

Micah 5-7 • As for me, I will look to the Lord

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We're going to finish the book of Micah tonight. These chapters aren't tremendously long, but there is some really good stuff in these chapters. So let's ask the Lord to open our hearts first.

Father, we thank you and praise you for the opportunity tonight and the freedom that we have in this country to gather as we're doing tonight, and just get into the scripture and to study it. And to open our hearts to the ministry of your Holy Spirit to speak to us, to add to our understanding and to give us, Lord, application in our lives. And so we ask you, Father, to do just that.

We submit this time to you, that you would speak because, Lord, you know your people. You know what's going on in their lives, what's going on in their hearts. You know what's happening that they probably don't even want to admit to somebody else. You know what's happening in their hearts that they may not even be wanting to admit to themselves. But you are able to speak and to minister and to reveal in such a way, Lord, that brings us back to the cross. And I pray that would happen tonight.

And I thank you Lord for all those who are here. I thank you for those who are watching us live tonight. I just pray, in Jesus' name, that you would bring a blessing to each and every heart. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Micah chapter 5 begins with kind of a brief prophetic reminder that the southern kingdom of Judah is going to be humbled by a foreign army. But God has a purpose for saying this. Let's read it. He says here in verse 1, "*Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops;*" and that's how we know he's referring to the southern kingdom of Judah because that term, "*O daughter of troops*" was a common term for Jerusalem because of her numerous troops.

And he goes on to say, "*siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek.*" Now you'll notice that he even makes reference to the judge of Israel, and yet he's still talking about the southern kingdom of Judah. And so that can be a little confusing. But you need to understand that to strike someone on the cheek in that culture was a huge insult.

I mean, it was like the greatest of insults to just come and pop somebody across the cheek. And God is saying that is going to happen to the southern kingdom of Judah. Now, once again, he hasn't made this statement simply to just kind of point the finger or say this is what's coming your way. He's going to make a larger point here about this, and it has to do with Messiah, His coming and what He will do.

Because speaking of one who will endure striking and insults, notice that he goes on to say in verse 2, "*But*" and that's an important word, the word 'but' shifts our attention from the picture of a besieged Jerusalem to a small town saying, "*But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,*" and he says, "*who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,*" and that means simply too little to be noticed. There were times that Bethlehem wasn't even included in the counting of the towns of Judah, simply because it was too easy to overlook, because of its small size.

And he says, "*from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*" Now we have to stop here for a moment and really take time with this verse, because this is a great verse. It's prophetically a great verse, but it has a lot of information that is important for us too.

It's arguably one of the most well-known prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the coming of Messiah. You'll remember that when Herod was concerned about someone usurping his throne when he heard this news about this newborn king that these wise men were trying to seek out as they followed a star.

He gathered some of the teachers and people of Israel, and he wanted to know, tell me more about this. Well, they quoted Micah to him. And this is the very passage they quoted to Herod to speak of his birthplace. So this was widely accepted and understood. It acknowledges, again, as I said before, that relative insignificance of the town of Bethlehem, alongside the other larger and more seemingly important locations.

And yet God says, concerning this little, tiny, insignificant village from you, he says, shall come forth one who is to be ruler in Israel. And there are a couple things to note about this one whom Micah prophesizes concerning. You'll notice the first thing that the Lord says is that the ruler will, "*come forth for me.*"

Did you catch that? Did you see this is the Lord speaking and He says this one is going to, "*come forth for me.*" Now, that's a very interesting choice of words

when you stop and think about it. Because when we talk about the coming of Messiah, we tend to think it's all for us. This was for me. Jesus came for me.

He came to save me from my sin. He came to redeem me. It's kind of all about me. But we have to remember something about God's redemptive plan. Jesus appeared in the course of human history, first and foremost, to fulfill God's redemptive program. Okay? First and foremost, He came for God.

Jesus came to fulfill the promises. To fulfill His passion to love. For God so loved the world He gave So Jesus came. And this is what God says through Micah. He has come, He has appeared, He shall come forth for me. And this is the true and final goal of God's redemptive program. And that's the glory of God.

Once again, we tend to look at the goal of Jesus coming to earth as to save us, save me. But ultimately Jesus came to fulfill God's plan and to bring glory to God. Now, that sounds kind of vain. Remember, God doesn't sin and there's nothing evil or impure in His heart. He deserves the glory.

He deserves the honor. He deserves us to magnify His name because He sent His Son. One will *"come forth for me"*. I think that's a fascinating comment here. But the other thing this passage reveals about this one who is coming forth, you'll notice is that he *"is from of old, from ancient days."* Now, that's how the ESV puts it. If you happen to be reading from the New American Standard Bible, your Bible says that he comes forth *"From the days of eternity."* If you have a New King James Version that you're reading from tonight, your Bible says he is *"From everlasting."* So what are all these different translations trying to say? They're all saying the same thing.

They're just using different words to say it, but what they're saying or attempting to convey in the best language possible is probably what is the strongest in the Hebrew, the strongest declaration of the eternal and never-ending duration of this one who is coming right to be ruler.

And that's what they're trying to convey. The Greek language conveys an idea that is very difficult to put into English, because in English we struggle to find words to describe infinity or eternity or something that is never ending. Those are the best words we can come up with.

And so that's why you see these different translations or the way they've translated this phrase from these different Bibles that are out because there's

very few words in the English that we can even come up with to try to make sense of this whole thing.

It's basically telling us here though, in this passage, in this single passage, that the man who is coming is going to have his origin in Bethlehem. The Son of God who is coming has His origin from everlasting from the days of eternity. In other words, He has no beginning. So this is a fascinating way for Micah to begin this particular chapter to speak about this ruler who is to come.

The entire prophecy is not only fascinating, but also important in light of how this whole chapter begins. Because again, it begins with this idea of destruction. The very first verse in this chapter speaks of all these bad things that are going to happen, this destruction concerning Jerusalem.

And you might say, well, why is that significant? Well, it's significant because destruction . . . I mean, how can that be part of God's plan here? Here's the point. Remember, God made a promise to David. Remember when David wanted to build the temple for the Lord and he told Nathan about his plan, and Nathan was like, sweet, go for it.

Well then Nathan, no sooner left, but the Lord spoke to Nathan and said, yeah, it's actually not the message I wanted you to give him. So here's the message, go back and tell him. So Nathan goes back to David and he says, I have a message from the Lord. And He says, you have desired to build Me a house, but the fact of the matter is I'm going to build you a house (2 Samuel 7:11).

And what He was talking about is the enduring house that would come from David's lineage. That would eventuate in the Messiah. But keep in mind something that we started this chapter with: destruction is coming. That's what God started this whole chapter by saying, destruction.

Well, how can that be? How can you destroy this lineage? How can you do that? You promised David that from his lineage would come the Messiah. And so he begins with this destruction, but then he begins to prophesy about this ruler who's going to come forth from Bethlehem. And we're kind of wondering, well, where's he come from if there's going to be this destruction?

Because keep in mind guys, the reason destruction is coming is because David's descendants have become corrupted. Largely, they've become corrupted. I mean there were some good kings along the way, but there was a lot of corruption. And God is finally going to bring, he prophesies here, judgment upon the house of David from the standpoint of the corruption that has gone on.

And yet he reiterates, and yet from Bethlehem shall come forth for me a ruler. Where's he coming from? Well, he actually tells us in the book of Isaiah, let me put this on the screen for you:

(slide)

Isaiah 11:1 (ESV)

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

Now, this is where the Lord tells you how Messiah is going to come forth from the lineage of David even after destruction. And so the picture that he gives there in Isaiah chapter 11 is this tree that's been lopped off. And that's the destruction. But a shoot is coming out from the roots. Have you ever seen that happen? I'm sure you have. If people cut off trees because of whatever reason, it could be threatening power lines or threatening a house or whatever the situation might be. So they lop off the tree, but they leave a stump.

And if you leave that stump for very long, it's not uncommon for a shoot to come out from the stump. That's what God is saying in Isaiah. From this cutoff lineage, I'm going to bring forth a shoot and it will bear fruit. That's what he says in Isaiah. It's going to bear fruit. So this is God's way of saying after the disobedient descendants of David are removed, like branches from a diseased tree that's been lopped off at the trunk, he's saying that He's going to cause a shoot to come forth. And that is of course speaks of the coming of Messiah.

So these are wonderful passages that speak of God's redemptive plan in the midst of judgment. Let's go on in verse 3 and continue now. We're continuing to make reference to Messiah. But he says, *"³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel."* This is an interesting prophecy. Micah is saying here that Israel will be given up without any kind of a ruling king. Because after Babylon came, no more kings. No more kings.

We had, we even tried some governors and that didn't work too good. But no more kings than he's saying she's going to be given up and she is going to endure labor and ultimate birth to give birth to well, we know to a king, right? That ultimately will rule forever and ever.

Now it goes on here in verse 4 to say, and now we're moving. This is one of those interesting prophecies. We're going to move into the distant future, okay? In verse 4. *"⁴And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the*

LORD, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure," (well, that hasn't happened completely yet) *"for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. ⁵And he shall be their peace."* Well, this is great. So we're told here that he's going to shepherd the flock of Israel to the degree that his leadership, his rulership, will be known to the very ends of the earth. And it says that at that time, Israel will dwell securely.

And again, that's something that hasn't happened yet. They dwell in the land, thankfully, now. They don't dwell securely, but they will dwell securely because He will be their peace in that coming day. We're talking about the millennial kingdom. We're talking about that 1000-year period after the tribulation when Jesus Christ reigns on the earth.

Now verse 5 goes on to say, *"When the Assyrian"* now it's going to use that term Assyrian. Remember, the Assyrian army is the one that conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, but we're really talking about the southern kingdom. We're really talking about Jerusalem. But we're talking about it kind of out of time.

So he's using Assyrian here to just make reference to enemies. It's kind of going to be used as a general term here. *"When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men; ⁶they shall shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod at its entrances; and he shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he comes into our land and treads within our border."*

I personally think here in verses 5 and 6, you have kind of a dual prophecy going on because you have something of an understanding that Israel is one day going to rule their enemies, which again, Assyria is referred to here as. And that will happen again during the millennial kingdom. But he's also saying that Assyria is going to come to the borders of the land, and they're going to be turned away. And God is going to deliver them from the Assyrians.

Well, that actually happened like some 20 years after Israel fell to the Assyrians. The Assyrian army came against Judah and they conquered their outlying cities and they got all the way to Jerusalem. And started shouting things over the wall. You remember this, you can read about it during the time of Hezekiah. And Hezekiah went before the Lord and cried out and the Lord delivered them (2 Kings 19:14-37). And that's what it says here. So we could very easily have here this law of double reference going in verses 5 and 6.

Verse 7, *"Then the remnant of Jacob"* notice that it's the remnant. That means it's the leftover portion of Jacob, *"shall be in the midst of many peoples like dew*

from the LORD, like showers on the grass, which delay not for a man nor wait for the children of man. ⁸And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of sheep, which, when it goes through, treads down and tears in pieces, and there's none to deliver. ⁹Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries, and all your enemies shall be cut off." And again, this is a reference to the millennial kingdom when Israel will be over their enemies at that time.

And the Lord says in verse 10:

¹⁰*And in that day, declares the LORD,
I will cut off your horses from among you
and will destroy your chariots;
¹¹and I will cut off the cities of your land
and throw down all your strongholds;
¹²and I will cut off sorceries from your hand,
and you shall have no more tellers of fortunes;
¹³and I will cut off your carved images
and your pillars from among you,
and you shall bow down no more
to the work of your hands;
¹⁴and I will root out your Asherah images from among you
and destroy your cities.
¹⁵And in anger and wrath I will execute vengeance
on the nations that did not obey." (ESV)*

You can see there's 2 things going on here. God says, and in that day, I'm going to cleanse Israel. Because remember, when Jesus comes back at the end of the great tribulation, Israel is still in unbelief. They're a nation of unbelief. However, Paul tells us they will turn to the Lord when He returns as a nation in a collective turning to the Lord (Romans 11:26).

And there will be a cleansing that will take place at that time. And that's what we're reading about in these verses when he says, you're going to be putting away all of these things. You're going to be putting away your implements of war, you're going to be putting away your carved images and all the things that are other than worshiping the Lord. And God says, and *"I will execute vengeance on the nations that did not obey."* So you can see these 2 things that the Lord is saying He will do.

Chapter 6. Now, chapter 6 speaks of the indictment of the Lord against His people when He confronts them with their actions. But what's particularly interesting about this chapter is that the Lord calls them to account for their actions by saying, what have I done to lead you to this and this? That's kind of an interesting argument. So it goes like this:

*"¹Hear what the LORD says:
Arise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.
²Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the LORD,
and you enduring foundations of the earth,
for the LORD has an indictment against his people,
and he will contend with Israel.
³"O my people, what have I done to you?
How have I wearied you? Answer me!
⁴For I brought you up from the land of Egypt
and redeemed you from the house of slavery,
and I sent before you Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam." (ESV)*

All from one family, by the way, two brothers and a sister. So He's beginning to ask these questions, what have I done that has caused you to go off the rails so badly? What did I do? I delivered you from your bondage in Egypt. I brought you out of slavery. I redeemed you, and I gave you leaders, people who you could look up to and so forth.

And then He begins to call to their remembrance. Notice here in verse 5, *"⁵O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the Lord."* Calling to their remembrance the actions of Balak.

Remember the king of Moab who was frightened? Scared of the masses of Israel as they were passing near his land on their way to the promised land, and he was very much afraid of the people of Israel. And so he hired a spiritist by the name of Balaam to curse his people. And so, Balak promised him a bunch of money, and you probably remember the story (Numbers 22-24).

And they eventually got up onto a high hill overlooking the valley where the whole nation of Israel was encamped before they came into the land. And Balak said, all right, go for it. I want you to put a curse on them. And out of Balaam's

mouth comes some of the most amazing blessings about God's view of Israel that you will ever read in the Bible.

And of course, King Balak was pretty upset about this. He said, hey man, wait a minute here. I paid you to curse these people and so let's go to another hill and we'll go get it from another vantage point. And maybe that'll kind of give you the right little tweak, and you can curse them from there.

Same thing happens, blesses them and the blessing is just amazing. If you go back and read those, it's just some of the most beautiful It's how God sees His people and that's what's beautiful about it. And He's calling them to remembrance of these things. And He's basically saying, did I not put words of blessing in Balaam's mouth instead of cursing? Did I not deliver you from the anger, and so forth, of these men?

Verse 6, he goes on and says, *"With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high?"* Now this is Micah speaking. *"Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"* All of these are rhetorical questions that Micah is using to underscore the fact that God was not looking for payment related to their sin.

Now, he's not undermining the sacrificial system that was given that their sins might be atoned for, but the sacrificial system was meant to draw them to the mercy of God. It was never to bring them to a place of believing that, 'oh, God likes dead animals and the blood of goats and bulls and rams. That's what God, oh, that's what He wants. So let's kill a bunch of them and let's pour out a whole bunch of blood. And He'll love that.' And that's the point.

That's how the people began to think. This thing became religiosity to them rather than understanding the symbolism, understanding the idea behind it. That God is a God of mercy, who longs to forgive. He's teaching us the idea of a substitutionary sacrifice, a blood sacrifice. Which of course points to His own son who is to come, who will be the perfect and final sacrifice. Because the blood of and the death of goats and bulls and rams and sheep and all those things, they can't take away sin.

It just temporarily atoned, right? But it didn't pay. The price still had to be paid. And so God is saying to His people here through Micah, I'm not looking for payment. You can't possibly pay me. And that's why Micah says, should I give my son? Of course, he's not advocating human sacrifice at all. He's simply

saying, is there a payment that I can make? And the answer is no. There's no payment that you can give for your sins.

So what did the Lord want from them? If He doesn't want all these animal sacrifices and all these other things, what does the Lord want? Verse 8, *"⁸He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice,"* that means to uphold, support justice *"and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"*

That's what God wants. That's what He's looking for. That's not religion. That's relationship. That's what spells the difference. God isn't looking for your religious actions or activities. He wants your heart. And so when he makes reference to justice, kindness, and humility, he's talking about your heart because those things come from the heart.

God says, I want your heart. This is a common sort of a thing. People ask me all the time, and they word it in many different ways, but if I do this, what's God going to think about that? And people keep bringing it down to actions. They keep bringing it down to behavior. Behavior is a symptom of the heart and we forget that. And people keep asking, is this behavior wrong? Is this a sin if I do this or does God want me to do that? And I keep having to come back and say, God wants your heart. He wants you. Stop talking about actions because don't you understand, people. One man's action could be a sin and another man's same action could not.

That messes with people's minds when I tell them that. Is this wrong to do this? And I'm like, maybe. Depends on your heart. It depends on your heart whether something is literally wrong, sometimes. Because there are some gray areas in scripture, and that's why people ask. But they want to make actions the bad thing. No, the heart is the bad thing. That's the thing we forget.

And so that's what He's saying here. I want you to do justice. I want you to love doing right by people. I want you to care about lovingkindness, which is a steadfast love. And I want you to be humble as you walk with me. I want you to be humble.

Look at verse 9, interesting verse. He says, *"⁹The voice of the LORD cries to the city – and it is sound wisdom to fear your name: "Hear of the rod and of him who appointed it!"* Or as the NIV says, *"Heed the rod and the One who appointed it."* Because the rod is God's spanking spoon. It's His instrument of discipline. And so He is saying, heed this thing, we need to heed the rod of discipline.

Here's what the Lord says. Verse 10, *"¹⁰Can I forget any longer the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is accursed?"* That's a hard thing to understand in our English language, the scant measure. The way they did business back then was they would have weights and measures.

And so if you were going to buy something from someone, you would measure out or weigh out the purchase price. And it could be different sorts of things that you're weighing, but the scant measure essentially is referring to the corrupted measure. And He's actually going to refer to that more in the next verse. But He's saying, can I forget the fact that you're constantly cheating people? Can I just overlook that forever?

Notice He repeats this condemnation in verse 11. He says, *"¹¹Shall I acquit the man with wicked scales and with a bag of deceitful weights? ¹²Your rich men are full of violence; your inhabitants speak lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. ¹³Therefore I strike you with a grievous blow, making you desolate because of your sins. ¹⁴You shall eat, but not be satisfied, and there shall be hunger within you; you shall put away, but not preserve, and what you preserve I will give to the sword. ¹⁵You shall sow,"* (which means to plant) *"but not reap;"* in other words, you will not harvest what you plant *"you shall tread olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil; you shall tread grapes, but not drink wine. ¹⁶For you have kept the statutes of Omri, and all the works of the house of Ahab;"* and these are two particularly wicked kings, Omri being the father, Ahab being the son, and they produced a great deal of wickedness in Israel, which made its way through both kingdoms. And He says, *"and you have walked in their counsels, that I may make you a desolation, and your inhabitants a hissing; so you shall bear the scorn of my people."*

All right, chapter 7. This is a great chapter. It begins by saying, *"⁷Woe is me! For I have become as when the summer fruit has been gathered, as when the grapes have been gleaned; there is no cluster to eat, no first-ripe fig that my soul desires."* And here's what he means by that. *"¹²The godly has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among mankind; they all lie in wait for blood, and each hunts the other with a net."* So there's just huge corruption.

"¹³Their hands are on what is evil, to do it well; the prince and the judge ask for a bribe, and the great man" (the great man refers to the powerful man, one who's powerful in their culture) "utters the evil desire of his soul; thus they weave it together." In other words, they do their evil things, one with another.

Look at this next statement. He says, *"⁴The best of them is like a brier, the most upright of them a thorn hedge."* Here in eastern Oregon, if we were making a statement like this, we would say the most upright man is like a puncture vine, right? And that one makes sense to us. Because we know just how maddening and puncture vines can be.

He says here in the middle of verse 4, *"The day of your watchmen, of your punishment, has come; now their confusion is at hand."* And look at the degree to which it has infiltrated the people. He says, *"⁵Put no trust in a neighbor; have no confidence in a friend; guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your arms;"* your wife. Why? *"⁶for the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house."*

You know a society is in trouble when family connections break down to the point where they now are your enemy. God created family to be one of the strongest, most enduring connections of support and kindness and mercy and grace. We should be showing those things to our family members and of course within the family of God.

It's interesting, when over the years as we've done benevolence. And what I mean by that is when people come to us and ask for support, and I'm not talking about people in the church, I'm talking about people who come from outside and they need help. They need a place to live, or they need something, just something.

And we always, we would always ask, well, do you have any family in the area? And many times they do, but they're completely and totally estranged from their family members. "Yeah. Well, I got a mother that lives over in Payette, but she won't talk to me. And I have a brother, and we haven't spoken in 20 years. My sister has a restraining order against me." Once again, you know when society is breaking down when the family breaks down. We as believers need to show something else. We need to show something different, not just for people who are our blood relatives. But for our people to whom we are bound by the blood of Jesus Christ, the family of God.

Verse 7 goes on to say, *"⁷But as for me, I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me."* Now, listen. Did you hear what he said there in that verse? If there is one redeeming aspect to even having your family turn against you. And again, that's a very poor sign culturally, but if there is one redeeming aspect to it, it forces a person to ultimately rely on the Lord.

I mean, when you have nobody else to talk to, nobody else to turn to, nobody else to run to, God will be there. God will be there. And that's why Micah writes, *"But as for me,"* all these other things are going on within the family unit that is broken down to the point of ultimate dysfunction. *"But as for me, I will look to the LORD;"* and did you notice those 3 things he says, and they're all very interesting.

First, they're actions. First *"I will look to the LORD"*. Secondly, *"I will wait for the God of my salvation"*. In other words, wait for His deliverance. And then he says at the very end, in the language of faith, *"my God will hear me."* Notice there's no question. There's no doubt. I will turn to the Lord. I will wait for God and He will hear me.

I love that. I love whenever the Bible gives us the language of faith, because that's the language we ought to be speaking on a regular basis. That should be our language. When things befall us, when the family falls apart, when life falls apart, I will trust in the Lord with all of my heart. And He will support me.

Verse 8 says, *"Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD because I have sinned against him, until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon his vindication."*

This is not only the voice of Micah, this is the voice of the godly remnant of God's people. And their voice is an interesting one, in that it expresses faith in the Lord. But you'll notice it also acknowledges sin. Did you catch that? He says in verse 9, *"I will bear the indignation of the LORD because I have sinned"*. He's not talking about judgment under death. He's talking about discipline.

If there is sin in your life, God's going to discipline you. But He's going to do it because He loves you. And the Godly remnant says, I will bear it. Because He will raise me up again. He will bring me out into the light. That's a declaration of faith, even in the midst of the disciplinary action of the Lord.

Verse 10, *"Then my enemy" who thought I was down for the count "will see, and shame will cover her who said to me, "Where is the LORD your God?" My eyes will look upon her; now she will be trampled down like the mire of the streets. A day for the building of your walls! In that day the boundary shall be far extended."* In other words, God is going to enlarge your territory. *"In that day they will come to you, from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt to the River,"* and look at this *"from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain."*

¹³But the earth will be desolate because of its inhabitants, for the fruit of their deeds."

Again, this is referring to the millennial kingdom, when the nations of the earth that are left after the great tribulation and after the battle of Armageddon, there will still be people left on the earth. We know that. And they will be mortal and they will live and die during the millennial kingdom.

Now as the church, we will have already received our resurrection bodies. But there will be people who will have survived the tribulation and will have survived the battle. They probably weren't involved in the battle of Armageddon, but they will stream to Israel. Because they know that there's healing and there's wisdom and the word of the Lord is going to be there. And they're going to want to talk to Jesus.

But it says, what are they going to leave behind? They're going to leave behind a desolate world. So the beginning of the millennial kingdom is going to be kind of rough from the standpoint that the earth has been made desolate because of the actions of mankind.

And yet during that 1000-year period, there's going to be a restoration of the earth and an abundance coming forth of the earth and great blessing. So the millennial kingdom is going to be a 1000 year period of rebuilding, rebuilding society, rebuilding culture, rebuilding the earth.

It's kind of interesting, isn't it, when you think of it that way, because then at the end of the millennial kingdom, He's going to get rid of it and start over again. Yeah. It's going to be a new heaven and a new Earth after that time.

All right. Verse 14:

*¹⁴Shepherd your people with your staff,
the flock of your inheritance,
who dwell alone in a forest
in the midst of a garden land;
let them graze in Bashan and Gilead
as in the days of old.
¹⁵As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt,
I will show them marvelous things." (ESV)*

The Lord says during that millennial kingdom, it's just going to be marvelous. I like that word.

"¹⁶The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might;" in other words, the strength that they once reveled in, we see it today, which is nuclear armaments and being a nuclear nation or whatever. It says they're going to be ashamed of those things at that time, *"they shall lay their hands on their mouths; their ears shall be deaf; ¹⁷they shall lick the dust like a serpent, like the crawling things of the earth; they shall come trembling out of their strongholds; they shall turn in dread to the LORD our God,"* did you catch that?

They are going to turn to the Lord, but it's going to be in dread. But they are going to turn. The people of the earth at the beginning of the millennial kingdom who survive, they will turn to the Lord. It will be in dread of Him, but they will turn to Him and they're also going to fear Israel.

That's what he says at the end of that verse 17, *"and they shall be in fear of you."* And that's something that is spoken many times throughout the course of the Old Testament. That the nations who gather during the millennial kingdom will come and they'll gather around the people of Israel in ways that, it's like, you guys are God's people.

You'll notice it doesn't say anything about where the church is going to be there. And some of you might be wondering, why isn't he talking about the church. Because the church is invisible. In the Old Testament, there's no reference to the church. The prophets didn't see, couldn't see the church.

Verse 18, let's finish out the chapter. *"¹⁸Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever,"* and I love this next part *"because he delights in steadfast love."* Honestly, most of the English translations render this 'He delights to show mercy,' and I really like that a little better. The ESV is kind of unique in it's rendering of steadfast love there. God delights to show mercy.

I use that a lot with people, particularly people who wonder if they could be forgiven. I get that quite often. They'll tell me some of the things they've done or sometimes they won't go into detail. They'll just say, I've done rotten things in my life. Can God forgive me? And I come back and say, well, thankfully our God delights to show mercy.

I love this too. In verse 19, it says, *"¹⁹He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depth of the sea."* And, as Corrie ten Boom used to say, and God posts a no fishing sign. That was her way of saying, don't go back and revisit the past. You've been forgiven. Don't go back there. Don't go back there. Don't sit and ponder your

sin. Do you know that's the enemy's playground? The enemy wants to get you to ponder your sin.

He wants to get you to revisit and rehearse your mistakes. Don't go there. If you've come to the Lord and you've said, 'Father, forgive me in the name of Jesus, cleanse me of every sin and iniquity,' then believe He did that according to His promise in 1 John 1:9. And don't go back there. Do not revisit the sin of the past. Keep your eyes on the Savior, not the sin.

Final verse 20, *"²⁰You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old."* And that last verse simply means you're going to keep your promise. Every promise you've ever made will be kept. Amen.

Let's pray. Lord very very encouraging words here as we finish out our study of the book of Micah. First of all, Lord, we saw in this section of chapters where this raising up of the ruler who had come from Bethlehem was first and foremost for you to fulfill your redemptive plan and to bring glory to your name. And then for us. To redeem us from sin, to cleanse us from the curse of our iniquity and to bring us into the family of God. We are so thankful, Lord, for your plan of redemption.

We're so thankful, Lord, that you have this whole thing planned out to the very end and our hearts long for the coming of Jesus again. As the Spirit and the Bride say, come Lord Jesus. We thank you for these wonderful reminders. Fill our hearts with knowledge and insight that we might walk with you with a whole heart. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.