

Synthetic Bible Studies

Containing an outline study of every book of the Bible
with suggestions for Sermons, Addresses and
Bible Expositions

By

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LESSON TWENTY-EIGHT

MICAH

There are three prophets who now form a group by themselves, Micah, Nahum and Isaiah. These all lived and prophesied at about the same time, the first of whom will be considered in this lesson.

The little known of the prophet Micah is briefly stated. From what town did he originate as gathered from chapter 1, verse 1? Calling himself a Morasthite probably indicates Moresheth, or Mareshah, as his birthplace in the southwestern part of Judah, near Gath. The time of his prophesying is shown in the same verse by the reference to the kings of Judah, as between 758 to 700 B. C. He seems to have been the writer of his own book, if we may judge from the personal allusions in 3:1, 8, and to have finally died in peace, judging by Jeremiah 26:18, 19. He is frequently referred to as a prophet, and his utterances quoted, not only in the instances above given, but in Isaiah 2:2-4, and 41:15; Ezekiel 22:27; Zephaniah 3:19; Matthew 2:5, and John 7:42.

JESUS quotes him in Matthew 10:35, 36. For further reference to his period, see the following chapter on Isaiah.

I. A Description of Judgment

The book of Micah, which contains but seven chapters, might be conveniently divided into three

parts:

Chapters 1-3 contain a description of the approaching judgment on both kingdoms - Israel and Judah.

- how do verses 1 and 5 of chapter 1 indicate that both kingdoms are under consideration?
- which of the two receives the earlier attention (vv. 6-9)?
- what towns of Judah are particularly mentioned in the conclusion of that chapter?

Please look upon the map and observe that these are all in the neighborhood of the prophet's home town, thus suggesting a reason for their specialization.

Pursuing the analysis of this division further, notice the order in which the three classes of the prophet's hearers are addressed:

- (1) He rebukes and threatens the people at large - this is in chapter 2.
- (2) After rebuking and warning the people, he addresses the princes in the same way (3:1-4).
- (3) He now addresses himself to the false prophets (3:5-8).

Unfortunately the nation or the church ruled over by unjust and unfaithful men, is usually obliged to share their punishment. This idea is brought out by what follows. The prophet recapitulates his charges against the people, the princes and the priests in verses 9-11, concluding this part of his prophecy with a further and particular announcement of the judgment about to fall on the whole nation. According to verse 11 what seems to have been the most crying and general sin of all? And yet notwithstanding their covetousness and greed, how did they show either their gross hypocrisy or gross ignorance of GOD (same verse, last part)?

It is at this point that the declaration of judgment is expressed, and in language which has been most literally fulfilled (v. 12).

II. A Vision of Hope

Chapters 4 and 5 unfold the future and happier, because holier, experience of the nation.

I ought to say just here that the first four verses of chapter 4 are quoted almost verbatim in Isaiah 2, unless we shall reverse the order and say that Micah quoted Isaiah, which may indeed be the case, though probably it is not.

At what time are these better things to come to pass according to the beginning of this chapter?

That expression "**the last** (or latter) **days**," we shall come to recognize more, and more clearly as pointing to the end of the present Christian age, which is to be followed by the millennial age. How are these better things figuratively expressed in verse 1?

It is not difficult to recognize in these figures of speech the exaltation of Jerusalem and Judah over all the nations in that day.

- but how does verse 2 show that that exaltation will not be exacting and tyrannous over the nations, but the opposite?
- what language in the verse shows beyond peradventure that the millennial age is referred to, and no period which has yet appeared in the history of the world?
- how do verses 3 and 4 strengthen this conviction?
- what expression in verse 7 almost directly states this to be the case?

In the prophet Joel we saw that prior to Israel's deliverance, and, indeed, as incident thereto, the Gentile nations of the earth will be besieging Jerusalem and desirous of seizing her, and that the Lord will interpose on her behalf. How do the closing verses of this chapter parallel that prophecy?

Addressing ourselves to chapter 5, we discover what in a greater or less degree is the common teaching of all the prophets that this deliverance, and these good times coming for Israel and Judah are connected with the person and work of the Messiah. For example, how is that fact led up to in verse 2? To be sure, these words are so quoted in Matthew 2, as to apply to the first coming of CHRIST, but that does not exclude the fact of His second coming. Indeed, His second coming may be said to be conditioned on His first coming. Moreover, all the succeeding verses in this chapter point to events which did not occur at His first coming, but will be found to be uniformly predicated of His second coming.

Let us look at some of them:

- verse 3 refers to the time when "**she which travaileth hath brought forth,**" i. e., the time when Israel shall be delivered out of her great tribulation at the end of this age.
- verse 4 speaks of the Lord as feeding His flock and being "**great unto the ends of the earth.**"
- verse 5 speaks of Him as the "peace" of Israel, "**when the Assyrians shall come into our land,**" an allusion not to the invasions of the prophet's own time but that of the latter days as is clearly seen from a comparison of verse 6.
- in verse 6, Israel is seen to be delivered from the Assyrians by the power of GOD, which was not true at the time of the invasions past, but shall only be true at the time of the invasion yet to come.

If it be objected that Assyria as a nation has passed away, the answer is either that it shall experience some kind of a revival in the future, or else it stands as a type of that Gentile power which shall rise up as the last enemy of Israel before her final deliverance into the place of power and triumph during the millennial age. If this proposition, or either of them, seems strange or unlikely to any of us just now, let us possess our souls in patience till the constant repetition of it in the prophets convinces us of its truth.

We need not pursue the analysis of these verses further, as even the cursory reading of them indicates that the period in mind is that when Israel shall have a place of power among the nations, her enemies overcome, and her own sins and idolatries forever put away.

III. A Contrast Drawn

Chapters 6 and 7 have been described as presenting a "contrast between the reasonableness,

purity and justice of the divine requirements, and the ingratitude, injustice and superstition of the people which caused their ruin."

The conclusion of the book is in the spirit of encouragement based on the unchanging truth and mercy of GOD.

The closing chapter is peculiarly affecting, presenting us with a kind of soliloquy of repentance on Israel's part.

The better element, the right-spirited ones among the people, are shown as confessing and lamenting their sinful condition in verses 1-6, but expressing the utmost confidence in GOD's returning favor (vv. 7, 8). Putting all the circumstances together, there are few verses in the whole Bible more expressive of profound and quiet hope and trust than these. It is beautiful indeed to see the spirit of humble confession and submission in verse 9, and the certainty of triumph over every foe (v. 10).

Observe particularly how the Lord Himself speaks through the prophet in verses 11-13. See the promise of supernatural interposition on Israel's behalf in that day (v. 15); and the confusion of the Gentile nations at their triumph, and their own discomfiture (vv. 16, 17). Of course, the temporal blessings thus coming upon Israel are all predicated of their return to the Lord and His forgiveness of their sins (vv. 18, 19). Nevertheless these things will all take place on the ground of the original promise to Abraham (v. 20).

~ end of Lesson 28 ~
