is a type of the nations of the world by which the people of the Lord are attacked, because in the time of the prophet this power was the imperial power by which Israel was endangered. Against this enemy Israel will set up seven, yea eight princes, who, under the chief command of the Messiah, i.e., as His subordinates, will drive it back, and press victoriously into its land. (On the combination of the numbers seven and eight, see the discussions at Amos 1:3.) Seven is mentioned as the number of the works proceeding from God, so that seven shepherds, i.e., princes, would be quite sufficient; and this number is surpassed by the eight, to express the thought that there might be even more than were required. מְסֻכִּי, not anointed of men, but installed and invested, from *nāsakh*, to pour out, to form, to appoint; hence Josh. 13:21, vassals, here the under-shepherds appointed by the Messiah as the upper-shepherd. The meaning “anointed,” which is derived from *sūkh*, neither suits Josh.

13:21 nor Prov. 8:23 (see Delitzsch on Ps. 2:6). On the figurative expression “feed with the sword,” for rule, see Ps. 2:9 and Rev. 2:27; רָעוּ from רָעָה, not from רָעַע. The land of Asshur is called the land of Nimrod, after the founder of the first empire (Gen. 10:9ff.), to indicate the character of the imperial power with its hostility to the kingdom of God. בְּפִתְחוֹתָיָהּ, in his gates, i.e., cities and fortresses; gates for cities, as in Isa. 3:26; 13:2, etc.: not at his gates = on his borders, where the Assyrians stream together for defence (Hitzig, Caspari, etc.). The borders of a land are never called gates; nor could a land be devastated or governed from the border, to say nothing of the fact that בַּפִּתְחוֹתָיָהּ corresponds to “in thy palaces” in v. 4, and leads to the thought that Asshur is to be fully repaid for what it has done to the kingdom of God. The thought is rounded off with וְהִצִּילֵנוּ מִמַּאֲשׁוּר וְגוֹר, and so He saves from Asshur, etc., not merely by the fact that Asshur is driven back to his own border, and watched there, but by the fact that he is fed in his own territory with the sword. This victorious conflict with the imperial power must not be restricted to the spiritual victory of the kingdom of God over the kingdoms of the world, as Hengstenberg supposes, appealing to vv. 10ff., according to which the Lord will make His people outwardly defenceless before it becomes fully victorious in Christ (Hengstenberg). For the extermination of the instruments of war announced in v. 10 refers not to the period of the exaltation of the people of God into the world-conquering power, but to the time of consummation, when the hostile powers shall be overcome. Before the people of God reach this goal, they have not only to carry on spiritual conflicts, but to fight for existence and recognition even with the force of arms. The prediction of this conflict and victory is not at variance with the announcement in Mic. 4:2, 3, that in the Messianic times all nations will go on pilgrimage to Zion, and seek for adoption into the kingdom of God. Both of these will proceed side by side. Many nations, i.e., great crowds out

of all nations, will seek the Lord and His gospel, and enter into His kingdom; but a great multitude out of all nations will also persist in their enmity to the Lord and His kingdom and people, and summon all their power to attack and crush it. The more the gospel spreads among the nations, the more will the enmity of unbelief and ungodliness grow, and a conflict be kindled, which will increase till the Lord shall come to the last judgment, and scatter all His foes.

Micah 5:7-9. But the Messiah will prove Himself to be peace to His people, not only by the fact that He protects and saves it from the attacks of the imperial power represented by Asshur, but also by the fact that He endows His rescuing people with the power to overcome their enemies, both spiritually and bodily also. V. 7. *“And the remnant of Jacob will be in the midst of many nations like dew from Jehovah, like drops of rain upon grass, which tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for children of men.* V. 8. *And the remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, in the midst of many nations, like the lion among the beasts of the forest, like the young lion among the flocks of sheep; which, when it goes through, treads down, and tears in pieces, without deliverer.* V. 9. *High be thy hand above thine oppressors, and may all thine enemies be rooted out.”* Two things are predicted here. In the first place (v. 7), Israel will come upon many nations, like a refreshing dew from Jehovah, which falls plentifully in drops upon the grass, and will produce and promote new and vigorous life among them. Dew is here, as indeed everywhere else, a figurative expression for refreshing, stimulating, enlivening (cf. Ps. 110:3; 133:3, and 72:6; Hos. 14:6; Deut. 33:2). The spiritual dew, which Jacob will bring to the nations, comes from Jehovah, and falls in rich abundance without the co-operation of men. Without the spiritual dew from above, the nations are grass (cf. Isa. 40:6-8). אֶשְׁרָא before יְקוּהָא does not refer to עֵשֶׂב, but to the principal idea of the preceding clause, viz., to טָל, to which the

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explanatory פְּרִיבִימִים וגו' is subordinate. As the falling of the dew in rain-drops upon the grass does not depend upon the waiting of men, but proceeds from Jehovah; so will the spiritual blessing, which will flow over from Israel upon the nations, not depend upon the waiting of the nations, but will flow to them against and beyond their expectation. This does not deny the fact that the heathen wait for the salvation of Jehovah, but simply expresses the thought that the blessings will not be measured by their expectation. Secondly (vv. 8, 9), the rescued Israel will prove itself a terrible power among the nations, and one to which they will be obliged to succumb. No proof is needed that vv. 8, 9 do not state in what way Israel will refresh the heathen, as Hitzig supposes. The refreshing dew and the rending lion cannot possibly be synonymous figures. The similarity of the introduction to vv. 7 and 8 points of itself to something new. To the nations Christ is set for the rising and falling of many (compare Luke 2:34, Rom. 9:33, with Isa. 8:14 and 28:16). The people of God shows itself like a lion, trampling and rending the sheep among the nations of the world which oppose its beneficent work. And over these may it triumph. This wish (*târôm* is optative) closes the promise of the attitude which Israel will assume among the nations of the world. For *târôm yâd* (high be the hand), compare Isa. 26:11. High is the hand which accomplishes mighty deeds, which smites and destroys the foe.

Micah 5:10–15. But if Israel conquer the nations in such a way as this, then will Jehovah fulfil the peace of His people by the destruction of all the instruments of war, and the extermination of everything of an idolatrous nature, as well as by the judgment of wrath upon all resisting nations. V. 10. *“And it comes to pass in that day, is the saying of Jehovah, that I will destroy thy horses out of the midst of thee, and annihilate thy chariots. V. 11. And I shall destroy the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy fortresses. V. 12. And I shall destroy the witchcrafts out of thy hand; and cloud-interpretors shall not be left to thee. V. 13. And I*

shall destroy thy graven images and thy statutes out of the midst of thee; and thou wilt no more worship the work of thy hands. V. 14. And I shall root out thine idol-groves out of the midst of thee, and destroy thy cities. V. 15. And I shall execute vengeance in wrath and fury upon the nations which have not heard.” These verses do not explain v. 8b, or state how the extermination of the enemy is to take place, or how Israel is made into a lion destroying the nations that are hostile to it, namely, by the fact that the Lord eradicates from its heart all confidence in horses, chariots, and fortifications, in witchcraft and idolatry (Caspari). This assumption is at variance with the words themselves, and with the strophic arrangement of the chapter. There is nothing about trust in horses, etc., but simply about the extermination of the horses, and everything else in which the idolatrous nation had sought its strength. Moreover, the expression וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא, when compared with וְהָיָה in vv. 4 and 6, shows at once that these verses are intended to depict the last and greatest effect produced by the coming of the Prince of peace in Israel, and overthrows Hengstenberg’s assumption, that the prophet here foretels the destructive work of the Lord in Israel, which will precede the destruction of the enemy predicted in v. 10. In that case בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא would mean “before that day,” a meaning which it can never have. The prophet passes rather from the attitude of Israel among the nations, to the description of the internal perfection of the kingdom of God, which does indeed stand in a reciprocal relation to the former and proceed simultaneously with it, but which will not be completed till after the victorious suppression of the foe. Only when the people of God shall have gained the supremacy over all their enemies, will the time have arrived for all the instruments of war to be destroyed. When the world shall be overcome, then will all war cease. The ancient Israel did indeed put its trust in war-horses, and war-chariots, and fortifications (cf. Isa. 2:7); but the Messianic Israel, or the true people of the Lord, will only put its trust in such things so far as it

is not yet pervaded by the power of the peace brought by the Messiah. And the more it appropriates the spiritual power of the Prince of peace, the more will the trust in horses and chariots disappear; so that they will be destroyed, because all war comes to an end (compare Isa. 9:4–6). And the extermination of everything of an idolatrous nature will go hand in hand with this. Two kinds are mentioned in vv. 12 and 13, viz., witchcraft and the worship of idols of their own making. As objects of witchcraft there are mentioned *keshâphîm*, lit., witchcrafts of different kinds, but the expression מַדְדֵי limits them to such as are performed with the hand, and *me'ōnenîm* (= 'ōnenîm in Isa. 2:6), lit., cloud-interpreters, or cloud, i.e., storm makers, from 'ānan, a kind of witchcraft which cannot be more precisely defined (see Delitzsch on *Isaiah*, l.c.). Of the objects of the idolatrous worship there are mentioned (after Lev. 26:1) *pesîlîm*, idols made of wood or metal; and מַצְבֹּת, stone-images, or stones dedicated to idols (see at 1 Kings 14:23). For v. 12b, compare Isa. 2:8.

Micah 5:14. Ver. 14 sums up the objects enumerated in vv. 10–13, which are to be exterminated, for the purpose of rounding off the description; the only objects of idolatrous worship mentioned being the 'āshêrim, and the only materials of war, the cities as means of defence. אֲשֵׁירִים, written with *scriptio plena*, as in Deut. 7:5 and 2 Kings 17:16, lit., stems of trees or posts standing upright or set up as idols, which were dedicated to the Canaanitish goddess of nature (see at Ex. 34:13). עָרִים, cities with walls, gates, and bolts. These two rather subordinate objects are mentioned *instar omnium*, to express the entire abolition of war and idolatry. We must not infer from this, however, that the nation of God will still have images made by human hands and worship them, during the stage of its development described in vv. 10–14; but must distinguish between the thought and its formal dress. The gross heathen idolatry, to which Israel was addicted under the Old Testament, is a figure

denoting that more refined idolatry which will exist even in the church of Christ so long as sin and unbelief endure. The extermination of every kind of heathen idolatry is simply the Old Testament expression for the purification of the church of the Lord from everything of an idolatrous and ungodly nature. To this there is appended in v. 15 a promise that the Lord will take vengeance, and wrath, and fury upon the nations which have not heard or have not observed the words and acts of the Lord, i.e., have not yielded themselves up to conversion. In other words, He will exterminate every ungodly power by a fierce judgment, so that nothing will ever be able to disturb the peace of His people and kingdom again.

Micah 6

III. The Way to Salvation—Ch. 6 and 7

Micah 6–7. Micah having declared to the people of Israel not only the judgment that will burst upon Zion on account of its sins, but also the salvation awaiting in the future the remnant saved and purified through the judgment, now proceeds, in the third and last address, to point out the way to salvation, by showing that they bring punishment upon themselves by their ingratitude and resistance to the commandments of God, and that it is only through sincere repentance that they can participate in the promised covenant mercies.

Exhortation to Repentance, and Divine Threatening—Ch. 6

Micah 6. In the form of a judicial contest between the Lord and His people, the prophet holds up before the Israelites their ingratitude for the great blessings which they have received from God (vv. 1–5), and teaches them that the Lord does not require outward sacrifices to appease His wrath, but righteousness, love, and humble walk with God (vv. 6–8), and that He must inflict severe punishment, because the people practise violence, lying, and deceit instead (vv. 9–14).

Micah 6:1, 2. Introduction.—Announcement of the lawsuit which the Lord will have with His

people.—V. 1. “Hear ye, then, what Jehovah saith; Rise up, contend with the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice! V. 2. Hear ye, O mountains, Jehovah’s contest; and ye immutable ones, ye foundations of the earth! For Jehovah has a contest with His people; and with Israel will He contend.” In v. 1 the nation of Israel is addressed in its several members. They are to hear what the Lord says to the prophet,—namely, the summons addressed to the mountains and hills to hear Jehovah’s contest with His people. The words “strive with the mountains” cannot be understood here as signifying that the mountains are the objects of the accusation, notwithstanding the fact that רִיב (rib) signifies to strive or quarrel with a person (Judg. 8:1; Isa. 50:8; Jer. 2:9); for, according to v. 2, they are to hear the contest of Jehovah with Israel, and therefore are to be merely witnesses on the occasion. Consequently אָת (at) can only express the idea of fellowship here, and רִיב אֵת (rib at) must be distinguished from רִיב עִם (rib em) in v. 2 and Hos. 4:1, etc. The mountains and hills are to hearken to the contest (as in Deut. 32:1 and Isa. 1:2), as witnesses, “who have seen what the Lord has done for Israel throughout the course of ages, and how Israel has rewarded Him for it all” (Caspari), to bear witness on behalf of the Lord, and against Israel. Accordingly the mountains are called הַרְאֲתָנִים (har’atanim), the constantly enduring, immutable ones, which have been spectators from time immemorial, and מוֹסְדֵי אָרֶץ (mosdei aretz), foundations of the earth, as being subject to no change on account of their strength and firmness. In this respect they are often called “the everlasting mountains” (e.g., Gen. 49:26; Deut. 33:15; Ps. 90:2; Hab. 3:6). Israel is called ‘ammī (Jehovah’s people) with intentional emphasis, not only to indicate the right of Jehovah to contend with it, but to sharpen its own conscience, by pointing to its calling. *Hithvakkach*, like *hivvâkhach* in the *niphal* in Isa. 1:18.

Micah 6:3–5. Vv. 3–5 open the suit. V. 3. “My people! what have I done unto thee, and with

what have I wearied thee? Answer me. V. 4. Yea, I have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, redeemed thee out of the slave-house, and sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. V. 5. My people! remember now what Balak the king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim to Gilga; that thou mayest discern the righteous acts of Jehovah.” The Lord opens the contest with the question, what He has done to the nation, that it has become tired of Him. The question is founded upon the fact that Israel has fallen away from its God, or broken the covenant. This is not distinctly stated, indeed; but it is clearly implied in the expression מָה הִלְאֲתִידִי (mah hil’atidi), What have I done, that thou hast become weary of me? לָאָה (la’ah), in the *hiphil*, to make a person weary, more particularly to weary the patience of a person, either by demands of too great severity (Isa. 43:23), or by failing to perform one’s promises (Jer. 2:31). עָנָה בִּי (anah bi), answer against me, i.e., accuse me. God has done His people no harm, but has only conferred benefits upon them. Of these He mentions in v. 4 the bringing up out of Egypt and the guidance through the Arabian desert, as being the greatest manifestations of divine grace, to which Israel owes its exaltation into a free and independent nation (cf. Amos 2:10 and Jer. 2:6). The *kī* (for) may be explained from the unexpressed answer to the questions in v. 3: “Nothing that could cause dissatisfaction with me;” for I have done nothing but confer benefits upon thee. To set forth the leading up out of Egypt as such a benefit, it is described as redemption out of the house of bondage, after Ex. 20:2. Moreover, the Lord had given His people prophets, men entrusted with His counsels and enlightened by His Spirit, as leaders into the promised land: viz., Moses, with whom He talked mouth to mouth, as a friend to his friend (Num. 12:8); and Aaron, who was not only able as high priest to ascertain the counsel and will of the Lord for the sake of the congregation, by means of the “light and right,” but who also, along with Moses, represented the nation before God (Num. 12:6; 14:5, 26; 16:20; 20:7 ff., and 29).

Miriam, the sister of the two, is also mentioned along with them, inasmuch as she too was a prophetess (Ex. 15:20). In v. 5 God also reminds them of the other great display of grace, viz., the frustration of the plan formed by the Moabitish king Balak to destroy Israel by means of the curses of Balaam (Num. 22–24). יַעֲזֵב refers to the plan which Balak concocted with the elders of Midian (Num. 22:3 ff.); and טָנָה, Balaam’s answering, to the sayings which this soothsayer was compelled by divine constraint to utter against his will, whereby, as Moses says in Deut. 23:5, 6, the Lord turned the intended curse into a blessing. The words “from Shittim (Israel’s last place of encampment beyond Jordan, in the steppes of Moab; see at Num. 22:1 and 25:1) to Gilgal” (the first place of encampment in the land of Canaan; see at Josh. 4:19, 20, and 5:9) do not depend upon זָכַרְנָא, adding a new feature to what has been mentioned already, in the sense of “think of all that took place from Shittim to Gilgal,” in which case זָכַרְנָא would have to be repeated in thought; but they are really attached to the clause וַיִּמָּה עָנָה וְגוֹ, and indicate the result, or the confirmation of Balaam’s answer. The period of Israel’s journeying from Shittim to Gilgal embraces not only Balak’s advice and Balaam’s answer, by which the plan invented for the destruction of Israel was frustrated, but also the defeat of the Midianites, who attempted to destroy Israel by seducing it to idolatry, the miraculous crossing of the Jordan, the entrance into the promised land, and the circumcision at Gilgal, by which the generation that had grown up in the desert was received into the covenant with Jehovah, and the whole nation reinstated in its normal relation to its God. Through these acts the Lord had actually put to shame the counsel of Balak, and confirmed the fact that Balaam’s answer was inspired by God.¹⁰ By these divine acts Israel was to discern the *tsidqōth Yehōvâh*; i.e., *not the mercies of Jehovah, for tsêdâqqâh* does not mean mercy, but “the righteous acts of Jehovah,” as in Judg. 5:11 and 1 Sam. 12:7. This term is applied to those miraculous displays of

divine omnipotence in and upon Israel, for the fulfilment of His counsel of salvation, which, as being emanations of the divine covenant faithfulness, attested the righteousness of Jehovah.

Micah 6:6–8. Israel cannot deny these gracious acts of its God. The remembrance of them calls to mind the base ingratitude with which it has repaid its God by rebelling against Him; so that it inquires, in vv. 6, 7, with what it can appease the Lord, i.e., appease His wrath. V. 6.

“Wherewith shall I come to meet Jehovah, bow myself before the God of the high place? Shall I come to meet Him with burnt-offerings, with yearling calves? V. 7. Will Jehovah take pleasure in thousands of rams, in ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give up my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” As Micah has spoken in vv. 3–5 in the name of Jehovah, he now proceeds, in vv. 6, 7, to let the congregation speak; not, however, by turning directly to God, since it recognises itself as guilty before Him, but by asking the prophet, as the interpreter of the divine will, what it is to do to repair the bond of fellowship which has been rent in pieces by its guilt. קָדַם does not here mean to anticipate, or come before, but to come to meet, as in Deut. 23:5. Coming to meet, however, can only signify humble prostration (*kâphaph*) before the divine majesty. The God of the high place is the God dwelling in the high place (Isa. 33:5; 77:15), or enthroned in heaven (Ps. 115:3). It is only with sacrifices, the means appointed by God Himself for the maintenance of fellowship with Him, that any man can come to meet Him. These the people offer to bring; and, indeed, burnt-offerings. There is no reference here to sin-offerings, through which disturbed or interrupted fellowship could be restored, by means of the expiation of their sins; because the people had as yet no true knowledge of sin, but were still living under the delusion that they were standing firmly in the covenant with the Lord, which they themselves had practically dissolved. As burnt-offerings, they would bring calves and rams, not because they formed the only material, but because they

were the material most usually employed; and, indeed, calves of a year old, because they were regarded as the best, not because no others were allowed to be offered, as Hitzig erroneously maintains; for, according to the law, calves and lambs could be offered in sacrifice even when they were eight days old (Lev. 22:27; Ex. 22:29). In the case of the calves the value is heightened by the quality, in that of the rams by the quantity: thousands of rams; and also myriads of rivers of oil (for this expression, compare Job 20:17). Oil not only formed part of the daily *minchah*, but of the *minchah* generally, which could not be omitted from any burnt-offerings (compare Num. 15:1–16 with Mic. 28 and 29), so that it was offered in very large quantities. Nevertheless, in the consciousness that these sacrifices might not be sufficient, the people would offer the dearest thing of all, viz., the first-born son, as an expiation for their sin. This offer is founded, no doubt, upon the true idea that sacrifice shadows forth the self-surrender of man to God, and that an animal is not a sufficient substitute for a man; but this true idea was not realized by literal (bodily) human sacrifices: on the contrary, it was turned into an ungodly abomination, because the surrender which God desires is that of the spirit, not of the flesh. Israel could and should have learned this, not only from the sacrifice of Isaac required by God (Gen. 22), but also from the law concerning the consecration or sanctification of the first-born (Ex. 13:12, 13). Hence this offer of the nation shows that it has no true knowledge of the will of its God, that it is still entangled in the heathen delusion, that the wrath of God can be expiated by human sacrifices (cf. 2 Kings 3:27; 16:3).

Micah 6:8. The prophet therefore proceeds in v. 8 to overthrow these outward means of reconciliation with God, and reminds the people of the moral demands of the law. V. 8. *“They have told thee, O man, what is good, and what Jehovah requires of thee, simply to do right, and love good, and walk humbly with thy God.”* תְּגִיד, impersonal, “one has told,” or they have

told thee, namely Moses in the law. The opinion that Jehovah should be supplied as the subject is a very improbable one, for the simple reason that Jehovah is expressly mentioned in the second dependent clause. The use of כִּי אֵם, *nisi*, as in the similar connection of thought in Deut. 10:12, may be accounted for from the retrospective allusion to the gifts mentioned by the people: not outward sacrifices of any kind, *but only* the fulfilment of three following duties: namely, above all things, doing righteousness and exercising love. These two embrace all the commandments of the second table, of whose fulfilment Israel thought so little, that it was addicted to the very opposite,—namely, injustice, oppression, and want of affection (vid., Mic. 2:1, 2, 8; 3:2, 3, 9 ff., 6:10 ff.). There is also a third: humble walk with God, i.e., in fellowship with God, as Israel, being a holy priestly nation, ought to walk. Without these moral virtues, sacrificial worship was a spiritless *opus operatum*, in which God had no pleasure (see at 1 Sam. 15:22 and Hos. 6:6).

Micah 6:9–16. But because Israel is altogether wanting in these virtues, the Lord must threaten and punish. V. 9. *“The voice of Jehovah, to the city it cries, and wisdom has thy name in its eye; hear ye the rod, and who appoints it!”* With these words Micah introduces the threatening and reproachful words of the Lord. קוֹל יְהוָה is not to be taken by itself, as an exclamation, “Hark! voice of the Lord!” as in Isa. 13:4; 40:6, etc. (Umbreit), but must be connected with what follows, in accordance with the accents. Whilst the prophet tells the people in v. 8 what Jehovah requires, he introduces the following threat with “voice of Jehovah,” etc., to give the greater emphasis to the reproof, by intimating that it is not his own voice, but Jehovah’s, which is speaking now. “To the city,” i.e., to the chief city of the kingdom, viz., Jerusalem. The sentence which follows, and which has been explained in very different ways, has the same object. תּוֹשִׁיָה, a word borrowed from the Chokmah-literature (Proverbs and Job), both here and Isa. 28:29,

formed from ψ or the root ψ (ψ), in the sense of *subsistentia*, *substantia*, then mostly *vera et realis sapientia* (see Delitzsch on Job 26:3). ψ is taken by many as a relative clause, "Blessed is he who sees Thy name," i.e., gives heed to Thy revelation, Thy government of the universe; but if this were the sense, the relative could not have been omitted, or the infinitive ψ must have been used. ψ is rather to be taken as the object, and ψ as the subject: Thy name sees wisdom, i.e., has the true wisdom of life in sight (ψ as in Gen. 20:10 and Ps. 66:18). There is no necessity for the conjecture ψ for ψ (Ewald and Hitzig); and notwithstanding the fact that ψ is adopted in all the ancient versions, it is unsuitable, since the thought "wisdom is to fear Thy name" would be a very strange one in this connection, unless we could paraphrase the *name* into "word of the person speaking." For other explanations, see Caspari. Hear ye, i.e., observe, the rod, viz., the judgment threatened by the Lord, and appointed for His rebellious nation. The reference is to the imperial power of Assyria, which Isaiah also describes in Isa. 10:5, 24, as the *matteh* and *shēbhet* by which Israel is smitten. The suffix to ψ refers to ψ , which is construed here as a feminine; ψ denotes the appointment of an instrument of punishment, as in Jer. 47:7.

Micah 6:10–12. The threatening words commence in v. 10; vv. 10–12 containing a condemnation of the prevailing sins. V. 10. "Are there yet in the house of the unjust treasures of injustice, and the ephah of consumption, the cursed one? V. 11. Can I be clean with the scale of injustice, and with a purse with stones of deceit? V. 12. That their rich men are full of wickedness, and their inhabitants speak deceit, and their tongue is falseness in their mouth." The reproof is dressed up in the form of a question. In the question in v. 10 the emphasis is laid upon the ψ , which stands for that very reason before the interrogative particle, as in Gen. 19:12, the

only other place in which this occurs. ψ , a softened form for ψ , as in 2 Sam. 14:19.

Treasures of wickedness are treasures acquired through wickedness or acts of injustice. The meaning of the question is not, Are the unjust treasures not yet removed out of the house, not yet distributed again? but, as vv. 10b and 11 require, Does the wicked man still bring such treasures into the house? does he still heap up such treasures in his house? The question is affirmative, and the form of a question is chosen to sharpen the conscience, as the unjust men to whom it is addressed cannot deny it. ψ , ephah of consumption or hungriness, analogous to the German expression "a hungry purse," is too small an ephah (cf. Deut. 25:14; Amos 8:5); the opposite of ψ (Deut. 25:15) or ψ (Lev. 19:36), which the law prescribed. Hence Micah calls it ψ = ψ in Prov. 22:14, that which is smitten by the wrath of God (equivalent to cursed; cf. Num. 23:7, Prov. 24:24). Whoever has not a full ephah is, according to Deut. 25:16, an abomination to the Lord. If these questions show the people that they do not answer to the demands made by the Lord in v. 8, the questions in v. 11 also teach that, with this state of things, they cannot hold themselves guiltless. The speaker inquires, from the standpoint of his own moral consciousness, whether he can be pure, i.e., guiltless, if he uses deceitful scales and weights,—a question to which every one must answer No. It is difficult, however, to decide who the questioner is. As v. 9 announces words of God, and in v. 10 God is speaking, and also in vv. 12, 13, it appears as though Jehovah must be the questioner here. But ψ does not tally with this. Jerome therefore adopts the rendering *numquid justificabo stateram impiam*; but ψ in the *kal* has only the meaning to be pure, and even in the *piel* it is not used in the sense of *niqqâh*, to acquit. This latter fact is sufficient to overthrow the proposal to alter the reading into *piel*. Moreover, "the context requires the thought that the rich men fancy

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they can be pure with deceitful weights, and a refutation of this delusive idea” (Caspari). Consequently the prophet only can raise this question, namely as the representative of the moral consciousness; and we must interpret this transition, which is so sudden and abrupt to our ears, by supplying the thought, “Let every one ask himself,” Can I, etc. Instead of רָשַׁע we have the more definite *mirmâh* in the parallel clause. Scales and a bag with stones belong together; *’ăbhânîm* are the stone weights (cf. Lev. 19:36; Deut. 25:13) which were carried in a bag (Prov. 16:11). In v. 12 the condemnation of injustice is widened still further. Whereas in the first clause the rich men of the capital (the suffix pointing back to עָרִי in v. 9), who are also to be thought of in v. 10, are expressly mentioned, in the second clause the inhabitants generally are referred to. And whilst the rich are not only charged with injustice or fraud in trade, but with *châmâs*, violence of every kind, the inhabitants are charged with lying and deceit of the tongue. *Leshônâm* (their tongue) is not placed at the head absolutely, in the sense of “As for their tongue, deceit is,” etc. Such an emphasis as this is precluded by the fact that the preceding clause, “speaking lies,” involves the use of the tongue. *Leshônâm* is the simple subject: Their tongue is deceit or falsehood in their mouth; i.e., their tongue is so full of deceit, that it is, so to speak, resolved into it. Both clauses express the thought, that “the inhabitants of Jerusalem are a population of liars and cheats” (Hitzig). The connection in which the verse stands, or the true explanation of אָשַׁר, has been a matter of dispute. We must reject both the combination of vv. 12 and 13 (“Because their rich men, etc., therefore I also,” etc.), and also the assumption that v. 12 contains the answer to the question in v. 10, and that אָשַׁר precedes the direct question (Hitzig): the former, because v. 12 obviously forms the conclusion to the reproof, and must be separated from what precedes it; the latter, because the question in v. 11 stands between vv. 10 and 12, which is closely connected with v. 10, and v. 12 also

contains no answer to v. 10, so far as the thought is concerned, even if the latter actually required an answer. We must rather take אָשַׁר as a relative, as Caspari does, and understand the verse as an exclamation, which the Lord utters in anger over the city: “She, whose rich men are full,” etc. “Angry persons generally prefer to speak of those who have excited their wrath, instead of addressing their words to them.”

Micah 6:13–15. The threat of punishment follows in vv. 13–16. V. 13. “So also now do I smite thee incurably, laying waste because of thy sins. V. 14. Thou wilt eat, and not be satisfied; and thine emptiness remains in thee; and thou wilt remove, and not save; and what thou savest I will give to the sword. V. 15. Thou wilt sow, and not reap; thou wilt tread olives, and not anoint thyself with oil; new wine, and not drink wine.”

With וְגַם־אֲנִי the threatened punishment is represented as the consequence of, or retribution for, the sins of the people. הִקַּלְתִּיךָ: literally, I have made the smiting thee sick, i.e., smitten thee with incurable sickness (for הִקַּלְתָּ, see at Nah. 3:19 and Jer. 30:12; and for the fact itself, Isa. 1:5, 6). The perfect expresses the certainty of the future. The suffix refers to the people, not of the capital only, but, as we may see from v. 16, of the whole of the kingdom of Judah. *Hashmēm* (an uncontracted form; see Ges. § 67, Anm. 10), *devastando*, is attached to the preceding verb in an adverbial sense, as a practical exemplification, like the שָׁבַע in Lev. 26:18, 24, 28, which Micah had in his eye at the time. For the individualizing of the punishment, which follows, rests upon Lev. 26:25, 26, and Deut. 28:39, 40. The land is threatened with devastation by the foe, from which the people flee into fortresses, the besieging of which occasions starvation. For the fulfilment of this, see Jer. 52:6 (cf. 2 Kings 6:25). חֲשׂוּ, ἄπ. λεγ., hollowness, or emptiness of stomach. וְהָרַגְתָּ, thou mayest remove, i.e., carry off thy goods and family, yet wilt thou not save; but even if thou shouldst save anything, it will fall into the

hands of the enemy, and be destroyed by his sword (vid., Jer. 50:37). The enemy will also partly consume and partly destroy the corn and field-fruit, as well as the stores of oil and wine (vid., Amos 5:11). וְלֹא תִסּוּף שָׁמֶן is taken verbatim from Deut. 28:40.

Micah 6:16. This trouble the people bring upon themselves by their ungodly conduct. With this thought the divine threatening is rounded off and closed. V. 16. *“And they observe the statutes of Omri, and all the doings of the house of Ahab, and so ye walk in their counsels; that I may make thee a horror, and her inhabitants a hissing, and the reproach of my people shall ye bear.”* The verse is attached loosely to what precedes by *Vav*. The first half corresponds to vv. 10–12, the second to vv. 13–15, and each has three clauses.

הַשְׁתַּמֵּר, as an intensive form of the *piel*, is the strongest expression for שָׁמֵר, and is not to be taken as a passive, as Ewald and others suppose, but in a reflective sense: “It (or one) carefully observes for itself the statutes of Omri instead of the statutes of the Lord” (Lev. 20:23; Jer. 10:3). All that is related of Omri, is that he was worse than all his predecessors (1 Kings 16:25). His statutes are the Baal-worship which his son and successor Ahab raised into the ruling national religion (1 Kings 16:31, 32), and the introduction of which is attributed to Omri as the founder of the dynasty. In the same sense is Athaliah, who was a daughter of Jezebel, called a daughter of Omri in 2 Chron. 22:2. All the doing of the house of Ahab: i.e., not only its Baal-worship, but also its persecution of the Lord’s prophets (1 Kings 18:4; 22:27), and the rest of its sins, e.g., the robbery and murder committed upon Naboth (1 Kings 21). With וְתִלְכּוּ the description passes over into a direct address; not into the preterite, however, for the imperfect with *Vav rel.* does not express here what has been the custom in both the past and present, but is simply the logical deduction from what precedes, “that which continually occurs.” The suffix attached to בְּמַעֲצוֹתָם refers to Ahab and Omri. By לְמַעַן the punishment is represented as intentionally brought about by

the sinners themselves, to give prominence to the daring with which men lived on in godlessness and unrighteousness. In אֶתְכֶם the whole nation is addressed: in the second clause, the inhabitants of the capital as the principal sinners; and in the third, the nation again in its individual members. שָׁמָה does not mean devastation here; but in parallelism with שִׁרְקָה, horror, or the object of horror, as in Deut. 28:37, Jer. 25:9; 51:37, and 2 Chron. 29:8. *Cherpath ‘ammī*: the shame which the nation of God, as such, have to bear from the heathen, when they are given up into their power (see Ezek. 36:20). This shame will have to be borne by the several citizens, the present supporters of the idea of the nation of God.

Micah 7

The Church’s Penitential Prayer, and the Divine Promise

Micah 7. The prophet responds to the threatening of the Lord (Mic. 6:9–16) in the name of the believing church with a penitential prayer, in which it sorrowfully confesses the universality of the deep moral corruption, and painfully bemoans the necessity for the visitation of God (vv. 1–6); after which it rises, through belief in the fidelity of God, to the confidential hope that the Lord will cause the light of His grace to rise again upon the church, which is bearing the merited punishment, and will not let its enemies triumph over it, but will procure it justice, and deeply humble the foe (vv. 7–13); and to this it appends a prayer fore the renewal of the former manifestations of grace (v. 14). The Lord answers this prayer with the promise that He will renew for His people the wonders of the olden time (vv. 15–17); whereupon the prophet closes by praising the mercy and grace of the Lord (vv. 18–20).

Micah 7:1–6. That the prophet is speaking in vv. 1 ff. not in his own name, but in the name of the church, which confesses and bemoans its rebellion against the Lord, is indisputably evident from vv. 7 ff., where, as all the expositors admit, the church speaks of itself in

the first person, and that not “the existing corrupt Israelitish church,” as Caspari supposes, but the penitential, believing church of the future, which discerns in the judgment the chastising hand of its God, and expresses the hope that the Lord will conduct its conflict with its foe, etc. The contents of vv. 1–6, also, do not point to the prophet in distinction from the congregation, but may be understood throughout as the confession of sin on the part of the latter. V. 1. “Woe to me! for I have become like a gathering of fruit, like a gleaning of the vintage: Not a grape to eat! an early fig, which my soul desired.” אֶלְלִי, which only occurs again in Job 10:15, differs from הוּי, and is “*vox dolentis, gementis, et ululantis magis quam minantis*” (March); and כִּי is not “that,” but “for,” giving the reason for אֶלְלִי. The meaning of הִיִּיתִי כִּאֲסִי is not, “it has happened to me as it generally happens to those who still seek for early figs at the fruit gathering, or for bunches of grapes at the gleaning of the vintage” (Caspari and others); for בְּאֶסְפֵי קִיץ does not mean as *at* the fruit-gathering, but *like* the fruit-gathering. The nation or the church resembles the fruit-gathering and gleaning of the vineyard, namely, in this fact, that the fruit-gathering yields not more early figs, and the gleaning of the vintage yields no more grapes to eat; that is to say, its condition resembles that of an orchard in the time of the fruit-gathering, when you may find fruit enough indeed, but not a single early fig, since the early figs ripen as early as June, whereas the fruit-gathering does not take place till August (see at Isa. 28:4). The second simile is a still simpler one, and is very easily explained. אֶסְפֵי is not a participle, but a noun—אֶסְפֵי the gathering (Isa. 32:10); and the plural is probably used simply because of עוֹלָלָה, the gleaning, and not with any allusion to the fact that the gleaning lasts several days, as Hitzig supposes, but because what is stated applies to all gatherings of fruit. קִיץ, fruit; see at Amos 8:1. אֶתְהָה is to be taken in a relative sense,

and the force of אֶינִי still extends to בְּכוֹרָה (compare Gen. 30:33). The figure is explained in vv. 2 ff.

Micah 7:2. “The godly man has disappeared from the earth, and there is no more a righteous man among men. All lie in wait for blood, they hunt every man his brother with the net. V. 3. Their hands are after evil, to make it good. The prince asks, and the judge is for reward; and the great man, he speaks the evil of his soul: and they twist it together.” The grape and the early fig signify the good and the righteous man. חֹסֵד is not the God-fearing man, but, according to the context, the man who cherishes love and fidelity. אָבַד, not “to have perished,” but to be lost, to have disappeared. מִן הָאָרֶץ, not “out of the land,” but, as the parallel בְּאֶדָם shows, from the earth, out of the world. For the fact itself, compare Ps. 12:2 and Isa. 57:1. They all lie in wait for blood, i.e., not that they all go about committing murder, but simply that they set their minds upon quarrels, cheating, and treachery, that they may rob their neighbour of his means of existence, so that he must perish (cf. Mic. 3:2, 3; 2:1, 2); at the same time, even murderous thoughts are not excluded. The same thing is implied in the hunting with the net. אָח, the brother, is the fellow-countryman (for this figure, compare Ps. 10:9; 35:7, 8, etc.). In v. 3 the words from עַל הָרַע לְהִיטִיב are not to be joined to what follows so as to form one sentence. Such a combination is not only opposed to the accents, but is at variance with the structure of the whole verse, which consists of several short clauses, and it does not even yield a natural thought; consequently Ewald proposes to alter the text (שׁוֹאֵל). הָרַע is hardly the *inf. hiph.* “to do evil,” but most likely a noun with the article, “the evil;” and the thought is therefore either “both hands are (sc., busy) with evil,” or “both hands are stretched out to evil,” to make it good, i.e., to carry out the evil well (בִּיטִיב as in Jer. 2:33), or to give evil such a form that it shall appear to be good, or right. This thought is then made special: the prince, the

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judge, and the great man, i.e., the rich man and mighty man (Lev. 19:15; 1 Sam. 25:2), weave a thing to make evil good. עָבַת, to weave, to twist together, after עֲבוֹת, twist or string. The subject to וַיְעַבְתוּהָ is to be found in the three classes already named, and not merely in the judge and the great man. There is just as little reason for this limitation as for the assumption that the great man and the prince are one person. The way in which the three twist the thing or the evil plan together is indicated in the statements of the three previous clauses. The prince asks, sc. for the condemnation of a righteous or innocent man; and the judge grants this for recompense against compensation; and the rich man co-operates by speaking *havyath naphshō*. *Havyâh* in most passages is universally allowed to signify hurt, mischief, destruction; and the only question is, whether this meaning is to be traced to הוּוּה = אוּוה, to breathe (Hupfeld on Ps. 5:10), or to הוּוה, to occur, an occurrence, then specially an evil occurrence (Hengstenberg, *Diss. on the Pentateuch*, vol. i. p. 252). Only in Prov. 10:3 and the passage before us is *havyâh* said to signify desire in a bad sense, or evil lust. But, as Caspari has shown, the meaning is neither necessary nor established in either of these two passages. In Prov. 10:3 the meaning *aerumna activa aliisque inferenda* is quite sufficient; and C. B. Michaelis has adopted it for the present passage: "The great man speaks the mischief of his soul," i.e., the injury or destruction of another, for which he cherishes a desire. *Nephesh*, the soul as the seat of desire. הוּוּה is not introduced to strengthen the suffix attached to נִפְשׁוֹ, "of his, yea of his soul" (Ewald, Hitzig, Umbreit); for not only are the accents against this, but also the thought, which requires no such strengthening. It is an emphatic repetition of the subject *haggâdōl*. The great man weaves evil with the king and judge, by desiring it, and expressing the desire in the most open manner, and thereby giving to the thing an appearance of right.

Micah 7:4-6. And even the best men form no exception to the rule. V. 4. "Their best man is like a briar; the upright man more than a hedge: the day of thy spies, thy visitation cometh, then will their confusion follow. V. 5. Trust not in the neighbour, rely not upon the intimate one; keep the doors of thy mouth before her that is thy bosom friend. V. 6. For the son despiseth the father, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the people of his own house." טוֹבִים, the good man among them, i.e., the best man, resembles the thorn-bush, which only pricks, hurts, and injures. In יִשָּׂר the force of the suffix still continues: the most righteous man among them; and מִן before מְסֻבֵּה is used in a comparative sense: "is more, i.e., worse, than a thorn-hedge." The corruption of the nation has reached such a terrible height, that the judgment must burst in upon them. This thought comes before the prophet's mind, so that he interrupts the description of the corrupt condition of things by pointing to the day of judgment. The "day of thy watch-men," i.e., of thy prophets (Jer. 6:17; Ezek. 3:17; 33:7), is explained in the apposition *peqûddâthekhâ* (thy visitation). The perfect בָּאָה is prophetic of the future, which is as certain as if it were already there. עָתָה, now, i.e., when this day has come (really therefore = "then"), will their confusion be, i.e., then will the wildest confusion come upon them, as the evil, which now envelopes itself in the appearance of good, will then burst forth without shame and without restraint, and everything will be turned upside down. In the same sense as this Isaiah also calls the day of divine judgment a day of confusion (Isa. 22:5). In the allusion to the day of judgment the speaker addresses the people, whereas in the description of the corruption he speaks of them. This distinction thus made between the person speaking and the people is not at variance with the assumption that the prophet speaks in the name of the congregation, any more than the words "thy watchmen, thy visitation," furnish an objection to the assumption that the prophet

was one of the watchmen himself. This distinction simply proves that the penitential community is not identical with the mass of the people, but to be distinguished from them. In v. 5 the description of the moral corruption is continued, and that in the form of a warning not to trust one another any more, neither companion (רֵעַ) with whom one has intercourse in life, nor the confidential friend (*'allūph*), nor the most intimate friend of all, viz., the wife lying on the husband's bosom. Even before her the husband was to beware of letting the secrets of his heart cross his lips, because she would betray them. The reason for this is assigned in v. 6, in the fact that even the holiest relations of the moral order of the world, the deepest ties of blood-relationship, are trodden under foot, and all the bonds of reverence, love, and chastity are loosened. The son treats his father as a fool (*nibbēl*, as in Deut. 32:15). "The men of his house" (the subject of the last clause) are servants dwelling in the house, not relations (cf. Gen. 17:23, 27; 39:14; 2 Sam. 12:17, 18). This verse is applied by Christ to the period of the κρίσις which will attend His coming, in His instruction to the apostles in Matt. 10:35, 36 (cf. Luke 12:53). It follows from this, that we have not to regard vv. 5 and 6 as a simple continuation of the description in vv. 2-4a, but that these verses contain the explanation of עֵתָהּ תִּהְיֶה מְבוֹכָתָם, in this sense, that at the outbreak of the judgment and of the visitation the faithlessness will reach the height of treachery to the nearest friends, yea, even of the dissolution of every family tie (cf. Matt. 24:10, 12).

Micah 7:7-13. "This confession of sin is followed by a confession of faith on the part of the humiliated people of God" (Shlier.) V. 7. "But I, for Jehovah will I look out; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. V. 8. Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy! for am I fallen, I rise again; for do I sit in darkness, Jehovah is light to me." By וְאֵינִי what follows is attached adversatively to the preceding words. Even though all love and faithfulness should have vanished from among men, and the day of

visitation should have come, the church of the faithful would not be driven from her confidence in the Lord, but would look to Him and His help, and console itself with the assurance that its God would hear it, i.e., rescue it from destruction. As the looking out (*tsâphâh*) for the Lord, whether He would not come, i.e., interpose to judge and aid, involves in itself a prayer for help, though it is not exhausted by it, but also embraces patient waiting, or the manifestation of faith in the life; so the hearing of God is a practical hearing, in other words, a coming to help and to save. The God of my salvation, i.e., from whom all my salvation comes (cf. Ps. 27:9; Isa. 17:10). Her enemy, i.e., the heathen power of the world, represented in Micah's time by Asshur, and personified in thought as daughter Asshur, is not to rejoice over Zion. וְיֵ, for, not "if:" the verb *nâphaltî* is rather to be taken conditionally, "for have I fallen;" *nâphal* being used, as in Amos 5:2, to denote the destruction of the power and of the kingdom. The church is here supposed to be praying out of the midst of the period when the judgment has fallen upon it for its sins, and the power of the world is triumphing over it. The prophet could let her speak thus, because he had already predicted the destruction of the kingdom and the carrying away of the people into exile as a judgment that was inevitable (Mic. 3:12; 6:16). Sitting in darkness, i.e., being in distress and poverty (cf. Isa. 9:1; 42:7; Ps. 107:10). In this darkness the Lord is light to the faithful, i.e., He is their salvation, as He who does indeed chasten His own people, but who even in wrath does not violate His grace, or break the promises which He has given to His people.

Micah 7:9. "The wrath of Jehovah shall I bear, for I have sinned against Him, till He shall fight my fight, and secure my right. He will bring me forth to the light; I shall behold His righteousness. V. 10. And may my enemy see it, and shame cover her, who hath said to me, Where is Jehovah thy God? Mine eyes will see it; now will she be for a treading down, like mire of the streets." Confidence in the help of the Lord

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flows from the consciousness, that the wretchedness and sufferings are a merited punishment for the sins. This consciousness and feeling generate patience and hope: patience to bear the wrath of God manifesting itself in the sufferings; hope that the sufferings, as inflicted by the righteous God, will cease as soon as the divine justice has been satisfied. *Za'aph*: lit., the foaming up of wrath (Isa. 30:30); hence strong wrath. This the church will bear, till the Lord conducts its conflict and secures its rights. רִיבֵי is the judicial conflict between Israel and the heathen power of the world. Although, for example, God had given up His nation to the power of its enemies, the nations of the world, on account of its sins, so that they accomplished the will of God, by destroying the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and carrying away the people into exile; yet they grew proud of their own might in so doing, and did not recognise themselves as instruments of punishment in the hand of the Lord, but attributed their victories to the power of their own arm, and even aimed at the destruction of Israel, with scornful defiance of the living God (cf. Isa. 10:5–15; Hab. 1:11). Thus they violated the rights of Israel, so that the Lord was obliged to conduct the contest of His people with the heathen, and secure the rights of Israel by the overthrow of the heathen power of the world. For רִיבֵי רִיבֵי, see Ps. 43:1; for עָשָׂה מְשַׁפֵּט, Ps. 9:4, 5; and for the fact itself, Isa. 49:25; 51:22. *Mishpât* is Israel's right, in opposition to the powers of the world, who would destroy it. The following word יוֹצִיאֲנִי is not governed by אֲשֶׁר, as the absence of the copula *Vav* shows. With these words the hope takes the form of the certain assurance that the Lord will remove the distress, and let Israel see His righteousness. *Ts^sdâqâh* is the righteousness of God revealing itself in the forgiveness and restoration of Israel to favour; like *ts^sdâqôth* in Mic. 6:5: in actual fact, the salvation of Israel about to be secured, regarded as an emanation of the righteousness of the covenant God; hence parallel to אֲזַר רָאָה

with רָאָה, to look at, so that one penetrates, as it were, into an object, seeing with feasting of the eyes (so also in v. 10). This exaltation of Israel to new salvation it is hoped that the enemy will see (וַתִּרְאֶה, opt.), and be covered with shame; for the power of the world is overthrown, in order that Israel may be redeemed out of its power. This desire is a just one, because the enemy has despised the Lord God. For the expression, "Where is Jehovah thy God?" compare Joel 2:17. And Israel will see its fulfilment (וַתִּרְאֶה with *Nun* doubled after a sharpened *é*; see Ewald, § 198, *a*). *'Attâh*, now (seeing the future in spirit, as having already come), the enemy will be trodden down like mire of the streets (for this figure, see Isa. 10:6).

Micah 7:11–13. The confident expectation rises in vv. 11 ff. into an assurance of the promise; the words of the prophet in the name of the church rising into an address to Zion, confirm its hope by the promise of the restoration of Zion, and the entrance of crowds of people into the city of God. V. 11. "A day to build thy walls (cometh); in that day will the ordinance be far away. V. 12. In that day will they come to thee from Asshur and the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt to the river, and (to) sea from sea, and (from) mountain to mountain. V. 13. And the earth will become a desert because of its inhabitants, for the fruit of their doings." V. 11 consists of two clauses; for we may easily supply to *yôm* "is" or "will be" = come. The daughter Zion is addressed (cf. Mic. 4:8) not as a church, but as a city, as the centre and representative of the kingdom of God. As such, she is compared to a vineyard, as in Isa. 5:1–7; 27:2–4, Ps. 80:9, 10. The word *gâdêr*, which is generally used for the hedge or wall around a vineyard, points to this (see Isa. 5:5; Num. 22:24; Eccles. 10:8). יוֹם הַהוּא is an adverbial accusative; in that day will חֹק be far away. The meaning of this word is very difficult to find, and can hardly be settled with any certainty. The explanation of *chôq*, as signifying the law imposed upon Israel by the heathen oppressors (Chald., Hengstenberg, etc.), cannot be

sustained, as this meaning cannot be established from Ps. 104:20, and is not suggested by the context. So, again, the explanation, "On that day will the goal set (for Israel), or the boundary fixed (for it), be a far distant one (i.e., then will the boundaries of the land of Israel lie in the far distance, or be advanced to the remotest distance:" Hitzig, Caspari, and others), introduces a meaning into the words which they do not possess. Even if *chōq* does denote a fixed point or a limit of either space or time, it never signifies the boundary of a nation; and *râchaq*, to be far off, is not equivalent to being advanced to a great distance. *Chōq* is apparently used here for the ordinance or limit which God has appointed to separate Israel from the nations; not a land-boundary, but the law of Israel's separation from the nations.

This law will be far away, i.e., will be removed or set aside (*yirchaq* is only chosen for the sake of the assonance with *chōq*), inasmuch as numerous crowds, as is added in v. 12 by way of explanation, will then stream to Zion, or come to the people of God, out of all lands (cf. Mic. 4:1, 2). For this is what v. 12 refers to, and not the return to Zion of the Israelites who have been scattered in the heathen lands. יְבוֹא (impersonal), one comes, they come: not "return," יָשׁוּב, which must have been the expression used if the return of the Israelites out of their captivity had been meant. The heathen who cherish a desire for the God of Zion and His law (Mic. 4:2) will come to Israel; not to Israel as still living in their midst (Caspari), but to the Israel that has already returned, and whose walls have been rebuilt (v. 11). The building of the walls of Zion involves the gathering together of the dispersed nation, or rather presupposes it. Heathen will come "from Asshur and the cities of Egypt," i.e., from the two mightiest empires in the time of the prophet. *Mâtsôr*, the poetical name of Egypt, as in Isa. 19:6; 37:25; and "cities of Egypt," because that land or kingdom was especially rich in cities. The further definitions individualize the idea of the totality of the lands

and provinces, the correlative members being transposed and incomplete in the last two sentences, so that the preposition עַד must be supplied to יָמִים, and the preposition מִן to הַהָרִים. From Egypt to the river (Euphrates) includes the lands lying between these two terminal points; and in the expressions, "sea from sea, and mountain to mountain," seas and mountains are mentioned in the most general manner, as the boundaries of lands and nations; so that we have not to think of any particular seas and mountains, say the Western (or Mediterranean) Sea, and the Eastern (the Dead or the Galilean) Sea, as being the western and eastern boundaries of Palestine, and of Lebanon and Sinai as the northern and southern boundaries, but must adhere firmly to the general character of the expression: "from one sea and one mountain to another sea and mountain," i.e., from every land situated between seas and mountains, that is to say, from all the lands and provinces of the earth. The coming out of all lands is not to be understood as denoting simply passing visits to Canaan or Zion, but as coming to connect themselves with the people of God, to be received into fellowship with them. There is a parallel to this promise in the promise contained in Isa. 19:18-25, that in the Messianic times Egypt and Asshur will turn to Jehovah. This takes place because the earth will become a desert, on account of the evil deeds of its inhabitants. Whilst Zion is rebuilt, and the people of God are multiplied, by the addition of the godly Gentiles out of all the countries of the earth, the judgment falls upon the sinful world. This statement of v. 13 is simply attached to what precedes it by וְהִיְתָה, in order to complete the promise of the restoration of Zion, by adding the fate which will befall the earth (i.e., the earth outside Canaan); but it actually contains the motive for the coming of the crowds to Zion. הָאָרֶץ cannot be the land of Israel (Canaan) here, in support of which appeal has been made to Lev. 26:33 and Isa. 1:7; for the context neither leads to any such

limitation as that אָרָץ could be taken in the sense of אֲרָצְכֶם (in Leviticus and Isaiah), nor allows of our thinking of the devastation of Canaan. When the day shall have come for the building of the walls of Zion, the land of Israel will not become a desert then; but, on the contrary, the devastation will cease. If the devastation of Canaan were intended here, we should have either to take והיתה as a pluperfect, in violation of the rules of the language, or arbitrarily to interpolate “previously,” as Hitzig proposes. על יִשְׁבֶּיהָ is defined more precisely by מִפְּרֵי מַעֲלָלֵיהֶם. The doings are of course evil ones, and the deeds themselves are the fruit (cf. Isa. 3:10).

Micah 7:14–17. The promise of salvation impels the congregation to pray that it may be granted (v. 14); whereupon the Lord assures it that His covenant mercies shall be renewed, and promises the thorough humiliation of the hostile nations of the world (vv. 15–17). V. 14. *“Feed thy people with thy staff, the sheep of thine inheritance, dwelling apart, in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of the olden time.”* The question in dispute among commentators, whether this prayer is addressed to the Lord by the prophet on behalf of the nation, or whether the prophet is still speaking in the name of the believing church, is decided in favour of the latter by the answer addressed to the church in v. 15. The Lord is addressed as the shepherd of Israel, the title by which Jacob addressed Him in Gen. 49:24 (cf. Ps. 80:2; 23:1 ff.). The prayer is related to the promise in Mic. 5:3 ff., viz., that the ruler coming forth out of Bethlehem will feed in the strength of Jehovah, and involves the prayer for the sending of this ruler. “With this staff,” i.e., the shepherd’s staff (cf. Lev. 27:32; Ps. 23:4), is added pictorially; and as a support to the prayer, it designates the people as the sheep of Jehovah’s inheritance. צֹאן נִחְלָה, instead of נִחְלָה, which occurs more frequently, is occasioned by the figure of the shepherd. As the sheep need the protection of the shepherd, lest

they should perish, so Israel needs the guidance of its God, that it may not be destroyed by its foes. The following apposition שֹׁכְנֵי לְבָדָד determines the manner of the feeding more precisely; so that we may resolve it into the clause, “so that thy people may dwell apart.” The words contain an allusion to Num. 23:9, where Balaam describes Israel as a people separated from the rest of the nations; and to Deut. 33:28, where Moses congratulates it, because it dwells in safety and alone (*bâdâd*, separate), under the protection of its God, in a land full of corn, new wine, etc. The church asks for the fulfilment of this blessing from Jehovah its shepherd, that it may dwell separate from the nations of the world, so that they may not be able to do it any harm; and that “in the wood in the midst of Carmel,” that promontory abounding in wood and pasture land (*laetis pascuis abundat*: Jerome on Amos 1:2). The wood is thought of here as shutting off the flock from the world without, withdrawing it from its sight, and affording it security; and the fact that dangerous wild beasts have their home in the forest (Jer. 5:6; Ps. 80:14) is overlooked here, because Israel is protected from them by its own shepherd. יָרַע, which follows, is not future, but optative, corresponding to the imperative רָעָה. Gilead and Bashan are also named as portions of the land that were rich in pasture (cf. Num. 32:1 ff.), namely, of the land to the east of the Jordan, Carmel belonging to the western portion of Canaan. These three portions individualize the whole of the territory which Israel received for its inheritance, and not merely the territory of the kingdom of the ten tribes. The simple reason why no districts in the kingdom of Judah are mentioned, is that Judah possessed no woody districts abounding in grass and pasture resembling those named. Moreover, the prayer refers to the whole of Israel, or rather to the remnant of the whole nation that has been rescued from the judgment, and which will form an undivided flock under the Messiah (cf. Mic. 5:2; Isa. 11:13; Ezek. 37:15 ff.). יָמֵי עוֹלָם, “the days of old,” are the times of Moses and Joshua, when the Lord

brought Israel with His mighty arm into the possession of the promised land.

The Lord answers this prayer, by promising, according to His abundant goodness, more than the church has asked. V. 15. *“As in the days of thy going out of the land of Egypt will I cause it to see wonders. V. 16. Nations will see it, and be ashamed of all their strength: they will lay the hand upon the mouth, their ears will become deaf. V. 17. They will lick dust like the snake, like the reptiles of the earth they come trembling out of their castles: they will go trembling to Jehovah our God, and before thee will they fear.”* The wonders (*niphlâ’ôth*; cf. Ex. 3:20; 15:11; Ps. 78:11) with which the Lord formerly smote Egypt, to redeem His people out of the bondage of that kingdom of the world, will the Lord renew for His people. In *יְהוָה* the nation is addressed, whilst the suffix of the third pers. attached to *אֶרְצָנוּ* points back to *עַמְּךָ* in v. 14.

The miraculous deeds will make such an impression, that the heathen nations who see them will stand ashamed, dumb and deaf with alarm and horror. Ashamed of all their strength, i.e., because all their strength becomes impotence before the mighty acts of the Almighty God. Laying the hand upon the mouth is a gesture expressive of reverential silence from astonishment and admiration (cf. Judg. 18:19; Job 21:5, etc.). Their ears shall become deaf “from the thunder of His mighty acts, Job 26:14, the *qôl hâmôn* of Isa. 33:8” (Hitzig). With this description of the impression made by the wonderful works of God, the words of God pass imperceptibly into words of the prophet, who carries out the divine answer still further in an explanatory form, as we may see from v. 17*b*. The heathen will submit themselves to Jehovah in the humblest fear. This is stated in v. 17. Licking the dust like the serpent contains an allusion to Gen. 3:14 (cf. Ps. 72:9 and Isa. 49:23). *זִחְלֵי אֶרֶץ*, earth-creepers, i.e., snakes, recalls the *זִחְלֵי עֶפֶר* of Deut. 32:24. Like snakes, when they are driven out of their hiding-place, or when charmers make them come out of their holes, so will the nations come trembling out of

their castles (*misgerôth* as in Ps. 18:46), and tremble to Jehovah, i.e., flee to Him with trembling, as alone able to grant help (see Hos. 3:5), and fear before thee. With *מִמְּךָ* the prayer passes into an address to Jehovah, to attach to this the praise of God with which he closes his book.

Micah 7:18. *“Who is a God like Thee? removing guilt and passing over iniquity to the remnant of His inheritance. He retaineth not His anger for ever, for He delighteth in mercy. V. 19. He will have compassion upon us again, tread down our transgressions; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. V. 20. Mayest Thou show truth to Jacob, mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old.”* *אֵל כְּמוֹךָ* looks back to Ex. 15:11; but whether Micah also plays upon his own name is doubtful. Like the first redemption of Israel out of Egypt, the second or still more glorious redemption of the people of God furnishes an occasion for praising the incomparable nature of the Lord. But whereas in the former Jehovah merely revealed Himself in His incomparable exaltation above all gods, in the restoration of the nation which had been cast out among the heathen because of its sins, and its exaltation among the nations, He now reveals His incomparable nature in grace and compassion. The words *נִשָּׂא עֵינָי וְגֵר* are formed after Ex. 34:6, 7, where the Lord, after the falling away of Israel from Him by the worship of the golden calf, reveals Himself to Moses as a gracious and merciful God, who forgives guilt and sin. But this grace and compassion are only fully revealed in the restoration and blessing of the remnant of His nation by Jesus Christ. (For v. 18*b*, see Ps. 103:9.) As One who delighteth in mercy, He will have compassion upon Israel again (*yâshûbh* used adverbially, as in Hos. 14:8, etc.), will tread down its sins, i.e., conquer their power and tyranny by His compassion, and cast them into the depths of the sea, as He once conquered the tyrant Pharaoh and drowned him in the depths of the sea (Ex. 15:5, 10). This believing assurance then closes with the prayer (*tittên* is optative) that the Lord will

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give His rescued nation truth and mercy (*'ēmeth* and *chesed*, after Ezek. 34:6), i.e., give them to enjoy, or bestow upon them, what He had sworn to the patriarchs (Gen. 22:16). Abraham and Jacob are mentioned instead of their family (cf. Isa. 41:8).
 With this lofty praise of the Lord, Micah closes not only the last words, but his whole book. The

New Testament parallel, as Hengstenberg has correctly observed, is Rom. 11:33–36; and the μυστήριον made known by the apostle in Rom. 11:25ff. gives us a view of the object and end of the ways of the Lord with His people.