

Comments on Micah 5

Continuing on the theme from the last chapter where Judah is told it will go into exile (4:9-10) then ultimately be redeemed (4:11-13), this text presents a new ideal king supported by the Lord who will gather Israel and lead Zion to victory against her enemies.

1 NOW gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.

v1 This verse is best taken with 4:9-13.

2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, [though] thou be little among the thousands of Judah, [yet] out of thee shall he come forth unto me [that is] to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth [have been] from of old, from everlasting. 3 Therefore will he give them up, until the time [that] she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. 4 And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. 5 And this [man] 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. 6 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 cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.

v2-6 The delivering messiah will come from Beth-lehem, translated "the house of bread", he shall rule Israel, and his origin will be an ancient one, presumably David (v. 2). But he will leave them helpless until the appointed one has borne, presumably Zion, then Israel will gather to her (v. 3). The messiah shall be invested with the power of the Lord, with His name upon him, and he shall shepherd Israel (v. 4). And should Assyria and its mighty warriors invade the lands of Zion, he will defend Zion and strike all of Assyria down and set up Israelite rulers over them (v. 5-6).

v2 "from of old, from everlasting", a reference to the Davidic lineage of the messiah having ancient origins, cp. 4:8, Hosea 3:5, Ezek. 34:23-24. The term "everlasting" in the KJV could just as fairly be translated "ancient times". The message is that Israel will be restored to its ancient glory as when king

David ruled.

"Ephrath", the family to which the Bethlehemites belonged, cp. 1 Sam. 17:12, Ruth 1:2, Ruth 4:11.

v3 This verse makes reference to the subject of 4:10. Zion will be left in exile until she is ready to bear the fruit of a righteous remnant of Israel. The implication being v. 2 is referring to the initial incarnation of the Lord as spiritual deliverer, but He will leave them until they are truly ready and then will return as a physical deliverer in the Second Advent.

The statement "she which travaileth hath brought forth" is in the Hebrew "yalad yalad" meaning "the begetter begets". The Hebrew here is identical to the two appearances of the KJV "travail" or "yalad" in 4:9-10, where the character is positively identified as Israel. It is safe to conclude this is referring to Israel as well.

v4 "he shall stand and feed", making reference to the messiah acting as shepherd to the gathered flock of Israel from 4:8 and the ironic reading on 2:12-13.

v5-6 Compare 4:11-13.

7 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 tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men. 8 And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles 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 treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. 9 Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.

v7-9 When the messiah rules Israel will be unstoppable, and inexorable as a result of the Lord's strength upon them (v. 7-8). Whereas she was formerly subject to her enemies (4:9-5:1), she will now cut off all her enemies (v. 9).

v7 "dew...showers" is an obscure Semitism referring to the subject of Judges 6:34-39, 2 Sam. 17:12.

v8 Compare Isa. 11:13-14. For the symbolism of the lion among sheep, cp. Alma 14:29.

10 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: 11 And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds: 12 And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no [more] soothsayers: 13 Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands. 14 And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities. 15 And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard.

v10-15 In the day of the Messianic kingdom, all wickedness of all nations will be cut off entirely. All of the fortress cities, and chariots and horses of war will be cut off as there will be peace per 4:1-8. All wickedness will be cut off as the Lord will judge and reign in righteousness. The earth will be purged of all wickedness.

Copyright © 2022 by S. Kurt Neumiller <kurt.neumiller@gmail.com>. All rights reserved. No part of this text may be reproduced in any form or by any means for commercial gain without the express written consent of the author. Digital or printed copies may be freely made and distributed for personal and public non-commercial use.