

ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION

THE PROPHECY OF MICAH

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INTRODUCTION

Dr. Elliott Binns reminds us that the full name of Micah is Micaiah of Moresheth (cf Jeremiah 26.18) probably (Binns thinks) an expansion to distinguish him from Micaiah the son of Imlah. The ancient Syriac Peshitta which predates the Hebrew Masoretic text contains the term which reflects in the later LXX and resonates with the ancient ore-exilic Hebrew.*

*The Latin title of the book is "Micha" from which its popular English name derives. The prophet's name was Michayahu-"Who is a God like you?" We are told at the outset that Micah prophesied in the days of Jotham Ahaz and Hezekiah (739-731-715-686B.C.)-fifty three years in all. His ministry was over half a century later than that of Jonah. He was a contemporary of Isaiah. His prophetic voice was heard before Hezekiah's thorough reforms and he pre-dates the Assyrian captivity of 722-1B.C. Though -as Harry Ironside notes he harangues leaders in Hezekiah's time "he was not apprehended by that godly king". (Jeremiah 26 16-19) During Micah's lifetime Assyria reached her peak of power whilst Judah's northern neighbour was crumbling. Micah encapsulated the righteous demands of the LORD in his statement "Do justly love mercy and walk humbly with God"(6.8). **President Jimmy Carter** quoted this text during his Inaugural as U.S. President.*

COMMENTARY

CHAPTER 1

WORLDWIDE JUDGMENT 1-4

Micah the man of Moresheth-Gath lived in a small town "usually identified with modern Tel el-Judeideh, 25 miles south east of Jerusalem"(RexMason) The remains of the settlement lie traverse to the route of the present motor exit to Tel Aviv airport

The word of the LORD which belonged to or was living to Micah the Morashite [One who lived where Judah bordered Gath -in an area to be given away to the Philistine as the price of peace] in the days of Jotham Ahaz and Hezekiah kings of Judah which he saw covering Samaria and Jerusalem. "Hear all you peoples; listen O Earth and its fullness and the LORD God will be a witness against you-the Lord from His holy temple. For behold the LORD rising from his (familiar) place and will tread (as in treading the winepress) upon the temples or high places of worship of the earth. The hills will melt or dissolve under him and the valleys will have rent or cleft as wax before the fire, as waters that have been caused to pour down into a slope. This literary flourish predicts earthquakes which represent the wider judgment scene that every biblical prophet predicts. This message is for the whole earth.

CITIES FOCUS SIN 5-7

*All this is through the transgression of **Jacob** [Judah & Israel] and sin of the house of Israel [The North]. What is the transgression of Jacob? **Is that not Samaria?** And what are the high places of Judah? (Her temple) **Is it not Jerusalem?***

The prophet sees sin crystallised in the capitols of the North and South. In the vein of Roman poets like Horace who saw Rome as a sink where the iniquity of empire concentrates Micah sees the sin of Israel and Judah focussed in their cities. So I will make Samaria a heap of ruins[y/] of the field suited to planting a vineyard [vines were trained over stacks of stone]and I will cause her stones to be poured down to a valley and I will constantly make her foundations naked. And all her images will be have been beaten to pieces with the hammer [ttk] and all her gifts of prostitution will be burned in the fire and all her idols I will make a waste for...

(1)... SHE GATHERED TOGETHER WAGES OF HARLOTTRY AND THEY WILL RETURN TO THE REWARD OF HARLOTTRY. Moral and social disorder is at the heart of Micah's testimony. The "shrines" featured religious prostitutes who corrupted the whole fabric of religious life. Sexual Sin stalks our cities in the form of legalised prostitution and legalised same sex

partnerships, one night stands, strip clubs, hotel massage provision and massage parlours and much else that cannot be right in the sight of God's holiness Christ's warnings and the Holy Spirit's teaching through the Apostle Paul.

MICAH'S ACTED PARABLE OF THE EXILE 8

On this account I will mourn and I will howl as a lamenter. I will walk barefoot or stripped as a captive [//v] and impudently uncovered. [mwr/] I will make mournful wailing as jackals and mourn with head down like the answering ostriches [hn[y hnb] for...

(2)... HER INJURIES ARE MALIGNANT [This term *via* is used of the sinfulness of the heart and its "desperate wickedness" in Jeremiah 17.9 There is serious social and moral disorder]

JERUSALEM IMPLICATED AND RIPE FOR JUDGMENT 9

For it has come or is coming to Judah-

(3) IT TOUCHES OR BURNS WITH DESIRE at the gate of my people at Jerusalem itself. *The "seat of justice" where the elders of the nation met was dealing with issues relating to the practices of the shrines. It may even be that corruption had been found among the judges of the nation. Poor social mores had infected the high council at Jerusalem.*

SARGON'S ROUTE TO RAPHIA -THE EIGHT FOLD PATH OF JUDGMENT 10-12

(1) Do not make it explicit or known in Gath.

(2) Do not go weeping in the house belonging to the Fawn [*Ophrah*-*"house of the Fawn"*]-otherwise described as "the land of the fox" [1Samuel 13.17]. *Clearly the Benjamite territory is no longer a centre of innocence. Have yourself rolled in dust [v/p]*

(3) Pass them by O inhabitant of **Shaphir** [*"town of beauty"*]-**(4) NAKED SHAMEFUL WOMAN.**

(4) The one who lives in **Zaanah** [*"Place of the flock"*] is not coming out.

(5) Beth Ezel [*"house of support or help or nobles"*] wails. Its standing place is taken from you. *This town whose nobles might have helped others was neutralised by grief over its own woes.*

(6) For the dweller in **Maroth** [*"bitternesses"*] was sick or in labour for good but calamity flowed down from the LORD to the gate of Jerusalem. *Despite the wrestlings of this city for right its citizens brought pain to Jerusalem.*

THE CAPTURE OF LACHISH AND MORESHETH 13-15

(7) O dweller in **Lachish**, yoke or bind the chariot to the swift [vqr REQESH]. *Micah employs pun as he makes future use of place names to illustrate disaster. Not even a swift stallion will avail to rescue the people of Lachish from Sargon. She was the first sinner or first to transgress belonging to the daughter of Zion for the transgressions of Israel were found in you.*

(8) Therefore you shall give recompense or a bridal price to Moresbeth Gath. [*"Gath takes possession"*] *Jerusalem would give Moresbeth away to Sargon as a bride with a big bride-price. The West would fall under his control. The houses of Aczib [*"Deception"*] shall be false or deception to the kings of Israel. Still the root of my father will be yours O dweller in Mareshah.*

MICAH PROMISES HOPE 16

The glory of Israel shall come to Adullam. *David centuries before gathered his mighty men who had been dissidents and outcasts to this stronghold and from there re-asserted his authority. This statement holds promise that Judah shall recover from the incursions of Sargon and his excursion towards the borders of Egypt. Become bald and shear off your hair because of the sons of your delight. Enlarge your baldness as the bald eagle for your precious sons shall go naked to captivity from you.*

CHAPTER 2

FRAUD WAS RIFE -RECOMPENSE SOON TO COME 1-3

(4)WOE TO THOSE WHO SCHEME UP INIQUITY [*bvj planning as damask weavers*] and those who work out iniquity on their beds and in the light of morning they do it because there is wealth or "the wherewithal" in their hands.

(5) THEY DESIRE [*dmj*] FIELDS OR LANDS AND SNATCH OR GRAB THEM AS PLUNDER [*l/zg*] and houses and take them for (unpaid) usury. *This is a further example of social injustice.* They defraud or oppress a strong man and his house-a husband and his inheritance. Therefore thus says the LORD behold me devising calamity against this family from which you cannot withdraw your necks [*nmrwx*]and you must not walk high and mighty because this is a time of calamity.

A PROVERB USED LATER BY THOSE WHO LOSE BY PLUNDER 4-5

In that day he will lift up a saying against you and he wails "**One plundered says it is coming to pass - WE WILL BE (PEOPLE WHO) SELF DESTRUCT. How he has changed what is mine! To a rebel he has allotted our fields.**"Therefore there will be no-one in the congregation of the LORD to cause the measuring line of sojourn to be cast. *In the dark saying the play is on "it shall be"-words which carry both prophetic significance and the name of God.*

WE DON'T WANT TO HEAR PROPHETS 6

For that reason they will drop the sentiment "let them not drop prophetic sentiments like myrrh". They will not drop prophetic sentiments **for you**-that will not take away the shame. *Micah is assuring those who don't want to hear ominous prophets that they will not be obliged to listen but they will still know judgment and feel shame.*

FOUR PROPHETIC QUESTIONS 7

- (1) What is the house of Jacob saying or thinking?
- (2) Is the Spirit of the LORD grieved or impatient?
- (3) Or are these his habitual practices or painful actions?
- (4) Do not my words make happy or better the one who walks upright?

LARCENY AND CRIMES AGAINST WIDOWS AND ORPHANS 8-9

And of late [*Literally "yesterday"*] my people rose up as an enemy.

(6) YOU CUT OFF THE GARMENT OF THE MANTLE [*"the belt"- see Exodus 22.8*] FROM THOSE WHO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOU AS YOU SLIP PAST... *The idea is like our concept of the pickpocket-like Dickens' "Oliver Twist" in Fagan's gang of street thieves except the action here is direct effrontery...you are returned (with booty)from war. The women of my people you continually drive out of their luxury homes [*gn*] From upon their boys or children you are taking my glory for their whole lifetime. It is James in the NT who characterises true religion as visiting or caring for the widow and the orphan in their affliction. Micah is disturbed by the lack of "true religion" at the basic level of social justice.*

ISRAEL EXILED BUT RE-GATHERED IN THE LATTER DAY 10-12A

Arise and go for this is not your place of rest or remaining to pass over defilement -it will destroy you completely-it is pernicious. If a man is walking and deceives or is a fraud lying and...

(7)...DROPS A PROPHETIC SENTIMENT TO YOU IN FAVOUR OF WINE OR DRINKING HE WOULD BE A MAN OF PROPHETIC SENTIMENT to this people. *So low were social standards that winebibbing and imbibing would have been deemed a proper matter for prophetic encouragement*

I will surely gather you entirely O Jacob. I will definitely quibbutz the remnant of Israel. I will place him together as a flock in a fold-as a flock in the middle of their pasture. *This is a very special prophecy in which the LORD appears to chase His people from their land for defiling it-and to cleanse them from idolatry and the filth that accompanied 7th century religion and continued sometimes surfacing and*

sometimes incognito for all the time until 597 when Judah was carried captive. However the people are promised the felicity of "one fold" and of the "same home" and of being "qibbutzed". These prophecies waited for 2600 years to reach their fulfillment but now we are privileged to witness the word of God by Micah as history.

ISRAEL REGROUPS AFTER CAPTIVITY ROME ATTACKS CHRIST COMES AND RETURNS 12B-13

They will cause tumult or commotion from mankind-or a "buzz" from numbers of men. *Both thoughts may be derived from the original.* The breaker will come up before their faces. They will scatter raven or break the wall and they will pass through the gate and go out by it. Their king will pass before their faces and the LORD at their head.

CHAPTER 3

LEADERS AND JUDGES TREAT THE PEOPLE LIKE POT MEAT 1-3

And I said "Hear now you who are heads of Jacob and you judges or commanders of the house of Israel. Is it not your duty to be conversant with justice? You haters of good and are lovers of evil ...

(1) (8)...THAT STRIP THE FLESH FROM [l zq] UPON THEM (the people)

(2) And cleave and "set a price" for their bones [r[v] [as if they were meat].

(3) And those who devour [l ka] my people

(4) And cause them to be skinned [hvp[]] to naked offerings

(5) And break their bones in pieces [j xp]

(6) And spread them out [vrp] as (meat) in a pot and as flesh in the middle of a big covered vessel.

The nature of the crime of rulers and judges was that they "fed upon the people"-as we would say "they skinned the population". They are presented as "butchers". Social justice is corrupt at the heart of government and law the system was corrupt.

THE LORD HIDES HIS FACE FROM HABITUAL SINNERS 4

From that time they will call out to the LORD but He will not hear them. He will hide his face from them at that time as it will be a time they hare evil in their repeated habits or exertions.

IT'S GOODNIGHT TO THE SELF-SEEKING PROPHETS. 5-7

(9) THUS SAYS THE LORD AGAINST THE PROPHETS WHO CAUSE MY PEOPLE TO STRAY or seduce them to error-who while they are chewing with their teeth (*i.e. "eating well"*) also proclaim "shalom" but who give nothing to their mouths and devote themselves to war against him.

(1) For that reason it will be nightfall for you away from vision

(2) And darkness without the certainty of divine determining. [msq]

(3) And the sun will set over the prophets

(4) And the day shall be dark as Kedar tents over them.

The seers shall be confused or perplexed and the diviners blush red with disappointed hope. [rpj]

And all of them will cover [hf[]] their lips for there is no reply from God.

MICAH IS "A PROPHET" BORN AND SPIRIT FILLED 8

But lifelong I am full of strength-of the Spirit of the LORD and of justice and the might of a soldier (of the LORD) to explain or make explicit to Jacob his transgression and to show to Israel his sin.

MICAH BEGS FOR AN EAR AND FOR REPENTANCE 9-12

Please hear this you heads of the house of Jacob and judges of the house of Israel who time after time render justice an object of horror [b[t] and convict every straight (case)of perversity or falsehood...[vq[]]

(10)... WHO BUILD ZION WITH BLOODSHED AND JERUSALEM WITH JUSTICE TURNED ASIDE [l#[] "declined" "denied] *The arraignment of the judiciary is complete. Our principles of delayed and denied justice under Magna Charta were recognised only by their absence*

(1) (11) HER CHIEF MEN WILL RENDER JUSTICE BY BRIBES

(2) (12) AND HER PRIESTS TEACH LAW FOR A SALARY

(3) (13) AND HER PROPHETS WILL GIVE DEFINITE PREDICTION FOR SILVER.

But upon the LORD they "trust" or "rest for support" or "border on" [n[v] saying "Is it not so that the LORD is among us. No calamity shall come upon us.

Therefore through your stained actions or reproaches Zion shall be a ploughed field and Jerusalem will become overturned heaps or ruins [nyy[] and **the hill of the house** or temple as though the bare hills of a forest

This prophecy was fulfilled subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. in a conspicuous manner. The site of Jerusalem lay in total ruin and even in the 19th century during a visit of Murray McCheyne it was precisely and aptly described as a ploughed field.

CHAPTER 4

SEVEN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MILLENNIUM

The events of this prophecy cover the Millennium, the coming of Christ, the Babylonian captivity and wars pertinent to the end times. The section constitutes a short prophetic tour down two and a half millennia-not in regular order-but inclusive of the events of the Millennial Kingdom, the Babylonian captivity, the Roman siege and rule and the passion of Christ

And it shall come to pass **IN LATTER DAYS** that:

(1) The mountain of the house of the LORD shall be constituted or prepared [mkn] *As a threshing floor* at the head of the mountains

(2) And it shall be beyond and apart from the hills

(3) And peoples shall flow as rivers up to it.

(4) And great Gentile nations will come and say with revelation "Come let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob so that He may teach us His **separated ways**

(5) And we shall walk in His **big pathways** of principle for from Zion comes Torah [*Christ-ward direction*] and from Jerusalem the oracle of guidance.

(6) He shall administer **justice between Great peoples** and cause **strong nations to be struck to the limits of distance away**. *This "smiting" though initially it may involve sterner measures of punishment it routinely involves what David and Solomon refer to in Psalm 2.9, Psalm 23.4, Psalm 110.2 and Proverbs 22.15 as the "rod of his authority"(cf also Isaiah 11.1-4). In Micah 6 8-9 the prophet further defines "His rod". The "rod" speaks of international "correction" and disciplines of life according to the three great principles of the rule of Christ enshrined in the Micah context namely:*

(a) The administration of justice-all that falls under judicial law

(b) The love of covenant faithfulness -all human relationships

(c) The humble walk with God-true religion with humility and regular devotion-all relationship with God

This definition of world rule under Messiah is comprehensive. It begins with enshrining the LORD'S principle of justice which is righteousness of the sort that lives by the law of substitution. That is to say "Our life for yours" "Our problem before yours" "Our initiative to forestall before your endangerment"(cf Romans 9.3).

In his letter to the Romans Paul adopts the Micah or Messianic "rod" principle as he writes to the Christians within the nation whose law rules the world.

1. Paul first defines how all men come under Christ. This occurs because "All have sinned" and because "One died for all then were all dead"-which means that everyman is in the debt of Christ so all ought to fall under his rule and the gospel call gives such opportunity and holds out such expectation of response. Romans 1-5 establish the first principles -the principia- of justice.

2. Paul from the reconciliation of Chapter 5 and in 6-8 shows how our relationship with God parallels the marriage covenant and puts us in a position to put Christ first at the cost of suffering. He then takes up the case of Israel which under Micah will belatedly learn these principles and shows that

(a) The Jews hold the principle of justice and the covenant truth and promise of its international acceptance within their scriptures but Gentiles not Jews pursue the justice or righteousness of Christ-nevertheless let us do so "humbly!"(Micah 6.8) for we were grafted in (Romans 10 22-24)

(b) But Jews need Jesus Christ. God never never never rejected Israel! God forbid! Paul like Elijah belonged to the "Remnant" which exists until this day. The homecoming of Israel will literally be "Resurrection" for Messiah will come and men will live to a thousand years and those long dead will appear again. Gentiles again-humility please! (Romans 11.21). God keeps covenant and along with those Gentiles saved by grace and living by faith a Jewish remnant has been numbered through the centuries

(c)The advent of true religion -All Israel will head up an era when men universally will walk with God-Romans 11 25-27 So again humility is of the essence-"they are enemies on your account" but "loved for the patriarchs sake" and ultimately through the witness rapture and return of the church with Christ the Jewish nation will be brought to God.

3. Paul in chapters 12-15 calls for devotion to the LORD and true covenant relations between man and man and respect for the law now existing as it is the guardian-albeit an imperfect guardian of right human relationships.

IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY IN THE MILLENNIUM (NOT ETERNITY) 3b-4

Paul adds a seventh principle of Christ's millennial kingdom.

(7)*And they shall hammer or forge [ttk] their swords and knives into ploughshares and mattocks [ta] and their spears into pruning instruments. Israel and the nations will live so peaceably as to have no need for instruments of war-and agriculture and fruit growing will be so abundant that agricultural requirements will be at a premium. Metal work and iron and steel plants and milling will still exist. Nation shall not raise the sword against nation and they will not have military training for warfare any more. But a man or soldier will sit under his vine and under his fig and none will cause him to tremble in terror [drj] for the mouth of the LORD of hosts is promising it over and over again.[Piel of rbd] The prophet Micah is overtly referring to the promise of the millennial kingdom are everywhere in the writings of of Isaiah-his older contemporary.*

THE MILLENNIUM CONTRASTED WITH THIS AGE 5

*Micah foretells the millennial age and returns under the phrase "**AT THIS TIME**" to adding another aspect of what may be expected in developments leading up to or during that felicitous time. I enumerate these references below.*

For all the peoples walk every man according to the name of his god but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for the millennial age and still afterwards or onwards.[d[# ml al] Micah speaks of the current and regrettably still current idolatry but prophecies the age of Yahweh worship and an eternity of reverence for Yahweh.

THE REGATHERING AND ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAEL FOR AN AGE 6-7

In that day whispers the LORD...

(1) ...I will collect those who lean to one side and are lame

(2) And I will kibbutz those who were expelled and whom I caused to pass through calamity or those I broke

(3) And I will make or constitute or establish the lame as a remnant and those cast far away to the Gentile a strong nation.

(4) And the LORD will reign over them in mount Zion...

(1)... **FROM THIS TIME** (of the inception of his gathering and rule) unto the millennium. *Micah both tops and tails the Kingdom of Messiah. It has a terminus ex quo and a terminus ad quem.*

THE TEMPLE MOUNT DECLARED THE "DAUGHTER OF ZION"8

And You O Migdol tower of the flock and Ophel acclivity (the temple mount) "daughter of Zion" to you it will come and the distant former rule will come -the kingdom belonging to the daughter of Zion. In the strictest sense the kingdom of Christ centres at the temple mount and there when Jews build a temple and whilst Arabs have a prayer house both will come into use when the LORD reigns as places of worship of His name.

THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY 9-10

(2) AT THIS TIME why is it you cause a loud cry? Is there no king within you? Has your **COUNSELLOR** been slain? *Micah's prophecy would seem to relate to the "wonderful Counsellor" of Isaiah-the Christ of Isaiah 9.6. For birth pangs or fear and trembling have taken strong hold on you as on a woman during labour. Labour and bring forth O Daughter of Zion as one who gives birth for ...*

(3) AT THIS TIME you will go forth from the city and abide in the land and you shall go right to Babylon there I will rescue you. There **the LORD will be your redeemer** from the hand of your enemies.

GENTILE NATIONS CONTRIVE TO MAKE ISRAEL WAYWARD-BUT GOD HAS OTHER PLANS TO TAKE APART UNITED NATIONS COHESION AND THE SUBTLE SYNCRETISTIC AND DEMONIC BASIS OF IT 11-12

(4) AND AT THIS time Great or many nations will assemble against you saying "Let us seduce her to apostasy or profane her and our eyes shall contemplate Zion with pleasure. But these do not know the distant devised plans of the LORD and they do not comprehend his predicted counsel or prudence for he will gather them together as sheaves of the threshing floor. *This latter simile is appropriate since the temple area which is at the heart of Jewish religion and was bought from Araunah symbolises the gathering of nations for a military defeat of extraordinary significance.*

ISRAEL'S EFFECTIVE END TIME DEFENCES 4.13

Arise and thresh O "daughter of Zion" for I will make your horn [military power] iron and your cloven hooves bronze and I will grind small[*qqd*] many peoples and I will cause their finishing or spoil to be devoted to the LORD and their forces or strength to the Lord of the whole earth.

THE ROMANS AND THE PASSION OF CHRIST 5.1

Micah under his term "Now" or "at this time" continues his testimony about the latter days.

(5)AT THIS TIME [*ht*] "*this opportune time*" break in upon the enemy O daughter of troops-he made a pressing siege against us. With a rod they will smite **THE JUDGE** of Israel upon the jaw-bone. *This prophecy was literally fulfilled as recorded in Luke 22.64 and John 18.22. We read "When they had blind-folded Him they struck him on the face" and "One of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand". This prophecy cannot pass without remark that such callous treatment could be meted out to our precious LORD is despicable in the light of his divine compassionate and caring life work. Micah calls our Saviour "the Judge" as earlier he has called Him the Counsellor" and in the following chapter the "Ruler."*

CHAPTER 5

THE PRE-EXISTANCE OF CHRIST IS TAUGHT 1 (In English 5.2)

The Hebrew Scriptures include the first verse of our translation in the previous chapter which makes better sense since the warfare of Israel is the topic continued in the verse. So the fifth chapter best begins with reference to the birth of Messiah. In defence of placing the verse as we have it there is a reference to our LORD in the prophecy about the "Judge of Israel".

And You Bethlehem Ephrata are not to be the least among the thousands of Judah. From you will come for me He who is to be **RULER** in Israel. His regular goings forth (like the "risings" of the sun) have been far distant beyond the days of the age or earliest time.

THE CHURCH ALONGSIDE ISRAEL IN PROPHECY 3

Therefore he will give them until the time **the labouring woman** brings forth and the remnant of his brothers are returning or repenting on account of or over and above the sons of Israel. *One might ask what "brothers" the "woman" brings forth who are over and above the Jews. This obscure concept is speaking about the "Bride of Christ" and the concept includes the birthing of Israel's remnant of faith as children of the "woman" alongside her "Christian" sons-their brothers. It is incredible that in this prophetic book the concept of the church is taught-but in such prophetic terms that in O.T. time it would*

not have been recognisable. The giving up of the Jewish sons -but always the maintenance of a Jewish remnant-and that until the Gentiles are grafted in is taught by Paul in Romans 11.18-22. The woman is also found as descriptive of the Jewish elect in the Apocalypse 12. 1,6, 16, 17. in her later flight from persecution.

TWO FURTHER MESSIANIC TITLES OF MESSIAH 4

He will stand as **A MINISTER** and will be **SHEPHERD** in the strength of the LORD-in the splendid majesty of the name of the LORD His Eloah and they shall settle (*the reference is to Israel's latter day "settlement"*) for ...

(6)...AT THIS TIME he shall be **GREAT** to the ends of the earth. *The distinction between this "latter" time and the former appearance of the "ruler" is such as to recognise that one unique person supplies the part of David's son by His birth in Bethlehem and the Messianic role by His second advent-hence "at this time"*[ht[] Adonai Jesus Christ was known for His ministry and His shepherd care. He said "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister"(Matthew 20.28 & Mark 10.45). He also said, "I am the Good Shepherd -the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep"(John 10)

CHRIST THE PEACEMAKER OR SHILOH 5

And **THIS ONE SHALL BE PEACE** for the Assyrian shall come into his land and when he will walk into our palaces and he will cause to be raised against him **seven Shepherds** (leaders) and eight **Appointed Persons** of mankind[*then thought of as princes JS*] literally means "anointed ones" or "covenanted ones". *The numbers should the context conform to the preceding setting of the latter days are of great interest. The "Shepherds" and "Appointed Persons" are of considerable interest. If we take Israeli Presidents there have been 9 to date and there have been 13 or more Prime-Ministers so the historic leadership of Israel since 1948 is not the subject here-but specific leaders when Christ rules. He will install a group of seven pastoral figures and eight rulers]*

ISRAEL TO HAVE THE LAST WORD AS TO PERSIA AND IRAQ 6

And they shall break or crush **the land of Asshur** with the sword and **the land of Nimrod** at its "**loosing of its warrior's girdle**" [hjj tp] and He shall cause us to be delivered from the Assyrian when he comes into our land and walks or treads our borders. *We need to notice that something very akin to this occurred with the disparate groups who united to bring down the Assyrians and Nineveh. The leaders of the Medes and Persians and Elam and the Cimmerians Scythians Parthians and Seleucids and of course the Egyptians were all involved in one way or another. The Assyrians did come in the time of Manasseh -both Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal warred against Egypt and made Judah a vassal state. The latter day time frame however warrants us watching also for renewed hostilities that link Persia and Syria(with Iraq)in an end-time struggle from which **the LORD Himself** delivers Israel.*

JEWS LIVING ABROAD REFRESH NATIONS BUT LOOK ELSEWHERE 7-8

And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of great or numerous peoples like dew from the LORD and as showers on the green grass or garden vegetables. which do not wait in expectation of man or put their hope in the sons of man. *Micah predicts that the Jewish dispersion though they might "refresh" nations yet they would remain separate and look to the LORD for their hope and for a future-unpredictable as the weather but equally valuable to the nations.*

MICAH PREDICTS THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF MANY JEWS AND THEIR LATTER DAY CAPABILITY TO OUTFLANK THEIR ENEMIES 9

And the remnant of Jacob **shall live among the Gentiles** in the heart of the life of great peoples as a lion among forest animals *The law of the jungle in modern politics is satisfactorily reflected in this simile-as a young lion among the folds of sheep who when he passes tramples under foot as a potter and tears and no-one can deliver. Your hand will be lifted against your adversaries and all your enemies will be cut off. The peace and security of nations is ultimately to be shaken as Christ said by war at the centre of which are the enemies of Israel.*

MANKIND TO FORFEIT THE TRAPPINGS OF LESSER IDEALS THAN THOSE OF FERING MESSIAH 10-15

"And in that day it will be", whispers the LORD

- (1) "that *I will cause your horses to be severed* from your midst
- (2) And *I will cause your chariots to be destroyed.*
- (3) And **I will cut off the cities** of your land
- (4) And I will *pull down all your fortresses.*
- (5) And I will cause your *sorceries* to be severed
- (6) And **you will not worship still or again the work of your hands.**
- (7) And I will cause your Asherahs to be torn from your midst *-deification of happiness*
- (8) And cause *your cities to be destroyed.*
- (9) And I will create or do vengeance in anger and hot fury against *the nations that have not listened."*

CHAPTER 6

THE LATE AGES CALLED TO BE WITNESSES 1-2

Please Listen and obey what the LORD is saying. Arise Strive with the mountains and let the hills hear and obey your voice. Hear and obey you mountains and you steady or perennial foundations or assemblies of the earth [*dsj-that "decreed" or "established" or "sitting together" -that which undergirds or props up the earth*] the contention or cause of the LORD for there is a contention [*byr from "pulling one another's hair" or "rending one another's garments" the term takes on a legal significance*] of the LORD with his people and **He will have** chastened or contended with Israel. *This call on the nations is after long strife with Israel.*

O ISRAEL, LEARN FROM HISTORY 3-5

My people what have I done to you and in what way have I wearied or grieved you? [*hal-"Leah"-the term for "weariness" and the name of Jacob's first wife*] Answer me! For I caused you to come up from the land of Egypt and I caused you to be redeemed [*hdp bought for a ransom*] from the house of slaves and I sent Moses Aaron and Miriam before your face. O my people please recall what Balak king of Moab advised or decreed and what Balaam son of Beor answered him from Shittim's acacias to Gilgal that you may gain experience of the righteousnesses of the LORD.

HOW IS FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD ESTABLISHED? 6-7

With what may I anticipate or begin with or meet with the LORD? With what shall I bow down or compel the High God?

- (1) Shall I meet Him with burnt offerings?
- (2) Shall I meet him with one year old calves?
- (3) Will the LORD be pleased with **thousands** of rams?
- (4) Will He be pleased with **ten thousand rivers of oil**?
- (5) Shall I **give** my firstborn for my sin? [literally "Give for"] *The most precious possession!*
- (6) The fruit of my womb for the sin of my soul? *Micah speaks as a married man and recognises that his firstborn is also his wife's child. The matter raises a great quandary. Has he even such rights as would make this most expensive sacrifice possible? Is it remotely relevant?*

MICAH 6.8 THE BASIS OF RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD 8

He (the LORD) has taught you O Mankind what is better. **What does the LORD continue searching or requiring from you?**

(1) But (if it is) to do justice or prepare the victim -the sentence of the judge or sacrifice in the lawful manner

(2) And to love covenant faithfulness

(3) And to act humbly (or bow down) to walk with God.

This threefold obligation does not side step an offering. Jews would never deny their basis of atonement as given in the law-"it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul". The word "doing" is not to say

that our deeds replace the essential sacrifice! hC ["Do" or "Offer"] calls in one breath for works and for His work-for accepting His desired sacrifice and doing those works that He has prepared for us to do. The second obligation demands that we desire and enter a relationship of covenant with God and remain faithful in our relationship. The third seeks daily prayer and keeping to His will.

CITY SINS -FRAUD LEADING TO WEALTH 9-12

The voice of the LORD is calling to the city and enterprise or where there is deliverance security purpose [*hvy is from the radical "salvation" "help" so the wise who listen will see the name of God as men see the sun and live or rejoice.*] *it will or they will have regard to or choose or learn Your name [literally "see prophetically" or "see with a prophet's eye"]* They must listen and obey the "branch" or "sceptre" and He who appoints it. Is there still wealth or security [*again the root is hvy "security" "help" "salvation"*] in the house of the wicked -treasure houses of wickedness and the accursed thinness of the Ephah? Will I purify those with "weights" or "weighed considerations" of evil? [*lza*] and with cups or bags of fraudulent stone weights? Because her wealthy ones are full of angry violence and her residents are constantly speaking deceit. [*Piel of rbd*] and their tongues are false [*hmr like arrows fired at random missing the mark*] in their mouths.

JERUSALEM TO BE IN CONTEMPT FOR ITS CONTEMPT OF GOD 13-16

- (1) Therefore I will also cause you to be sick of your smiting and devastated on account of your sins.
- (2) You shall eat and not be satiated and an empty stomach [*j vj*] will be in your midst
- (3) And you will draw back [*qsn remove the landmark*] and not make a rescue and what you rescue I will give to the sword;
- (4) You will sow and you will not harvest;
- (5) You will tread the olive press and not anoint yourself with oil
- (6) And there will be new wine but you will not drink the wine.
- (7) For the ordinances of Omri will have been kept or observed and all the works of the house of Ahab and you walk in their counsels in order that I may deliver you to destruction and your residents to derision whistling or contempt and you shall bear the reproach scorn or winter [*prj*] of my people

CHAPTER 7

ENDEMIC SOCIAL INJUSTICE 1-3

Alas for me [literally "Howl Alas"] for I am living as the harvesters; I am like the gleaners of vintage-there is no cluster for eating of the first developed fruit that my soul craves. The covenant keeper has perished from the earth and there is no just one among mankind. They are all ambushing for blood. Every man takes his brother prey as a hunter with a net. That they might better accomplish evil by their hands the prince and the judge makes request for a recompense or bribe and the great man (he) speaks of the wish or lust of his soul and they will constantly pervert or interweave it. *Micah appears to speak of universal corruption between prince and judge and the great men. In that case he is telling us they are in cahoots. However if the Great mans desire is right and moderate the verb suggests the princes and judges may be joined in perverting it. [The verb tb[-answers to either use but **the context** when taken with Chapter 3.11 confirms that all ranks are conniving in evil.]*

PEOPLE ARE GETTING HURT-FAMILIES ARE DIVIDED 4-6

Their best is as a sharp stinging nettle, the just worse than a thorn hedge. The day of your watchman or he who lies in wait -of your visitor or examiner is coming.

(7) AT THIS TIME comes their perplexity or confusion. Do not have faith in a caring friend; do not be confident of a familiar or associate; Keep the doors of your mouth from the one who rests on your breast. For the son is impious and disgraceful towards the father; the daughter gathers people against her mother; the daughter-i n-law against her mother in law. The enemies of a man are sons or men of his own house. *The setting is reportage of the internecine time under Manasseh but prophetic of the times Christ spoke of in Luke 12 49-53 when Christ comes to send the "fire" of the Holy Spirit and the subsequent "fire" of judgment on the earth.*

IN A GRAVE SITUATION MICAH TURN TO GOD 7

But I will constantly watch in expectation for the LORD. I will cause my hope to be attached to the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.

THE NORTHERN ENEMY WILL BE HUMBLLED AT THE LAST 8-10

Do not rejoice with laughter **O MY ENEMY**; when I am falling one I rise. When I am sitting in darkness the LORD is my light. I will carry the indignation or sadness [*p[z]*] of the LORD because I have sinned against Him **UNTIL THE TIME WHEN HE STRIVES MY STRIFE AND CREATES JUSTIFICATION FOR ME. He will cause me to come forth to the light and I will see by prophecy or preaching into the house of His righteousness** And **SHE WHO IS INIMICAL** will see and shame will hide her that said to me "Where is the LORD your God?" My eyes will see into her.

(8) AT THIS TIME she will be to be trampled as clay or mud of the wide streets. *This future time has been terribly fulfilled at the fall of Jerusalem but its dregs are to be drunk in the day of Jacob's trouble spoken of in Jeremiah 30.7*

MESSIAH'S KINGDOM AND WORLDWIDE MILLENNIAL RULE 11-13

The day of the building of your walls-this is the day the ordinance will be distant or effective to far away. **IN THAT DAY** they will come to you from Assyrian and cities of fortification [*i.e. "shut cities" "cities on your borders"*] and from fortified Egypt to the River (*Euphrates?*) and from sea to sea [*i.e. "all the earth"*]and mountain to mountain [*i.e. Exiles who return from East and West will come from many lands and kingdoms*] But the land shall be headed for destruction on account of its inhabitants and the fruit of their repeated wrongdoings.

MICAH CALLS FOR THE ADVENT OF THE "SHEPHERD" 14-15

Be **SHEPHERD** to your people with Your rod [*emblem of "the sceptre of rule"*] -the flock of Your inheritance who dwell in lonely woodland in the midst of Carmel; may they pasture Bashan and Gilead as in the days of the age gone by or long ago. As in the days of your coming from the land of Egypt I will cause him to see miracles.

BIBLICAL REVELATION AND JUDGMENT HUMBLE NATIONS 16-17

The Gentile nations will see prophetically and be disappointed or confused and ashamed of all their warlike increase of strength or valiant. They will place their hand upon their mouth; their ears will be opened [*vrj* "*ploughed*"]. They will lick dust as a snake; as crawling creatures of the earth they will be in tumult or tremble [*zgr*] coming out of their cages they will be in dread [*to come*] towards the LORD our God and they will fear you [*Israel*]

MICAH'S TEACHING ON GOD'S UNIQUE COVENANT LOVE 18-20

(1)WHO IS GOD LIKE YOU -lifting the burden of iniquity

(2) And passing over transgression of the remnant of his heritage?

(3) He does not cause his anger to continue strong for ever because he delights in covenant faithfulness and love.

(4) He will turn,

(5) He will have mercy on us,

(6) He will tread under foot or disregard our iniquities

(7) And You will send or shoot all their sins into the thick darkness [*///x*] of the sea.

(8) You will give truth and faithfulness to Jacob-covenant love to Abraham which you swore by Yourself to our fathers from the days of ancient time.

This is a magnificent conclusion to the prophecy. We see the joy and pride of Micah whose name enshrines the overwhelming truth "Who is like the LORD?" writ large in this concluding postscript. If Micah 6.8 is the image God has of man this is the image man ought to have of God. Many Christians

worst the God of the Old Testament by comparison with the Christ of the New but the prophets give us good reason to discountenance this idea. "God is **unchangeable** in His being wisdom power holiness justice goodness and truth" are words from the fourth question of the Shorter Catechism. This being so God was as good and compassionate in 750 B.C. as He is in 2010 A.D. What we are apt to forget is that the O.T. covers millennia of polemathy and history and reveals much more of the judgement of God in history than the 65 or so years when the bulk of the N.T. was written. But once we add the Apocalypse and perhaps Hebrews we gain perspective. God is as sure to judge nations and evil in modern time as He did those ancient nations in the past. His patience was as great then as with the World in Noah's day(giving them 100 years for repentance) and the Amorites (giving them 400 years to eschew corruption)and Jerusalem(sending prophets for 300 plus years since the kingdom divided) and Nineveh (Calling it to Repentance and giving its children opportunity to seek God)as it was with Jerusalem in the New Testament(giving it 40 years of mercy) or with our own nation(which since the morning star of the Reformation has enjoyed 450 years of God's grace)

WHO INDEED IS LIKE THE LORD?

THE END

Bob Coffey L'shuvkha Marya
To the glory of the Lord
Aramaic Bible Companion

*Concerning Dr. Elliot Binns I have to recount a rather humorous interchange between a seminarian and Rabbi Wilson during my time at Union Seminary, Belfast. The occasion was the first Monday morning lecture and the class of theologs of which I was one was in a mood to delay beginning seriously to get our heads down. Alistair Kerr –a generally apt and capable student with a dry sense of humour piped up “Professor, how did you spend the week-end?” It was quite usual for Dr.Wilson as Principal of the college to preach at one of Northern Ireland’s many Presbyterian churches on a Sunday. Rabbi Wilson replied with a grin suppressed behind his open brief case lid suitable inscribed R.J.W. “Mr. Kerr I was looking into Binns!” Of course that came across as “I was looking into bins!” because few of us were adequately read to recognise the pun. Kerr replied “Sir, that was a strange thing for a Hebrew Professor to be engaged in!” Whereupon Professor Robbie John Wilson added with emphasis, “Gentlemen, Binns, I would have you know, is a very renowned commentator on the prophet Isaiah!” So, are we all ready to begin?”