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THE BOOK OF MICAH: OUR WORLD TODAY

There are many prophecies in the Bible about the end of this present age and the time when Jesus Christ will start to rule over the whole Earth, at the start of the millennium. For example, the Apostle Paul has given us a general picture regarding what the world will be like "in the last days" in 2 Timothy 3:1-5. Paul describes a society that is totally selfish, covetous, violent, ruthless, totally immoral, filled with hypocritical lies and deceit, and extremely hateful towards anyone who seeks to sincerely apply the laws of the Almighty Creator God in his or her own life. And that sounds very much like **our world today**.

That exact same type of society is also described in the Old Testament in many different places, including by the Prophet Micah. Micah's ministry covered the reigns of three kings of the House of Judah: Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah (Micah 1:1). This means that Micah's ministry went from somewhere in the 740s B.C. to around the 690s B.C. This covered the period when the House of Israel to the north of the House of Judah went into national captivity to the Assyrians.

Micah was preaching during very dangerous times for the people of Israel. That national captivity for the people in the north, which Micah witnessed firsthand, was a type of the yet future great tribulation for the people of Israel at the end of this present age.

Let's examine the picture of human society that God presents to us through the Prophet Micah. We'll start in chapter 2.

A TOTALLY SELFISH SOCIETY

Woe to **them that devise iniquity**, and work evil upon their beds! When the morning is light, **they practice it**, because it is in the power of their hand. (Micah 2:1)

This is the picture of a very selfish society, where people are always focused on **ways to make more money**. And once they have thought up some new scheme, people ruthlessly implement their selfish ideas. This is spelled out in the next verse.

And **they covet fields, and take them by violence**; and houses, and take *them* away: so **they oppress a man and his house**, even a man and his heritage. (Micah 2:2)

This is a picture of greed and covetousness. It is a focus on a desire to constantly increase personal wealth, and also increase power over other people, with a total disregard for the suffering their covetous ways will bring to large numbers of people (i.e. in this way they oppress people).

A key element in this process is that such increases in personal riches are **not the result of the creation of new wealth**. Oh no, in our world today in very many cases they don't create any new wealth, which would require them to produce new value and new goods.

No, they increase their personal riches by taking wealth away from other people. **They re-distribute the existing wealth** (taxation, levies, fines, penalties, commissions, exorbitant prices charged by sellers, access to look at things on the internet, etc.) in such a way that they themselves end up with more, while

other people end up with less. In other words, at the expense of other people they want to have more without actually producing anything tangible.

For example, many of the billionaires today don't actually produce anything concrete. Amazon doesn't produce any goods. Amazon is simply the go-between for the people who own or produce goods, and the people who want to buy those goods. Amazon simply facilitates the sale of goods that other people have produced. But Amazon itself doesn't actually produce anything tangible. Yet the founder of Amazon is the richest man in the world.

Facebook and Twitter don't produce anything tangible with a real value at all; they simply facilitate the exchange of thoughts, feelings and ideas between other people. Yet the owners of these companies are billionaires.

The richest people in the past were those who produced tangible goods like cars, furniture, food items, crude oil and gasoline, electric power, houses, tools, machines and appliances, raw minerals, books and magazines, etc. In this way they produced new wealth. They actually produced things that people could take home and possess.

But the richest people today in many cases don't produce anything tangible at all! They don't produce anything that people can take home and possess. Instead, the richest people today produce entertainment that amuses us for a while. They take a percentage from the sale of goods that other people have produced. They provide credit (e.g. credit card companies and banks) for other people to purchase things that still other people have produced. They enable other people to interact on social media. They get advertising revenue from the goods that other people want to sell. They get commissions from the work that other people have performed. But the richest companies in the world in many cases haven't actually produced "new wealth" ... they haven't produced anything that people can eat or take home and possess and use in their homes. Our world is focused on always making more money. Greed and covetousness are the dominant characteristics of our age.

And when we look at the Book of Micah, it looks very much like Micah was describing our 21st century world of greed and covetousness. But God hates covetousness, because covetousness is anti-God. And so God pronounced a penalty for all of Israelite society.

Therefore thus says the LORD; Behold, **against this family do I devise an evil**, from which you shall not remove your necks; neither shall you go haughtily: for this time *is* evil. (Micah 2:3)

The "evils" which God had planned against "the family" of Israel back then were the respective national captivities, first for the House of Israel, and then later for the House of Judah. In the end-time fulfillment that "evil" will be what we refer to as "the great tribulation". It will be a penalty for sins, specifically for idolatry and greed and covetousness. This "evil" will entail us on a national level losing all the wealth we have amassed. In the words of Micah 2:4, "**we will be utterly spoiled**", losing everything we have.

God then continued to say:

Therefore **you shall have none** that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the LORD. (Micah 2:5)

This is a way of saying that these greedy people, the leaders in various areas of life, will lose their inheritance in Israel. This will be achieved because these specific individuals shall not have any descendants in the millennium (i.e. "they shall have none" to stake any claims). And even in our present world today there have been **many super-rich families** that **have simply died out** soon after the

original wealth-accumulator's death. This is a fairly common God-imposed penalty.

Verse 6 tells us that people in general will not listen to warnings from true ministers of God, because **they hate being reproached** for their evil ways of living. But their reproach, their "shame", will come and it will not be taken away.

Verse 7 tells us that God **could** help the people of Israel with all troubles. God will always bless obedience to His laws, and He will likewise always punish all disobedience. It is a matter of cause and effect. If we as nations are being blessed by God, it means that at least to some degree people respect God's laws and live by God's laws. But if we as nations are cursed, it means that **we don't make any effort to live by the laws of God**, that we treat God's laws with disdain and contempt.

Notice verse 8:

Even **of late** my people is risen up as an enemy: you pull off the robe with the garment from them that pass by securely as men averse from war (i.e. returning from war). (Micah 2:8)

In ancient times victorious soldiers returning from war would often plunder greedily and indiscriminately the people who had been defeated. This is another reference to greed and covetousness, shamelessly taking advantage of helpless people. Notice the introduction of a time element into this scenario with the expression "of late". It hasn't always been that way, but "**of late**" **people have become far more greedy**.

The next verse continues this description of greed.

The women of My people have you cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have you taken away My glory for ever. (Micah 2:9)

This is a society that takes advantage of helpless women, charging exorbitant prices for whatever services are rendered, and cheating helpless women out of their wealth. **It is always about money**, and how to take it away from other people, especially from those who are weak and helpless.

This deviously obtained wealth is "polluted", and therefore it will lead to a very grievous destruction (verse 10). This destruction is another reference to the great tribulation that will come upon the people of Israel.

God then continued to say:

If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, *saying*, **I will prophesy unto you of wine and of strong drink**; he shall even be the prophet of this people. (Micah 2:11)

This is a society that loves false prophets, those that undermine, attack and criticize the ways of God. The religious leaders whom people follow are people who **deliberately lie** and promote heretical teachings, permissive teachings that people really want to hear. And we've had ministers like that in God's Church, **men who deliberately introduced heresies** to the people of God. This is a reference to the same time to which the Apostle Paul referred in 2 Timothy 4:3.

For the time will come when **they will not endure sound doctrine**; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; (2 Timothy 4:3)

The expression "itching ears" refers to: tell me what I want to hear, tell me lies, sweet little lies. It is telling us that **people in the Church of God** "will not endure sound doctrine". And that has also

happened already. In the past 30-40 years many people have walked away from many biblically correct teachings.

Anyway, so Israel will go into the time of the great tribulation. And afterwards Jesus Christ will gather the remnant of Israel, that will survive into the millennium, like a shepherd gathers his sheep into a sheepfold (Micah 2:12). In other words, Jesus Christ will gather the remnant of Israel and then nurture them **very carefully**, so they can once again grow and develop into large and prosperous nations. That will be during the millennium, the time when Jesus Christ, the Eternal, will be their King (Micah 2:13).

Having shown us the ultimate outcome under Jesus Christ's rule during the millennium, the account then again reverts to a discussion of the **evil leaders** in Israelite society leading up to the time of the great tribulation.

CHAPTER 3

And I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and you princes of the house of Israel; *Is it* not for you to know judgment? (Micah 3:1)

The "heads" and the "princes" in our society today are the leaders not only in politics, but also in commerce and in industry and in the information media and in entertainment and in internet marketing, etc. **Collectively they are responsible for how society is regulated.** All of them really should know what is good and what is the right thing to do. They should know "right judgment".

But **they knowingly reject the right way** of doing things!

So **judgment in our world today is not fair.** They deliberately promote what is evil and what is wrong. They viciously attack all who oppose their evil ways. Those evil ways are destroying the nations of Israel. These wicked "heads and princes" do everything they can to promote the total breakdown of law and order (e.g. civic leaders who work to eliminate the police, and who at the same time let criminals go free, leaders who actively oppose existing laws, etc.). And they actively **attack those who are peaceful** and law-abiding.

Who **hate the good**, and love the evil; who **pluck off their skin** from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; (i.e. the skin and the flesh of those who are basically "good"). (Micah 3:2)

They are vicious in their attacks on the good, willing to destroy the character, lives and reputations of any people who oppose them. They threaten and persecute all who oppose their perverse ways and opinions. Those who oppose them are accused of being "racists". They don't tolerate the truth in any area of life. And they endlessly spread lies.

We are living right now in the fulfillment of Micah 3:2. These things are happening before our eyes, while we watch helplessly how the nation is being destroyed, very likely in preparation for the great tribulation. The good are persecuted, and the evil are praised, and terrorists are looked upon as heroes. That is the picture Micah 3:2 presents to us.

We are living in very dangerous times!

Verse 3 continues the description of the powerful and the wealthy in our world. They love making rules for other people to live by, while exempting themselves from their own rules.

Who also eat the flesh of My people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and **chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron.** (Micah 3:3)

This is a vivid picture of ruthless greed and covetousness. They can never have enough. It is a picture of the rich and powerful **callously destroying people's lives**. They know full well that they are destroying the lives of ordinary people, but they couldn't care less who ends up suffering. And whenever on rare occasions they themselves happen to end up suffering, having to pay for their own transgressions, then **their self-pity knows no limits**. And in those situations they very readily and totally hypocritically claim to be the victims of some evil plot. They have a totally perverse frame of mind.

But **that's our world today**, and that's the world which the Prophet Micah describes. And when people in general are suffering, then they cry out to God for help. But ...

He will not hear them: He will even hide His face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings. (Micah 3:4)

God will not help Israel against her enemies, or against **the evil leaders within Israelite society**. And when the great tribulation starts for Israel, then God will not listen to pleas for help. (For the record, I have no idea when that will be.)

In this context God then addresses specifically the **religious leaders** amongst the people of Israel.

Thus says the LORD concerning **the prophets that make My people err**, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that puts not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him. (Micah 3:5)

Here God tells us that the false evil religious leaders do **four things**:

- 1) They actually cause people to err. They do this by encouraging people to sin, and by promoting heretical teachings.
- 2) They "bite" people, meaning that they aggressively attack people who disagree with them.
- 3) They cry "Peace", meaning that they have a facade of piousness and sanctity. For that matter, they may even get a "Nobel Peace Prize" for their supposed efforts towards peace. But it is nothing more than a hypocritical facade.
- 4) They prepare war on those who oppose them, those who don't give them the things they demand. They are always looking for more money, and they expect other people to pay their bills. And they pressure the rich to support them.

These religious leaders described in verse 5 are totally selfish in their ways. They don't really care for the people they supposedly "serve". So in the next verse God tells us what will happen to those religious leaders.

Therefore night *shall be* unto you, that **you shall not have a vision**; and it shall be dark unto you, that you shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. (Micah 3:6)

When the great tribulation starts these religious leaders will simply not understand what is happening. They will be clueless. And they certainly will not understand **why** these things will happen. They will not be a help to anyone, because they themselves are an active part of the evil, greedy, covetous world in which we today live.

Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yes, they shall all cover their lips; for *there is no answer from God.* (Micah 3:7)

So **during the great tribulation** religious leaders will have no answers. They have no understanding. In this context the Prophet Micah felt emotionally stirred up to present a warning message to the people of Israel.

But truly I am full of **power** by the spirit of the LORD, and of **judgment**, and of **might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression**, and to Israel his sin. (Micah 3:8)

Micah felt compelled to spell out the real causes for these national calamities, causes which all the other religious leaders of his day didn't really understand. So now Micah addresses his warning once again to **the leaders in society**.

Hear this, I pray you, you heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that **abhor judgment, and pervert all equity.** (Micah 3:9)

These are the leaders who pervert what is right. They hate godly standards and godly judgment. They are partial in their judgments, applying specific penalties for breaking certain specific laws to their personal enemies but not to their friends. Verse 9 is happening right here and right now. We see **the perversion of justice** on an almost daily basis.

In verse 11 Micah elaborated further.

The heads thereof **judge for reward**, and the priests thereof **teach for hire**, and the prophets thereof **divine for money**: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, *Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.* (Micah 3:11)

The greed and covetousness are brazenly open. They all want money. The secular leaders expect bribes. The politicians expect bribes for favorable decisions, and the religious leaders will for a fee tell people what they want to hear. That's our world today.

This perverse state of affairs will be punished by God with total destruction.

Therefore shall Zion **for your sake** be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest. (Micah 3:12)

Back then the penalty God imposed was the total destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Over 600 years later Jerusalem was once again destroyed, this time by the Roman armies. And in the yet future destruction of Jerusalem at Jesus Christ's coming the Mount of Olives will be divided by a huge earthquake (Zechariah 14:4), and Jerusalem will be destroyed.

CHAPTER 4

But **in the last days** it shall come to pass, *that* the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and **people shall flow unto it.** (Micah 4:1)

In the Bible we have two similar expressions, which people sometimes confuse. We have the expression "**in the last days**", which is a more general expression that can apply to different periods of time. And

we have the expression "**the time of the end**", which refers specifically to the three-and-a-half year period just before Jesus Christ's second coming.

Both of these expressions are thoroughly discussed in my November 2016 article "This Is Not Yet 'The Time Of The End'". Here in verse 1 this is the more general expression that is used to refer to both, events before Christ's return, and also to events after Christ's return.

The rule of Jesus Christ will replace all these human rulers and leaders. Verse 1 refers to the establishment of the Government of God over this whole planet Earth. And then many nations will readily submit to the rule of Jesus Christ.

And **many nations** shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and **we will walk in His paths**: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (Micah 4:2)

At His return Jesus Christ will have dealt with all the rebellious people on Earth, both Israelites and non-Israelites.

And **He shall judge** among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and **they shall beat** their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, **neither** shall they **learn war** any more. (Micah 4:3)

"Judging many nations" takes place in the period leading up to Jesus Christ setting up the Government of God in Jerusalem. The nations will be judged in the time of the seven last Trumpets and the seven last Plagues.

"Beating their weapons into farming tools" takes place after Jesus Christ has started to rule this whole Earth. "War" is something that is learned, and Satan is the teacher. **War is an expression of greed and lust and coveting** (see James 4:1-2), wanting something that another nation lays claim to. And warfare will no longer be taught in any nation.

The absence of all war will then open the way to real contentment.

But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and **none shall make them afraid**: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken *it*. (Micah 4:4)

This is a picture of the total absence of covetousness, a picture of contentment and satisfaction. There will be peace and security when Jesus Christ rules the world.

For **all people** will walk every one in the name of **his God** (his "elohim"), and **we** will walk in the name of the LORD **our God** (our "elohim") for ever and ever. (Micah 4:5)

This is a reference to the millennium, when Jesus Christ will have "144,000 Elohim" assisting Him in ruling this Earth. Some of those 144,000 Elohim will be kings over whole nations, while others will be rulers (or "kings") over a number of cities. All of the 144,000 in the first resurrection are designated to be "kings and priests" (see Revelation 5:10).

Here in Micah 4:5 we see a contrast between "**we**" and "**all people**". But this verse is also a picture of peace and harmony. Here "we" refers to Israelites, and "all people" refers to all the non-Israelite nations in the millennium. What this verse is showing is that all of the 144,000 Elohim will be administering the laws of God in their respective areas of responsibility. Notice that both groups will "walk" in the laws of God.

When it says that everyone from all nations will walk in the name of "his" Elohim, this is a reference to the Elohim from amongst the 144,000, who will be the king over that person's particular nation or city. This means that all people will listen to the instructions they will receive from the Elohim who will be the God-appointed King over them.

This verse presents a picture of harmony, not one of competition or confrontation. The Elohim in both expressions in this verse are teaching the same laws and the same will of Jesus Christ during the millennium. **This verse is showing the 144,000 kings and priests of Revelation 5:10 fulfilling the responsibilities they will have been given.** This verse shows people during the millennium from all nations willingly submitting their lives to God's rule.

Micah 4:6-7 shows Jesus Christ leading the remnant of Israel out of captivity and once again enabling them to grow into strong nations, who will overwhelmingly very willingly submit their lives to God. And verse 8 shows that Jerusalem will become the world capital during the millennium.

Verse 9 starts with the word "now". This refers to the fact that meanwhile (i.e. for the immediate future) there is going to be a captivity for Israel, when they cry out for help. Verse 10 shows that Israel historically did go into captivity to Babylon, and that Israel will in the future once again go into captivity to Babylon, and then, at the start of the millennium, God will intervene and bring Israel back from captivity.

In verse 11 God says:

Now also **many nations are gathered against you**, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. (Micah 4:11)

In our world today there are many nations that actively hate the nations of Israel, and who desire to see the Israelite nations destroyed. Their hatred for the nations of Israel will be one particular expression of Satan's "great wrath" (see Revelation 12:12) at the end of this present age.

But those nations don't understand why God is allowing them to destroy Israel, and they will be in for a huge shock when God in His own time then intervenes for Israel and punishes these anti-Israel nations. In the words of Micah 4:12, "they know not the thoughts of the Eternal". And then the nations of Israel will again be victorious against all their enemies (verse 13).

GOD'S PUNISHMENT ON ISRAEL'S ENEMIES

Israel's enemies will be punished in the events that surround the second coming of Jesus Christ. And so Micah 5:2 then presents a prophecy for the coming of the Messiah, who will save Israel from their enemies.

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *though* you be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of you shall He come forth unto Me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting. (Micah 5:2)

This is a prophecy that Jesus Christ would be born in Bethlehem. Now notice verse 3.

Therefore will He give them up, **until the time** *that* she which travails has brought forth: then the remnant of His brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. (Micah 5:3)

What is this verse speaking about? Do you know?

God will give "them", i.e. Israel, up until a certain point in time. So God gives Israel into the hands of her enemies until a specific event takes place. What is that event?

That event is when "she", i.e. the Church of God, brings forth children. When will that be? That will be the time of the first resurrection, when 144,000 firstfruits will be born into the Family of God.

Who are "the remnant of His brethren"? They are the physical human Israelites who live through the great tribulation and on into the millennium. They will all return to the areas which Jesus Christ will give to the tribes of Israel.

An amplified version of Micah 5:3 might read:

Therefore will God give the Israelites up into the hands of their enemies, until the time of the first resurrection, when the remnants of Israel, who have survived the great tribulation, will return to the lands that Jesus Christ has set apart for the nations of Israel. (Micah 5:3, amplified)

That will be the start of Jesus Christ's rule over the earth with power and authority. As verse 4 says, "He shall be great unto the ends of the earth".

Verse 5 reverts back to the time of Micah, when the Assyrians invaded and conquered the Northern Kingdom.

And this *individual* shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him **seven shepherds**, and **eight principal men**. (Micah 5:5)

Since there is no clear indication that these "seven shepherds and eight principal men" were ever at any time in the past involved in the overthrow of Assyria, it seems that this is a reference to a yet future time, when Israel will have been conquered, i.e. at the time of the great tribulation. Then it will be Assyria's turn to be defeated. I have no idea whatsoever as to who these "seven shepherds and eight principal men" will be, or how this whole situation will unfold. But the next verse makes clear that Assyria will be defeated through the efforts of those fifteen men.

And **they shall waste the land of Assyria** with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall He deliver *us* from the Assyrian, when he comes into our land, and when he treads within our borders. (Micah 5:6)

"Thus shall He deliver us" means that God will deliver Israel from the Assyrian captivity by using "seven pastors and eight principal men" to achieve the destruction of Assyria. "With the sword" means that Assyria will be defeated militarily, by military warfare.

The next verse implies that this is something that will happen at the time leading up to Jesus Christ's return. The remnant of Israel will then be a blessing for all nations.

And **the remnant of Jacob** shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarries not for man, nor waits for the sons of men. (Micah 5:7)

Rain is a blessing on agricultural land, leading to the production of large crops. The Israelites, who are likely to be the first people who will come to a real repentance at the start of the millennium, will be powerful examples for all other nations to emulate. This is another way of stating Zechariah 8:23.

Thus says the LORD of hosts; In those days *it shall come to pass*, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, **We will go with you:** for **we have heard that God is with you.** (Zechariah 8:23)

This same point of Israel again having a position of power is further elaborated in verse 8.

And **the remnant of Jacob** shall be among the nations in the midst of many people **as a lion among the beasts of the forest**, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treads down, and tears in pieces, and none can deliver. (Micah 5:8)

All enemies of Israel will also be enemies of Jesus Christ, and they will be defeated. All opposition to Christ's rule will be put down (verse 9).

The last six verses of chapter 5 then focus on another aspect of the rule of Jesus Christ. At the start of the millennium there will be very great changes from what we have in our present world.

And it shall come to pass in that day, says the LORD, that I will cut off **your horses** out of the midst of you, and I will destroy **your chariots**: (Micah 5:10)

This reference to horses and chariots is a reference to military armies. At the start of Christ's rule all armies worldwide will be destroyed, and all military weapons will be destroyed. This is a reiteration of what we saw in Micah 4:3, nations converting their weapons into farming implements. In that way there will be no more weapons for warfare available for any nation.

And I will cut off the cities of your land, and throw down all your strong holds: (Micah 5:11)

When the seventh plague of Revelation 16 is poured out, then there will be an incredibly powerful earthquake, which will destroy all cities worldwide (see Revelation 16:17-20). Nothing from any present or past civilization will survive into the world that Jesus Christ will rule. Micah 5:11 is a reference to this event.

And then verses 12-14 describe **the total and utter destruction** of every facet **of every false religion** that exists anywhere on earth. That includes everything that has anything to do with demonism (verse 12), and with images and idols and religious artwork and religious jewelry (verse 13), and every religious building of any kind (churches, cathedrals, temples, shrines, monuments, mosques, synagogues, etc.) (verse 14). It will all be totally demolished, so that no vestige of any false religion remains.

Verse 15 then tells us that **all this destruction** upon all the nations of this world, which destruction takes place when the seven last plagues are poured out, **is an expression of God's anger** and God's fury upon rebellious humanity. It will represent the start of Jesus Christ's rule "with a rod of iron" (see Revelation 19:15), severely punishing all human rebellion.

And then Jesus Christ will again reason with those people who survive into the millennium.

GOD REASONS WITH HUMANITY

Hear you now what the LORD says; Arise, contend You before the mountains, and let the hills hear Your voice. (Micah 6:1)

God will reason with "the mountains and the hills", meaning with the people of Israel and with all other nations. God will open people's minds to understand the truth of God, and God will then explain what He requires from human beings.

Hear you, O mountains, the LORD'S controversy, and you strong foundations of the earth: for **the LORD has a controversy with His people**, and He will plead with Israel. (Micah 6:2)

God has a great complaint against Israel. And Jesus Christ then spells out the problem. This event is something that happens right at the start of the millennium. Christ will reason with the Israelites who are left at that point. This way of dealing with those Israelites who survive into the millennium will be an example to all the other nations, regarding how God will deal with all people.

O My people, what have I done unto you? and wherein have I wearied you? testify against Me. (Micah 6:3)

God will ask: **why don't you obey Me?** What are your excuses? Tell Me where I have not dealt fairly with you? The point is that Israel does not have any excuses, none whatsoever. The point is that whenever God has blessed Israel, Israel has sooner or later always responded with rebellion, rejecting God's ways, accepting pagan customs and pagan traditions instead.

Look at what God has already done for Israel in the past.

For I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of servants; and **I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.** (Micah 6:4)

When people really submit themselves to God, then God will always help. And **then God will also provide good leaders**, like Moses, Aaron and Miriam at the time of the exodus. And when evil leaders, like Balak the king of Moab, try to have Israel cursed, then God has intervened and blessed Israel instead.

O My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that you may know the righteousness of the LORD. (Micah 6:5)

So God has always done good for Israel. Therefore why are you, Israel, not living by the laws of God?

In response to this situation Israel then asks: **what must we do** to be accepted by God? Do we have to bring sacrifices to please God? Must we bring big and expensive sacrifices? Will God expect us to sacrifice our own children to Him, something various pagan religions in past ages have done for their gods? Just what does God want from us?

Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, *and* bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* 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? (Micah 6:6-7)

No, God is not looking for any of the above. Throughout the Bible God has showed us what He is really looking for in us. Micah has summarized what God is looking for very succinctly in verse 8.

He has showed you, O man, what *is* good; and what does the LORD require of you, but **to do justly**, and **to love mercy**, and **to walk humbly** with your God? (Micah 6:8)

At the beginning of the millennium Jesus Christ will explain to mortal human beings that God's whole way of life is summarized by three statements:

1) **To do justly**, meaning to live by God's commandments and laws.

2) **To love mercy**, meaning having a genuine attitude of compassion and concern for other people, and an eagerness to forgive and be reconciled whenever problems do arise.

3) **To walk humbly with God**, meaning having a frame of mind of seeking to please God, and seeing our own total insignificance before God (see Isaiah 40:15-17; etc.). To walk with God means that we accept God's leadership and willingly follow Christ "whithersoever He goes" (i.e. like the 144,000 do in Revelation 14:4).

All the other specific laws of God do nothing more than amplify these three overriding statements. It is not difficult to understand what God expects from us human beings.

Micah continued to say:

The LORD'S voice cries unto the city, and *the man of wisdom* shall see Your name: **hear you the rod, and who has appointed it.** (Micah 6:9)

"The rod" stands for penalties, and it is God who has appointed those penalties. And what God cries out is that there is a reason for every penalty that God has established. Every penalty that we incur means that we have in some way transgressed somewhere. When we suffer in some way, in most cases that is a direct consequence of something we have done (and sometimes, a consequence of something someone else has done).

We need to "hear the rod", i.e. recognize penalties from God for what they are, and then heed the correction that is implied in the penalty. Penalties are designed to motivate us to change, not only to change our actions, but also to change the way we use our minds.

But very few people are willing to change the way they use their minds. Most people are not prepared to change. They want to be accepted the way they are, without having to change in any way. And they remain that way even in the midst of severe trials and tribulations.

Most people want to be accepted just the way they are, because they hate having to change. But God never accepts any human being on our (i.e. human) terms. **God demands that we change.** There is no place in the Family of God for anyone who is not prepared to change!

Are there yet the **treasures of wickedness** in the house of the wicked, and **the scant measure** *that is* abominable? (Micah 6:10)

This once again reverts to the greedy, covetous ways that dominate life in our modern societies today. The "treasures of wickedness" refer to the wealth that is accumulated by greed, i.e. giving very little for the prices that are charged. "Scant measure" refers to giving the customer less than the customer should be receiving for that price. This is stated quite plainly in the next verse.

Shall I count *them* pure with the **wicked balances**, and with the bag of **deceitful weights**? (Micah 6:11)

The rich men are those who are influential in society. And **it is the rich men who cause most of the problems** for mankind, both at the time of Micah and also today.

For **the rich men thereof are full of violence**, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue *is* deceitful in their mouth. (Micah 6:12)

It is the rich who **instigate violence**. Without support from rich people all violent attempts to overthrow existing systems of law and order will fail. All such attempts to overthrow an existing order need major

financial support. And there are always some rich people who are willing to provide such support, because they have that type of mind.

For example, almost 90 years ago now, back in the 1930s, without the financial support of rich German industrialists Adolf Hitler would never have been able to gain control of the German government. And Hitler then instituted a reign of violence and terror, that only ended with Germany's total defeat in World War II.

The same approach of rich people sponsoring violence can also be found in examples with other countries.

In principle it is no different today. It should not be surprising that we today have billionaires in our society, who have devoted very large sums of money to overthrow the current rule of law in the nations of Israel, and who actively sponsor terrorist movements.

As just one example, without the support of rich people our "Black Lives Matter" movement here in the USA would have fizzled out into obscurity. It took the financial support of rich people, with control over powerful organizations, to turn this aggressive movement into a powerful and highly influential force, which openly threatens the very fabric of American society. **Rich men are responsible** for all the mob violence we have experienced over the past almost two years.

And lying and deceit are an ever-present part of this process. Such people never tell us the truth. Micah 6:12 applies as much to our world today as it did to Micah's own time. Back then the rich men were devious and deceitful. But in time they were also punished by God.

Therefore also will I **make you sick** in smiting you, in making *you desolate* because of your sins. (Micah 6:13)

These are penalties for inciting violence, and for greed and hypocrisy. And ultimately these penalties will lead to the national destruction of the nations of Israel, again leading us to the time of the great tribulation.

And that time may then also be preceded by a time of **scarcity and famine**, as indicated in the next two verses.

You shall eat, but not be satisfied; and your casting down *shall be* in the midst of you; and you shall take hold, but shall not deliver; and *that* which you deliver will I give up to the sword. You shall sow, but you shall not reap; you shall tread the olives, but you shall not anoint you with oil; and sweet wine, but shall not drink wine. (Micah 6:14-15)

This is a description of God's penalties imposed on a national level. And the next verse shows that all these penalties are because of the perverse leadership that controls both the governments, and also industry and commerce and entertainment and the information media. It is all embraced by the term "the statutes of Omri".

For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and you walk in their counsels; that I should make you a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore you shall bear the reproach of My people. (Micah 6:16)

Omri was the father of Ahab. Omri instituted perverse customs and laws, and he promoted idolatry. And his son Ahab continued in those ways. And when Ahab married Jezebel, he firmly entrenched paganism in Israel. The worst form of paganism at that time was Baal-worship, which was later wiped out by King

Jehu. But overall, idolatry has always continued to be a problem in Israel.

We today are also faced with "the statutes of Omri", meaning totally **perverse laws and regulations**. And even as back then God punished Israel for the ways of Omri and Ahab, so also today God will punish us for the anti-God laws and ways that our governments have enacted. God will also make us "a desolation".

CHAPTER 7

Now Micah presents one final picture of Israel's destruction, followed by Jesus Christ establishing the Kingdom of God here on earth.

Woe is me! for I am as **when they have gathered the summer fruits**, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage: *there is* no cluster to eat: my soul desired the first-ripe fruit. (Micah 7:1)

This is a picture of total destruction. All the fruits are gone. All is barren. There is nothing left in the orchards and in the vineyards. There is nothing left to eat. Micah is picturing a time of famine and hardship.

The good *man* is perished out of the earth: and **there is none upright among men**: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net. (Micah 7:2)

Those of upright character have disappeared. **We don't have any good leaders left**. Everyone is out to get as much as possible for himself, without regard for how that may affect other people. The leaders we have are selfish, greedy and ruthless in pursuit of their selfish ambitions. That is the type of leadership the nations of Israel will have in the lead-up to the great tribulation. These are the evil, selfish leaders that implement "the statutes of Omri", and they carry most of the responsibility for the punishments which God will pour out on Israel.

That they may **do evil with both hands earnestly**, the prince asks (for a bribe), and the judge asks for a reward; and the great *man*, he utters his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up. (Micah 7:3)

The leadership in Israel is totally perverse and corrupt, and extremely greedy for secret payments. In many cases they state quite clearly what they expect as a bribe. "So they wrap it up" means: once the bribes have been agreed upon, then they make the deal. "The great man" makes quite clear what he expects you to give to him as a bribe. It is an evil time for anyone who seeks to faithfully live by all of God's laws.

The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge: the day of your watchmen and your visitation (i.e. your punishment) comes; now shall be their perplexity (i.e. their confusion). (Micah 7:4)

In the time leading up to the great tribulation **all the leaders** in the nations of Israel **will be bad and evil**. The leaders you look up to (i.e. "your watchmen") are clueless as to what is going to happen. They will not understand that their own ways have caused the punishments they will experience. And for ordinary people there will be nobody whom they can trust.

Trust you not in a friend, put you not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of your mouth from her that lies in your bosom. (Micah 7:5)

It will be an extremely stressful time. The people who will be friendly and helpful to your face may be the ones who will betray you behind your back. Other Scriptures also refer to this same period of intense stress. For example:

And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and **cause them to be put to death**. (Matthew 10:21)

For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And **a man's foes shall be they of his own household**. (Matthew 10:35-36)

This is a society controlled by fear, and Satan is the author of every spirit of fear that people may experience. And the actions of bad, evil leaders are Satan's main tool for spreading a spirit of fear throughout society as the time of the end approaches.

For the son dishonors the father, 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. (Micah 7:6)

This is what both Jesus Christ and Micah have told us. So we should not be surprised when **some of us may have to experience some of these very difficult situations**. When such situations come about for a large number of God's people, then that will be one indication that the time of God's intervention is drawing near.

Dealing with the intense stress that those situations will bring about will be one form of testing for the people of God. How will we cope if we are exposed to such difficult situations? Will we stay faithful to God? Or will we give up?

Therefore I will look unto the LORD; **I will wait for the God of my salvation**: my God will hear me. (Micah 7:7)

The answer is that in such difficult circumstances total reliance on God will be our only option. And God is the only One who can protect us from the trials of the great tribulation. As Jesus Christ has told us, **we must "endure to the end"** in order to be saved (see Matthew 10:22).

Rejoice not against me, O my enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD *shall be* a light unto me. (Micah 7:8)

Consider this in the context of leading up to the great tribulation.

In those circumstances of severe persecution (verse 6) we are to look to God for help (verse 7). And if somewhere along the line we fall short, then we need to repent and still look to God to be our help and our guide. If we conduct ourselves in integrity before God, even though we may at times fall, then God will always help us.

I will bear the indignation of the LORD, **because I have sinned against Him**, until He plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: He will bring me forth to the light, *and* I shall behold His righteousness. (Micah 7:9)

The statement "because I have sinned against Him" is the expression of a repentant mind. And it is also an expression of **faith in God**. Now God's servant Micah himself will be in the first resurrection. But the principle of this statement, given in the context of the great tribulation, is that there will be a sorting-out process for those people who on the one hand will physically live through the great tribulation and then

live on into the millennium, and on the other hand those people who will die in the events that lead up to Jesus Christ establishing the Government of God in Jerusalem.

God will be very selective regarding which mortal human beings will be given the privilege to live physically over into the millennium. And Micah 7:9 describes the attitude that will be expected for those who will live into the millennium.

Then *she that is* my enemy shall see *it*, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the LORD your God? my eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets. (Micah 7:10)

Those people, who scoffed at the few who are trying to live by God's laws in those difficult circumstances, will die in the events that lead up to Jesus Christ establishing His Government in Jerusalem (i.e. they will be "trodden down as the mire"). That will be a part of the sorting-out process.

In the day that your walls are to be built, *in* that day shall the decree be far removed. (Micah 7:11)

This text is a little unclear, but the intended meaning seems to be that when Jerusalem is to be rebuilt, then it will be larger than it was previously. "Far removed" refers to being extended outwards, and implied are the city limits of Jerusalem.

In that day also he shall come even to You (i.e. to Jesus Christ in Jerusalem) from Assyria, and from the fortified cities, and from the fortress even to the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain. (Micah 7:12)

This refers to the start of the millennium, when Jesus Christ will be ruling. People from all nations will then come up to Jerusalem, like Zechariah 8:23, which we looked at earlier.

Notwithstanding the land shall be desolate because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings. (Micah 7:13)

This is a reminder that first, before Jesus Christ begins His rule over this Earth, the land will become desolate. That will happen as a consequence of the seven last Trumpets and the seven last Plagues.

And then the remainder of chapter 7 speaks about what things will be like during the millennium when Jesus Christ will rule.

Upon repentance those Israelites who live over into the millennium will be forgiven their past sins, and they will be restored to live in peace and prosperity.

Feed Your people with Your rod, the flock of Your heritage, which dwell solitarily (i.e. alone) *in* the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed *in* Bashan and Gilead, **as in the days of old.** (Micah 7:14)

That will be the time of the second exodus, and it will include various miracles (i.e. marvelous things) that Jesus Christ will perform, even as the original exodus from Egypt involved numerous miracles.

According to the days of your coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvelous *things*. (Micah 7:15)

Then it will become very clear to all the other nations that God is with the nations of Israel, and that God

is blessing Israel. And they will no longer criticize Israel in any way (i.e. they lay their hand upon their mouth). Instead, they will seek Israel's favor.

The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay *their* hand upon *their* mouth, their ears shall be deaf. (Micah 7:16)

And those nations that hated the people of Israel will come to fear Israel. They will humble themselves before Israel, because they will understand that the God of Israel is the only true God. No more atheism or agnosticism or any pagan religion.

They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: **they shall be afraid of the LORD** our God, and **shall fear because of you**. (Micah 7:17)

And they will learn that upon real repentance, upon really changing their way of thinking, God will forgive and have mercy, not only on Israel, but on all people, and then they too will be greatly blessed by God.

Who *is* a God like unto You, that pardons iniquity, and passes by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? **He retains not His anger for ever**, because **He delights in mercy**. (Micah 7:18)

Verse 19 discusses how things will go in the millennium. By and large Israel will repent, and **God will forgive their sins**. Then Israel will obey God and live by all of God's laws, and then God will bless Israel. This example all other nations will see, and they too will then follow this same process.

He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and You will **cast all their sins into the depths of the sea**. (Micah 7:19)

And then the blessings which God promised to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob will be fulfilled. Then, during the millennium, **the relationship between God and the people of Israel** will at last develop into the relationship that God had intended to have with Abraham's descendants

all along. On the part of the people it will be a relationship of joyful and eager submission to all of God's laws and ways.

You will perform the truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham, which You have sworn unto our fathers from the days of old. (Micah 7:20)

Here is the relationship that God has always wanted.

For I know him, that **he will command his children** and his household after him, and **they shall keep the way of the LORD**, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which He has spoken of him. (Genesis 18:19)

Regrettably this anticipated relationship, of generation after generation of Israelites faithfully obeying God, never came about at any time during the Old Testament. But this relationship will finally be achieved when Jesus Christ begins to rule over the whole earth. That will usher in a time of joy and happiness and prosperity.

IN CONCLUSION

Micah has given us a description of what life will be like for Israel in the time leading up to the great

tribulation. It is a picture of greed and covetousness and idolatry. The picture fits our present world very accurately. And after the calamitous times that lie ahead, it will be followed by the perfect rule of Jesus Christ, when many, many people will gladly submit their lives to God, and when God then pours out staggering blessings on all those who really repent.

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