
MICAH 1: 1 the LORD's word that came to Micah the Morashtite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

Micah, the Morasthite, or of Moresa, a village near the city Eleutheropolis, in the southern part of Judah, is the sixth in order of the twelve minor prophets. He prophesied under Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, for about fifty years. Some have confounded him with Micaiah, son of Imlah, who lived in the kingdom of the ten tribes, under the reign of Ahab.

The spurious Dorotheus says that Micah was buried in the burying-place of the Anakim, whose habitation had been at Hebron, and round about it. This prophet appeared almost at the same time with Isaiah, and has even borrowed some expressions from him. Compare Isa 2:2 with Mic 4:1, and Isa 41:15 with Mic 4:13.

The prophecy of Micah contains but seven chapters. He foretells the calamities of Samaria, which was taken by Shalmaneser, and reduced to a heap of stones. Afterwards he prophesies against Judah, and declares the troubles that Sennacherib should bring upon it under the reign of Hezekiah. Then he declaims against the iniquities of Samaria. He foretells the captivity of the ten tribes, and their return into their own country. The third chapter contains a pathetic invective against the princes of the house of Jacob, and the judges of the house of Israel; which seems leveled against the chief of the kingdom of Judah, the judges, the magistrates, the priests, the false prophets, etc. He upbraids them with their avarice, their injustice, and falsehood; and tells them they will be the occasion that Jerusalem shall be reduced to a heap of rubbish, and the mountain of the temple shall be as a forest. We are informed, Jer 26:18, Jer 26:19, that this prophecy was pronounced in the reign of Hezekiah; and that it saved Jeremiah from death.

After these terrible denunciations, Micah speaks of the reign of the Messiah, and of the establishment of the Christian Church. And as the peaceable times which succeeded the return from the Babylonish captivity, and which were a figure of the reign of the Messiah, were disturbed by a tempest of a short continuance, Micah foretold it in such a manner as agrees very well with what Ezekiel says of the war of Gog against the Jews. Micah speaks in particular of the birth of the Messiah; that he was to be born at Bethlehem; and that his dominion was to extend to the utmost parts of the earth. He says that God should raise seven shepherds, who should reign by the sword over Assyria, and in the land of Nimrod; which Calmet explains of Darius, son of Hystaspes; and of the seven confederates that killed the magian, and who possessed the empire of the Persians, after the extinction of the family of Cyrus. The fifth chapter, from verse 7 to the end, describes the flourishing estate of the Jews in their own country, from the reign of Darius, and after the Maccabees; yet in such a manner, that he mingles several things in it that can apply only to the Church of Jesus Christ.

The two last chapters of Micah contain, first, a long invective against the iniquities of Samaria: then he foretells the fall of Babylon; the re-establishment of the cities of Israel; the greatness of the country possessed by the Israelites; their happiness; the graces wherewith God will favor them; and all this in such lofty terms, that they chiefly agree with the Christian Church. St. Jerome says that Micah was buried at Morasthi, ten furlongs from Eleutheropolis; and Sozomenes says that his tomb was revealed to Zebennus, bishop of Eleutheropolis, under the reign of Theodosius the Great. He calls the place of his burial Beretsate, which is probably the same as Morasthi, ten furlongs from Eleutheropolis.

Bishop Newcome observes that Micah was of the kingdom of Judah, as he only makes mention of kings who reigned over that country. It is supposed that he prophesied farther on in the reign of Hezekiah than Hosea did; although Mic 5:5 was written before the captivity of the ten tribes, which happened in the sixth year of Hezekiah. It is plain from Mic 1:1, Mic 1:5, Mic 1:9, Mic 1:12, Mic 1:13, that he was sent both to Israel and Judah. Like Amos and Hosea, he reproves and threatens, with great spirit and energy, a corrupt people. See Mic 2:1-3, Mic 2:8, Mic 2:9, Mic 2:10; Mic 3:2-4, Mic 3:6, Mic 3:10-12; Mic 7:2-4. And, like Hosea, he inveighs against the princes and prophets with the highest indignation. See Mic 3:5-7, Mic 3:9-12; Mic 7:3. The reader will observe that these similar topics are treated of by each prophet with remarkable variety, and copiousness of expression.

Some of his prophecies are distinct and illustrious ones, as Mic 2:12, Mic 2:13; Mic 3:12; Mic 4:1-4, Mic 4:10; Mic 5:2-4; Mic 6:13; Mic 7:8-10.

We may justly admire the elegance of his diction: - Mic 2:12 - "I will surely gather, O Jacob, all of thee: I will surely assemble the residue of Israel. I will put them together as sheep of Bozra, As a flock in the midst of their fold: They shall make a tumult from the multitude of men. Mic 2:13 - He that forceth a passage is come up before them: They have forced a passage, and have passed through the gate; and are gone forth by it: And their King passeth before them, even Jehovah at the head of them." Mic 4:1 - "But it shall come to pass, in the latter days, That the mountain of the temple of Jehovah shall be established on the top of the mountains, And it shall be exalted above the hills; And the people shall flow into it: Mic 4:2 - And many nations shall go, and shall say, Come, and let us go up unto the mountain of Jehovah, And unto the temple of the God of Jacob: That he may teach us of his ways, and that we may walk in his paths. For from Sion shall go forth a law, And the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. Mic 4:3 - And he shall judge between many people, And he shall convince strong nations afar off: And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, And their spears into pruninghooks: Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they any longer learn war."

His animation - Mic 1:5, lines 3, 4 - "What is the transgression of Jacob? - is it not that of Samaria? And what are the high places of Judah? - are they not those of Jerusalem?" Mic 4:9 - "And now why dost thou cry out loudly? Is there no king in thee? Hath thy counsellor perished? For pangs have seized thee, as a woman in travail."

There are few beauties of composition of which examples may not be found in this prophet. For sublimity and impressiveness in several places, he is unrivalled. The Lord's controversy, Mic 6:1-8, is equal to any thing even in the prophet Isaiah. It has a powerful effect on every attentive reader.

His strength of expression: - Mic 1:6 - "Therefore will I make Samaria a heap of the field, a place for the plantings of a vineyard: And I will pour down her stones into the valley, and I will discover her foundations." Mic 3:2 - "Ye who hate good and love evil: Who pluck their skin from off them, And their flesh from off their bones." Mic 3:3 - "Who have also eaten the flesh of my people, And have flayed their skin from off them, And have broken their bones; And have divided them asunder, as flesh in the pot: And as meat within the caldron." Mic 7:1 - "Wo is me; for I am become As the gatherers of late figs, as the gleaners of the vintage. There is no cluster to eat: My soul desireth the first-ripe fig. Mic 7:2 - The good man is perished from the land, And there is none upright among men. All of them lie in wait for blood; They hunt every man his brother for his destruction."

His pathos: - Mic 1:16 - "Make thee bald, and cut off thine hair for thy delicate children; Enlarge thy baldness as the eagle; For they are gone into captivity from thee." Mic 2:4 - "In that day shall a proverb be taken up against you; And a grievous lamentation shall be made: Saying, 'We are utterly

laid waste:He hath changed the portion of my people:How hath he departed from me,To bring again him that divided our fields!"

His sublimity: - Mic 1:2 - "Hear, O ye people, all of you:Hearken, O land, and all that are therein.And let the Lord Jehovah be witness against you;Even the Lord from his holy temple. Mic 1:3 - For, behold, Jehovah will go forth from his place:And he will come down, and will tread upon the high places of the earth. Mic 1:4 - And the mountains shall be molten under him;And the valleys shall cleave asunder;As wax before the fire, As waters poured down a steep place." Mic 6:1 - "Hear ye now what Jehovah saith:Arise, contend thou before the mountains;And let the hills hear thy voice." Mic 7:16 - "The nations shall see, and shall be confounded because of their might:They shall lay their hand upon their mouth; their ears shall be deaf. Mic 7:17 - They shall lick the dust as the serpent;As the creeping things upon the earth, they shall tremble from their close places:Because of Jehovah our God, they shall stand in awe; and they shall fear because of thee."

The prophet begins with calling the attention of all people to the awful descent of Jehovah, coming to execute his judgments against the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, Mic 1:1-5; first against Samaria, whose fate the prophet laments on the dress of mourners, and with the doleful cries of the fox or ostrich, Mic 1:6-8; and then against Jerusalem, which is threatened with the invasion of Sennacherib. Other cities of Judah are likewise threatened; and their danger represented to be so great as to oblige them to have recourse for protection even to their enemies the Philistines, from whom they desired at first to conceal their situation. But all resources are declared to be vain; Israel and Judah must go into captivity, Mic 1:9-16.

Verse 1

The word of the Lord that came to Micah the Morasthite - For all authentic particulars relative to this prophet, see the introduction.

In the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah - These three kings reigned about threescore years; and Micah is supposed to have prophesied about forty or fifty years; but no more of his prophecies have reached posterity than what are contained in this book, nor is there any evidence that any more was written. His time appears to have been spent chiefly in preaching and exhorting; and he was directed to write those parts only that were calculated to profit succeeding generations.

MICAH 1: 2 Hear, you peoples, all of you. Listen, O earth, and all that is therein: and let the Lord the LORD be witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple.

Verse 2

Hear, all ye people - The very commencement of this prophecy supposes preceding exhortations and predictions.

Hearken, O earth - ארץ arets, here, should be translated land, the country of the Hebrews being only intended.

And let the Lord God be Witness - Let him who has sent me with this message be witness that I have delivered it faithfully; and be a witness against you, if you take not the warning.

The Lord from his holy temple - The place where he still remains as your King, and your Judge; and where you profess to pay your devotions. The temple was yet standing, for Jerusalem was not taken

for many years after this; and these prophecies were delivered before the captivity of the ten tribes, as Micah appears to have been sent both to Israel and to Judah. See Mic 1:5-9, Mic 1:12, Mic 1:13.

MICAH 1: 3 For, behold, the LORD comes out of his place, and will come down and tread on the high places of the earth.

Verse 3

For, behold, the Lord cometh forth - See this clause, Amo 4:13 (note). He represents Jehovah as a mighty conqueror, issuing from his pavilion, stepping from mountain to mountain, which rush down and fill the valleys before him; a consuming fire accompanying him, that melts and confounds every hill and dale, and blends all in universal confusion. God is here represented as doing that himself which other conquerors do by the multitude of their hosts; levelling the mountains, filling some of the valleys, and digging for waters in others, and pouring them from hills and dales for the use of the conquering armies, by pipes and aqueducts.

And why is all this mighty movement? Mic 1:5. "For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel."

MICAH 1: 4 The mountains melt under him, and the valleys split apart, like wax before the fire, like waters that are poured down a steep place.

MICAH 1: 5 "All this is for the disobedience of Jacob, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the disobedience of Jacob? Isn't it Samaria? And what are the high places of Judah? Aren't they Jerusalem?"

Verse 5

What is the transgression of Jacob? - Is it not something extremely grievous? Is it not that of Samaria? Samaria and Jerusalem, the chief cities, are infected with idolatry. Each has its high places, and its idol worship, in opposition to the worship of the true God. That there was idolatry practiced by the elders of Israel, even in the temple of Jehovah, see Eze 8:1, etc. As the royal cities in both kingdoms gave the example of gross idolatry, no wonder that it spread through the whole land, both of Israel and Judah.

MICAH 1: 6 Therefore I will make Samaria like a rubble heap of the field, like places for planting vineyards; and I will pour down its stones into the valley, and I will uncover its foundations.

Verse 6

I will make Samaria - I will bring it to desolation: and, instead of being a royal city, it shall be a place for vineyards. Newcome observes, that Samaria was situated on a hill, the right soil for a vineyard.

I will discover the foundations thereof - I will cause its walls and fortifications to be razed to the ground.

MICAH 1: 7 All her idols will be beaten to pieces, and all her temple gifts will be burned with fire, and all her images I will destroy; for of the hire of a prostitute has she gathered them, and to the hire of a prostitute shall they return."

Verse 7

All the hires thereof shall be burned - Multitudes of women gave the money they gained by their public prostitution at the temples for the support of the priesthood, the ornamenting of the walls, altars, and images. So that these things, and perhaps several of the images themselves, were literally the hire of the harlots: and God threatens here to deliver all into the hands of enemies who should seize on this wealth, and literally spend it in the same way in which it was acquired; so that "to the hire of a harlot these things should return."

MICAH 1: 8 For this I will lament and wail; I will go stripped and naked; I will howl like the jackals, and moan like the daughters of owls.

Verse 8

I will make a wailing like the dragons - Newcome translates: -

I will make a wailing like the foxes, (or jackals),

And mourning like the daughters of the ostrich.

This beast, the jackal or shiagal, we have often met with in the prophets. Travellers inform us that its howlings by night are most lamentable; and as to the ostrich, it is remarkable for its fearful shrieking and agonizing groanings after night. Dr. Shaw says he has often heard them groan as if they were in the greatest agonies.

MICAH 1: 9 For her wounds are incurable; for it has come even to Judah. It reaches to the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem.

Verse 9

Her wound is incurable - Nothing shall prevent their utter ruin, for they have filled up the measure of their iniquity.

He is come - even to Jerusalem - The desolation and captivity of Israel shall first take place; that of Judah shall come after.

MICAH 1: 10 Don't tell it in Gath. Don't weep at all. At Beth Ophrah I have rolled myself in the dust.

Verse 10

Declare ye it not at Gath - Do not let this prediction be known among the Philistines, else they will glory over you.

House of Aphrah - Or, Beth-aphrah. This place is mentioned Jos 18:23, as in the tribe of Benjamin. There is a paronomasia, or play on words, here: **בבית לעפרה עפר** bebeith leaphrah aphar, "Roll thyself in the dust in the house of dust."

MICAH 1: 11 Pass on, inhabitant of Shaphir, in nakedness and shame. The inhabitant of Zaanan won't come out. The wailing of Beth Ezel will take from you his protection.

Verse 11

Inhabitant of Saphir - Sapher, Sepphoris, or Sephora, was the strongest place in Galilee. - Calmet. It was a city in the tribe of Judah, between Eleutheropolis and Ascalon. - Houbigant.

Zaanan - Another city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:13.

Beth-ezel - A place near Jerusalem, Zac 14:5. Some think that Jerusalem itself is intended by this word.

MICAH 1: 12 For the inhabitant of Maroth waits anxiously for good, because evil has come down from the LORD to the gate of Jerusalem.

Verse 12

The inhabitant of Maroth - There was a city of a similar name in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:59.

MICAH 1: 13 Harness the chariot to the swift steed, inhabitant of Lachish. She was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion; For the transgressions of Israel were found in you.

Verse 13

Inhabitant of Lachish - This city was in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:39, and was taken by Sennacherib when he was coming against Jerusalem, 2Kgs 18:13, etc., and it is supposed that he wished to reduce this city first, that, possessing it, he might prevent Hezekiah's receiving any help from Egypt.

She is the beginning of the sin - This seems to intimate that Lachish was the first city in Judah which received the idolatrous worship of Israel.

MICAH 1: 14 Therefore you will give a parting gift to Moresheth Gath. The houses of Achzib will be a deceitful thing to the kings of Israel.

Verse 14

Give presents to Moresheth-gath - Calmet says that Moresa or Morashti, and Achzib, were cities not far from Gath. It is possible that when Ahaz found himself pressed by Pekah, king of Israel, he might have sent to these places for succor, that by their assistance he might frustrate the hopes of the king of Israel; and this may be the meaning of "The houses of Achzib shall be a lie to the kings of Israel." In these verses there are several instances of the paronomasia. See Mic 1:10, עפר aphar, dust, and עפרה aphrah, the name of the city. Mic 1:11. צאנן tsaanan, the city, and יצאה yatsah, to go out. Mic 1:13, לכיש lachish, the city, and רכש rechesh, the swift beast. Mic 1:14, אכזיב achzib, the city, and אכזב achzab, a lie. Such paronomasias were reputed ornaments by the prophets. They occur in Isaiah with great effect. See Isa 5:7.

MICAH 1: 15 I will yet bring to you, inhabitant of Mareshah. He who is the glory of Israel will come to Adullam.

Verse 15

Yet will I bring an heir unto thee, O - Mareshah - Here is another instance, הירש haigeresh, to bring an heir, and מרשה mareshah, the city, the name of which signifies heirship. And so of the above proper names.

Adullam the glory of Israel - This was a fenced city in the south of Judah (see 2Chr 11:7) towards the Dead Sea.

There is much obscurity in the concluding verses of this chapter. They undoubtedly refer to the captivity of Israel, and to circumstances of distress, etc., which are not mentioned in any of the historical books, and therefore their reference and meaning can only be conjectured.

MICAH 1: 16 Shave your heads, and cut off your hair for the children of your delight. Enlarge your baldness like the vulture; for they have gone into captivity from you!

Verse 16

Make thee bald - Cutting off the hair was a sign of great distress, and was practised on the death of near relatives; see Amo 8:10.

The desolation should be so great that Israel should feel it to her utmost extent; and the mourning should be like that of a mother for the death of her most delicate children.

Enlarge thy baldness as the eagle - Referring to the mounting of this bird, when in casting its feathers and breeding new ones, it is very sickly, and its strength wholly exhausted.

They are gone into captivity - This is a prediction of the captivity by Shalmaneser. Samaria, the chief city, is called on to deplore it, as then fast approaching.

MICAH 2: 1 Woe to those who devise iniquity and work evil on their beds! When the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand.

Here the prophet denounces a wo against the plotters of wickedness, the covetous and the oppressor, Mic 2:1, Mic 2:2. God is represented as devising their ruin, Mic 2:3. An Israelite is then introduced as a mourner, personating his people, and lamenting their fate, Mic 2:4. Their total expulsion is now threatened on account of their very numerous offenses, Mic 2:5-10. Great infatuation of the people in favor of those pretenders to Divine inspiration who prophesied to them peace and plenty, Mic 2:11. The chapter concludes with a gracious promise of the restoration of the posterity of Jacob from captivity; possibly alluding to their deliverance from the Chaldean yoke, an event which was about two hundred years in futurity at the delivery of this prophecy, Mic 2:12, Mic 2:13.

Verse 1

Wo to them that devise iniquity - Who lay schemes and plans for transgressions; who make it their study to find out new modes of sinning; and make these things their nocturnal meditations, that, having fixed their plan, they may begin to execute it as soon as it is light in the morning.

Because it is in the power of their hand - They think they may do whatever they have power and opportunity to do.

MICAH 2: 2 They covet fields, and seize them; and houses, and take them away: and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.

Verse 2

They covet fields - These are the rich and mighty in the land; and, like Ahab, they will take the vineyard or inheritance of any poor Naboth on which they may fix their covetous eye; so that they take away even the heritage of the poor.

MICAH 2: 3 Therefore thus says the LORD: "Behold, I am planning against these people a disaster, from which you will not remove your necks, neither will you walk haughtily; for it is an evil time.

Verse 3

Against this family (the Israelites) do I devise an evil - You have devised the evil of plundering the upright; I will devise the evil to you of punishment for your conduct; you shall have your necks brought under the yoke of servitude. Tiglath-pileser ruined this kingdom, and transported the people to Assyria, under the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah; and Micah lived to see this catastrophe. See on Mic 2:9 (note).

MICAH 2: 4 In that day they will take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, saying, 'We are utterly ruined! My people's possession is divided up. Indeed he takes it from me and assigns our fields to traitors!'"

Verse 4

Take up a parable against you - Your wickedness and your punishment shall be subjects of common conversation; and a funeral dirge shall be composed and sung for you as for the dead. The lamentation is that which immediately follows: We be utterly spoiled; and ends, Are these his doings? Mic 2:7.

MICAH 2: 5 Therefore you will have no one who divides the land by lot in the LORD's assembly.

Verse 5

None that shall cast a cord - You will no more have your inheritance divided to you by lot, as it was to your fathers; ye shall neither have fields nor possessions of any kind.

MICAH 2: 6 "Don't prophesy!" They prophesy. "Don't prophesy about these things. Disgrace won't overtake us."

Verse 6

Prophesy ye not - Do not predict any more evils - we have as many as we can bear. We are utterly ruined - shame and confusion cover our faces. The original is singular, and expressive of sorrow and sobbing. Literally, "Do not cause it to rain; they will cause it to rain; they cannot make it rain sooner than this; confusion shall not depart from us." To rain, often means to preach, to prophesy; Eze 20:46, Eze 21:2; Amo 7:16; Deu 32:2; Job 29:22; Pro 5:3, etc.

The last line Bp. Newcome translates, "For he shall not remove from himself reproaches;" and paraphrases, "The true prophet will subject himself to public disgrace by exercising his office."

MICAH 2: 7 Shall it be said, O house of Jacob: "Is the Spirit of the LORD angry? Are these his doings? Don't my words do good to him who walks blamelessly?"

Verse 7

Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? - This is the complaint of the Israelites, and a part of the lamentation. Doth it not speak by other persons as well as by Micah? Doth it communicate to us such influences as it did formerly? Is it true that these evils are threatened by that Spirit? Are these his doings? To which Jehovah answers, "Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" No upright man need fear any word spoken by me: my words to such yield instruction and comfort; never dismay. Were ye upright, ye would not complain of the words of my prophets. The last clause may be translated, "Walking with him that is upright." The upright man walks by the word; and the word walks with him who walks by it.

MICAH 2: 8 But lately my people have risen up as an enemy. You strip the robe and clothing from those who pass by without a care, returning from battle.

Verse 8

My people is risen up as an enemy - Ye are not only opposed to me, but ye are enemies to each other. Ye rob and spoil each other. Ye plunder the peaceable passenger; depriving him both of his upper and under garment; ye pull off the robe from those who, far from being spoilers themselves, are averse from war.

MICAH 2: 9 You drive the women of my people out from their pleasant houses; from their young children you take away my blessing forever.

Verse 9

The women of my people - Ye are the cause of the women and their children being carried into captivity - separated from their pleasant habitations, and from my temple and ordinances - and from the blessings of the covenant, which it is my glory to give, and theirs to receive. These two verses may probably relate to the war made on Ahaz by Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel. They fell suddenly upon the Jews; killed in one day one hundred and twenty thousand, and took two hundred thousand captive; and carried away much spoil. Thus, they rose up against them as enemies, when there was peace between the two kingdoms; spoiled them of their goods, carried away men, women, and children, till, at the remonstrances of the prophet Oded, they were released. See 2Chr 28:6, etc. Micah lived in the days of Ahaz, and might have seen the barbarities which he here describes.

MICAH 2: 10 Arise, and depart! For this is not your resting place, because of uncleanness that destroys, even with a grievous destruction.

Verse 10

Arise ye, and depart - Prepare for your captivity; ye shall have no resting place here: the very land is polluted by your iniquities, and shall vomit you out, and it shall be destroyed; and the destruction of it shall be great and sore.

Some think this is an exhortation to the godly, to leave a land that was to be destroyed so speedily.

MICAH 2: 11 If a man walking in a spirit of falsehood lies: "I will prophesy to you of wine and of strong drink"; he would be the prophet of this people.

Verse 11

If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood - The meaning is: If a man who professes to be Divinely inspired do lie, by prophesying of plenty, etc., then such a person shall be received as a true prophet by this people. It not unfrequently happens that the Christless worldling, who has got into the priest's office for a maintenance, and who leaves the people undisturbed in their unregenerate state, is better received than the faithful pastor, who proclaims the justice of the Lord, and the necessity of repentance and forsaking sin, in order to their being made partakers of that holiness without which no man shall see God.

MICAH 2: 12 I will surely assemble, Jacob, all of you; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as a flock in the midst of their pasture; they will swarm with people.

Verse 12

I will surely assemble - This is a promise of the restoration of Israel from captivity. He compares them to a flock of sheep rushing together to their fold, the hoofs of which make a wonderful noise or clatter. So when one hundred sheep run, eight hundred toes or divisions of these bifid animals make a clattering noise. This appears to be the image.

MICAH 2: 13 He who breaks open the way goes up before them. They break through the gate, and go out. And their king passes on before them, with the LORD at their head.

Verse 13

The breaker is come up - He who is to give them deliverance, and lead them out on the way of their return. He who takes down the hurdles, or makes a gap in the wall or hedge, to permit them to pass through. This may apply to those human agents that shall permit and order their return. And Jehovah being at their head, may refer to their final restoration, when the Lord Jesus shall become their leader, they having returned unto him as the shepherd and bishop of their souls; and they and the Gentiles forming one fold under one shepherd, to go no more out into captivity for ever. Lord, hasten the time!

MICAH 3: 1 I said, "Please listen, you heads of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel: Isn't it for you to know justice?"

In this chapter the prophet inveighs with great boldness and spirit against the princes and prophets of Judah; and foretells the destruction of Jerusalem as the consequence of their iniquity, Mic 3:1-12. The last verse was fulfilled to a certain extent by Nebuchadnezzar; but most fully and literally by the Romans under Titus. See Josephus.

Verse 1

Hear - O heads of Jacob - The metaphor of the flock is still carried on. The chiefs of Jacob, and the princes of Israel, instead of taking care of the flocks, defending them, and finding them pasture, oppressed them in various ways. They are like wolves, who tear the skin of the sheep, and the flesh off their bones. This applies to all unjust and oppressive rulers.

Suetonius tells us, in his Life of Tiberius, that when the governors of provinces wrote to the emperor, entreating him to increase the tributes, he wrote back: "It is the property of a good shepherd to shear his sheep, not to skin them." *Praesidibus onerandas tributo provincias suadentibus rescipsit: Boni Pastoris esse Tondere pecus, non Deglubebe.* This is a maxim which many rulers of the earth do not seem to understand.

MICAH 3: 2 You who hate the good, and love the evil; who tear off their skin, and their flesh from off their bones;

MICAH 3: 3 who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the cauldron.

MICAH 3: 4 Then they will cry to the LORD, but he will not answer them. Yes, he will hide his face from them at that time, because they made their deeds evil."

Verse 4

Then shall they cry - When calamity comes upon these oppressors, they shall cry for deliverance: but they shall not be heard; because, in their unjust exactions upon the people, they went on ruthlessly, and would not hear the cry of the oppressed.

MICAH 3: 5 Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who lead my people astray; for those who feed their teeth, they proclaim, "Peace!" and whoever doesn't provide for their mouths, they prepare war against him:

Verse 5

That bite with their teeth - That eat to the full; that are well provided for, and as long as they are so, prophesy smooth things, and cry, Peace! i.e., Ye shall have nothing but peace and prosperity. Whereas the true prophet, "who putteth not into their mouths," who makes no provision for their evil propensities, "they prepare war against him." עליו מלחמה kiddeshu alaiv milchamah, "They sanctify a war against him." They call on all to help them to put down a man who is speaking evil of the Lord's people; and predicting the destruction of his temple, and Israel his inheritance.

MICAH 3: 6 "Therefore night is over you, with no vision, and it is dark to you, that you may not divine; and the sun will go down on the prophets, and the day will be black over them.

Verse 6

Night shall be unto you - Ye shall have no spiritual light, nor will God give you any revelation of his will.

The sun shall go down over the prophets - They prospered for a while, causing the people to err; but they shall also be carried into captivity, and then the sun of their prosperity shall go down for ever, and the very day that gives light and comfort to others, shall be darkness and calamity to them.

MICAH 3: 7 The seers shall be disappointed, and the diviners confounded. Yes, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer from God."

Verse 7

Shall the seers be ashamed - For the false visions of comfort and prosperity which they pretended to see.

And the diviners confounded - Who pretended to foretell future prosperity; for they themselves are now thrall'd in that very captivity which the true prophets foretold, and which the false prophets said should not happen.

MICAH 3: 8 But as for me, I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD, and of judgement, and of might, to declare to Jacob his disobedience, and to Israel his sin.

Verse 8

But - I am full of power - Here is the character of the true prophet. He is filled, all his soul is occupied with power, כח coach, with heavenly energy; by the Spirit of the Lord, the fountain of all truth and might; and of judgment, which enables him to make a proper discernment between the precious and the vile; and of might, גבורה geburah, prevalent power, against which vice shall not be able to prevail, and before which iniquity shall not be able to stand: but all shall fall together, and be confounded.

MICAH 3: 9 Please listen to this, you heads of the house of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice, and pervert all equity.

Verse 9

Hear this - An appeal similar to that in Mic 3:1.

MICAH 3: 10 They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity.

Verse 10

They build up Zion with blood - They might cry out loudly against that butchery practiced by Pekah, king of Israel, and Pul coadjutor of Rezie, against the Jews. See on Mic 2:9 (note). But these were by no means clear themselves; for if they strengthened the city, or decorated the temple, it was by the produce of their exactions and oppressions of the people.

I do not know a text more applicable than this to slave-dealers; or to any who have made their fortunes by such wrongs as affect the life of man; especially the former, who by the gains of this diabolic traffic have built houses etc.; for, following up the prophet's metaphor, the timbers, etc., are the bones of the hapless Africans; and the mortar, the blood of the defenceless progeny of Ham. What an account must all those who have any hand in or profit from this detestable, degrading, and inhuman traffic, give to Him who will shortly judge the quick and dead!

MICAH 3: 11 Her leaders judge for bribes, and her priests teach for a price, and her prophets of it tell fortunes for money: yet they lean on the LORD, and say, "Isn't the LORD in the midst of us? No disaster will come on us."

Verse 11

The heads thereof judge for reward - This does not apply to the regular law officers, who have their proper salaries for giving up their whole time and attention to the conscientious discharge of the duties of their office; but to those who take a reward, who take Bribes, for the perversion of justice; who will decide in favor of those from whom they get the greatest reward.

The prophets - divine for money - These are evidently the false prophets; for none, professing to be sent by God, used any kind of divination.

Yet will they lean upon the Lord - They will prescribe fasts and public thanksgivings, while not one sin is repented of or forsaken, and not one public grievance is redressed.

Is not the Lord among us? - Here is his temple, here are his ordinances, and here are his people. Will he leave these? Yes, he will abandon the whole, because all are polluted.

MICAH 3: 12 Therefore Zion for your sake will be ploughed like a field, and Jerusalem will become heaps of rubble, and the mountain of the temple like the high places of a forest.

Verse 12

Therefore shall Zion - be ploughed as a field - It shall undergo a variety of reverses and sackages, till at last there shall not be one stone left on the top of another, that shall not be pulled down; and then a plough shall be drawn along the site of the walls, to signify an irreparable and endless destruction. Of this ancient custom Horace speaks, *Odor. lib. i., Od. 16, ver. 18.*

Altis urbibus ultimae

Stetere causae cur perirent

Funditus, imprimeretque muris

Hostile aratrum exercitus insolens. "From hence proud cities date their utter falls;

When, insolent in ruin, o'er their walls

The wrathful soldier drags the hostile plough,

That haughty mark of total overthrow."

Francis.

Thus did the Romans treat Jerusalem when it was taken by Titus. Turnus Rufus, or as he is called by St. Jerome, Titus Arinius Rufus, or Terentius Rufus, according to Josephus, caused a plough to be drawn over all the courts of the temple to signify that it should never be rebuilt, and the place only serve for agricultural purposes. See the note on Mat 24:2. Thus Jerusalem became heaps, an indiscriminate mass of ruins and rubbish; and the mountain of the house, Mount Moriah, on which the temple stood, became so much neglected after the total destruction of the temple, that it soon resembled the high places of the forest. What is said here may apply also, as before hinted, to the ruin of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar in the last year of the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of the Jews.

As the Masoretes, in their division of the Bible, reckon the twelve minor prophets but as one book, they mark this verse (Mic 3:12) the Middle verse of these prophets.

MICAH 4: 1 But in the latter days, it will happen that the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established on the top of the mountains, and it will be exalted above the hills; and peoples will stream to it.

In the commencement of this chapter we have a glorious prophecy of the establishment and prosperity of the Messiah's kingdom; its peaceful character, increasing spiritual and political influence, ultimate universality, and everlasting duration, Mic 4:1-4. Then breaks in a chorus of his people declaring their peculiar happiness in being members of his kingdom, Mic 4:5. The prophet resumes the subject; predicts the restoration and future prosperity of Israel, Mic 4:6-8; and exhorts them not to be discouraged at their approaching captivity, as they should in due time not only be delivered from it, but likewise be victorious over all their enemies, Mic 4:9-13. These last verses, which evidently contain a prediction of the final triumph of Christianity over every adversary, have been applied to the conquests of the Maccabees; but the character and beneficial results of their military exploits, as far as we have any account of them, correspond but in a very faint degree to the beautiful and highly wrought terms of the prophecy. The first three verses of this chapter are very similar to the commencement of the second chapter of Isaiah; and the fourth, for beauty of imagery and elegance of expression, is not unworthy of that prophet.

Verse 1

But in the last days it shall come to pass - These four verses contain, says Bp. Newcome, a prophecy that was to be fulfilled by the coming of the Messiah, when the Gentiles were to be admitted into covenant with God, and the apostles were to preach the Gospel, beginning at Jerusalem, Luk 24:47; Act 2:14, etc., when Christ was to be the spiritual Judge and King of many people, was to convince many nations of their errors and vices, and was to found a religion which had the strongest tendency to promote peace. Bp. Lowth thinks that "Micah took this passage from Isaiah;" or the Spirit may have inspired both prophets with this prediction; or both may have copied some common original, the words of a prophet well known at that time. The variations (few and of little importance) may be seen in the notes on the parallel passages, Isa 2:2, etc.; to which the reader is requested to refer.

MICAH 4: 2 Many nations will go 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 will go out of Zion, and the LORD's word from Jerusalem;

MICAH 4: 3 and he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off. They will beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war any more.

MICAH 4: 4 But they will sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and no one will make them afraid: For the mouth of the LORD of Armies has spoken.

Verse 4

Under his vine and under his fig tree - A proverbial expression, indicative of perfect peace, security, and rural comfort. See on Isa 2:1 (note). This verse is an addition to the prophecy as it stands in Isaiah. See Clarke on Mic 4:1 (note).

MICAH 4: 5 Indeed all the nations may walk in the name of their gods; but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.

Verse 5

Every one in the name of his god - This shall be the state of the Gentile world; but after the captivity, the Jews walked in the name of Jehovah alone; and acknowledge no other object of religious worship to the present day.

MICAH 4: 6 "In that day," says the LORD, "I will assemble that which is lame, and I will gather that which is driven away, and that which I have afflicted;

Verse 6

Will I assemble her that halteth - driven out - afflicted - Under these epithets, the state of the Jews, who were to be gathered into the Christian Church, is pointed out. They halted between the true God and idols; they were driven out into captivity, because of this idolatry; and they were variously afflicted, because they would not return unto the Lord that bought them.

MICAH 4: 7 and I will make that which was lame a remnant, and that which was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD will reign over them on Mount Zion from then on, even forever."

Verse 7

Her that halted a remnant - I will preserve them as a distinct people after their return from captivity, for the farther purposes of my grace and mercy.

And the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion - The Chaldee is remarkable here, and positively applies the words to the Messiah: "But thou, O Messiah, of Israel, who art hidden because of the sins of the congregation of Zion, the kingdom shall come unto thee."

MICAH 4: 8 You, tower of the flock, the hill of the daughter of Zion, to you it will come, yes, the former dominion will come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.

Verse 8

O tower of the flock - I think the temple is meant, or Jerusalem; the place where the flock, the whole congregation of the people assembled to worship God. Newcome retains the Hebrew word עֲדָרָה *eder*, a tower in or near Beth-lehem, Gen 35:21 or, as some think, a tower near the sheep-gate in Jerusalem, I believe Jerusalem, or the temple, or both, are meant; for these were considered the stronghold of the daughter-of Zion, the fortress of the Jewish people.

Even the first dominion - What was this? The Divine theocracy under Jesus Christ; this former, this first dominion, was to be restored. Hence the angel called him Immanuel, God with us, ruling among us.

MICAH 4: 9 Now why do you cry out aloud? Is there no king in you? Has your counsellor perished, that pains have taken hold of you as of a woman in travail?

Verse 9

Is there no King in thee? - None. And why? Because thou hast rejected Jehovah thy king.

Is thy counsellor perished? - No: but thou hast rejected the words and advices of the prophets.

Pangs have taken thee - He is speaking of the desolations that should take place when the Chaldeans should come against the city; and hence he says, "Thou shalt go to Babylon;" ye shall be cast out of your own land, and sent slaves to a foreign country, He represents the people under the notion of a woman in travail.

MICAH 4: 10 Be in pain, and labour to give birth, daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail; for now you will go out of the city, and will dwell in the field, and will come even to Babylon. There you will be rescued. There the LORD will redeem you from the hand of your enemies.

Verse 10

There shalt thou be delivered - There God shall meet thee; and by redeeming thee from thy captivity, bringing thee back to thine own land, and finally converting thee unto himself, shall deliver thee from the burden of grief and wo which thou now bearest, and under which thou dost groan.

MICAH 4: 11 Now many nations have assembled against you, that say, "Let her be defiled, and let our eye gloat over Zion."

Verse 11

Many nations are gathered against thee - The Chaldeans, who were composed of many nations. And, we may add, all the surrounding nations were their enemies; and rejoiced when the Chaldean army had overthrown Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and led the people away captive.

Let her be defiled - This was their cry and their wish: Let Jerusalem be laid as low as she can be, like a thing defiled and cast away with abhorrence; that their eyes might look upon Zion with scorn, contempt, and exultation.

MICAH 4: 12 But they don't know the thoughts of the LORD, neither do they understand his counsel; for he has gathered them like the sheaves to the threshing floor.

Verse 12

But they know not the thoughts of the Lord - These think that God has utterly rejected his people, and they shall have a troublesome neighbor no more: but this is not his design; he will afflict them for a time; but these, the enemies of his people, he will gather as sheaves into the threshing-floor, there to be trodden, and the wheel to go over them. This is the counsel, the purpose of God, which these do not understand. The persons here referred to are not only the Chaldeans which were threshed by the Persians and Medes; but the Idumeans, Ammonites, Moabites, and Philistines, which the Jews afterwards subdued.

MICAH 4: 13 Arise and thresh, daughter of Zion; for I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hoofs brass; and you will beat in pieces many peoples: and I will devote their gain to the LORD, and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth.

Verse 13

Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion - This refers to the subject of the preceding verse. When God shall have gathered together all thy enemies, as into the threshing-floor, he will give thee commission and power to get a complete victory over them, and reduce them to servitude. And that thou mayest be able to do this, he will be on thy side as a powerful helper; here signified by the metaphors, iron horns, and brazen hoofs. Thou shalt have power, authority, and unconquerable strength; for thine enemies shall be no more against thee than the corn against oxen shod with brass, or a puny animal against the horn of a fierce bull tipped with iron.

I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord - What they have taken from thee in the way of spoil shall be restored; and again consecrated unto the service of him who will show himself to be the Lord, the Supreme Governor of the whole earth. Was not this prediction fulfilled when Cyrus gave the Jews permission to return to their own land, and gave them back the sacred vessels of the temple which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away? The Maccabees and their successors recovered much of the booty of which the neighboring nations had deprived the Jews; and the treasure taken was devoted to Jehovah. The first verse of the next chapter should conclude this.

MICAH: 5:1 Now you shall gather yourself in troops, daughter of troops. He has laid siege against us. They will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek.

This chapter begins, according to the opinion of some commentators, with a prophecy concerning the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and the great indignities which Zedekiah should suffer from the Babylonians, Mic 5:1. We have next a most famous prediction concerning the birthplace of the Messiah, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from Everlasting, Mic 5:2. See Mat 2:6. The Jews obstinately persisting in their opposition to the Messiah, God will therefore give them up into the hands of their enemies till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled: and then all the posterity of Jacob, both Israel and Judah, shall be converted to the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, along with the Gentiles, be brought into the large and peaceful pastures of this Great Shepherd of the sheep, Mic 5:3, Mic 5:4. After this illustrious prophecy, the prophet goes on to foretell the downfall of the Assyrians, by whom are meant the enemies of the Church in general, the type being probably put for the antitype; the miraculous discomfiture of the great Assyrian army in the reign of Sennacherib strongly shadowing forth the glorious and no less miraculous triumphs of Christianity in the latter times, Mic 5:5, Mic 5:6. See Isa 11:16. Some understand this prophecy of Antiochus and the seven famous Maccabees, with their eight royal successors, from Aristobulus to Antigonus; and it is not impossible that these people may be also intended, for we have often had occasion to remark that a prophecy of the Old Testament Scriptures has frequently more than one aspect. The seventh verse was fulfilled by the Jews spreading the knowledge of the true God during their captivity, and so paving the way for the gospel; but will be more signally fulfilled after their conversion and restoration. See Rom 11:12-15. The remaining verses contain a prophecy of the final overthrow of all the enemies of pure and undefiled religion, and of the thorough purification of the Church of God from the corruptions of Antichrist, Mic 5:9-15.

Verse 1

O daughter of troops - The Chaldeans, whose armies were composed of troops from various nations.

He (Nebuchadnezzar) hath laid siege against us; (Jerusalem); they shall smite the judge of Israel (Zedekiah) with a rod upon the cheek - They shall offer him the greatest indignity. They slew his sons before his face; and then put out his eyes, loaded him with chains, and carried him captive to Babylon.

MICAH 5: 2 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, being small among the clans of Judah, out of you one will come out to me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings out are from of old, from ancient times.

Verse 2

But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah - I have considered this subject in great detail in the notes on Mat 2:6, to which the reader will be pleased to refer. This verse should begin this chapter; the first verse belongs to the preceding chapter.

Bethlehem Ephratah, to distinguish it from another Beth-lehem, which was in the tribe of Zebulun, Jos 19:15.

Thousands of Judah - The tribes were divided into small portions called thousands; as in our country certain divisions of counties are called hundreds.

Whose goings forth have been from of old - In every age, from the foundation of the world, there has been some manifestation of the Messiah. He was the hope, as he was the salvation, of the world, from the promise to Adam in paradise, to his manifestation in the flesh four thousand years after.

From everlasting - מִיְמֵי עוֹלָם miyemey olam, "From the days of all time;" from time as it came out of eternity. That is, there was no time in which he has not been going forth-coming in various ways to save men. And he that came forth the moment that time had its birth, was before that time in which he began to come forth to save the souls that he had created. He was before all things. As he is the Creator of all things, so he is the Eternal, and no part of what was created. All being but God has been created. Whatever has not been created is God. But Jesus is the Creator of all things; therefore he is God; for he cannot be a part of his own work.

MICAH 5: 3 Therefore he will abandon them until the time that she who is in labour gives birth. Then the rest of his brothers will return to the children of Israel.

Verse 3

Therefore wilt he give them up - Jesus Christ shall give up the disobedient and rebellious Jews into the hands of all the nations of the earth, till she who travaileth hath brought forth; that is, till the Christian Church, represented Rev 12:1, under the notion of a woman in travail, shall have had the fullness of the Gentiles brought in. Then the remnant of his brethren shall return; the Jews also shall be converted unto the Lord; and thus all Israel shall be saved according to Rom 11:26.

Unto the children of Israel - Taking in both families, that of Judah and that of Israel. The remnant of the ten tribes, wherever they are, shall be brought in under Christ; and though now lost among the nations of the earth, they will then not only be brought in among the fullness of the Gentiles, but most probably be distinguished as Jews.

On this verse Abp. Newcome says, "The sense is, God will not fully vindicate and exalt his people, till the virgin mother shall have brought forth her Son; and till Judah and Israel, and all the true sons of Abraham among their brethren the Gentiles, be converted to Christianity.

MICAH 5: 4 He shall stand, and shall shepherd in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God: and they will live, for then he will be great to the ends of the earth.

Verse 4

He shall stand and feed - The Messiah shall remain with his followers, supporting and governing them in the strength and majesty of the Lord, with all the miraculous interferences of his power, and all the glories of his grace.

And they shall abide - After this the Jews shall no more go astray, but shall remain one people with the Gentiles, under the one Shepherd and Bishop of all souls.

Newcome translates, "They shall be converted" for instead of וישבו veyashebu, he reads וישבו veyashubu, which gives him the translation above. This is the reading of three MSS. of Kennicott's and De Rossi's, with the Syriac, Chaldee, and Vulgate.

For now shall he be great - The Messiah shall be great, as bringing salvation to the ends of the earth. All nations shall receive his religion, and he shall be universal King.

MICAH 5: 5 He will be our peace when Assyria invades our land, and when he marches through our fortresses, then we will raise against him seven shepherds, and eight leaders of men.

Verse 5

And this man shall be the peace - This clause should be joined to the preceding verse, as it finishes the prophecy concerning our blessed Lord, who is the Author and Prince of Israel; and shall finally give peace to all nations, by bringing them under his yoke.

When the Assyrian shall come - This is a new prophecy, and relates to the subversion of the Assyrian empire.

Then shall we raise against him seven shepherds - Supposed to mean the seven Maccabees, Mattathias, and his five sons, and Hyrcanus, the son of Simon.

Eight principal men - Eight princes, the Asmonean race; beginning with Aristobulus, and ending with Herod, who was married to Mariamne. - Sharpe. Perhaps seven and eight are a definite for an indefinite number, as Ecc 11:2; Job 5:19. The prophet means the chiefs of the Medes and Babylonians, the prefects of different provinces who took Nineveh, whose number may have been what is here specified. - Newcome.

Calmet considers this as referring to the invasion of Judea by Cambyses, when the Lord raised up against him the seven magi. He of them who passed for king of the Persians was the Smerdis of Herodotus, the Oropastes of Trogus, and the Artaxerxes of Ezra. These magi were put to death by seven Persian chiefs; who, having delivered the empire from them, set one of themselves, Darius, the son of Hystaspes, upon the throne.

MICAH 5: 6 They will rule the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in its gates. He will deliver us from the Assyrian, when he invades our land, and when he marches within our border.

Verse 6

The land of Nimrod - Assyria, and Nineveh its capital; and Babylon, which was also built by Nimrod, who was its first king, Gen 10:11, Gen 10:12, in the margin.

In the entrances thereof - At its posts or watergates; for it was by rendering themselves masters of the Euphrates that the Medes and Persians took the city, according to the prediction of Jeremiah, Jer 51:32, Jer 51:36. Calmet thinks that this refers to the deliverance of the land from Cambyses by his death, and the insurrection of the eight princes mentioned above, who made themselves masters of the whole Babylonian empire, etc. Perhaps it is best to refer it to the invasion of Judea by Nebuchadnezzar; and the final destruction of the Babylonish empire by Cyrus, who took Babylon, slew Belshazzar, and possessed himself of the kingdom.

MICAH 5: 7 The remnant of Jacob will be in the midst of many peoples, like dew from the LORD, like showers on the grass, that don't wait for man, nor wait for the sons of men.

Verse 7

The remnant of Jacob - From the reign of Darius Hystaspes (Ahasuerus, husband of Esther) the Jews were greatly favored. Those who continued in Persia and Chaldea were greatly honored under the protection of Mordecai and Esther. - Calmet. But others consider this as applying to the Maccabees.

As a dew from the Lord - Even during their captivity many of the Jews were the means of spreading the knowledge of the one true God; see Dan 2:47; Dan 3:29; Dan 4:34; Dan 6:26. This may be the dew from the Lord mentioned here. When the Messiah appeared, the Gospel was preached by them; and it shall again be propagated by their future glorious restoration, Rom 11:12, Rom 11:25.

The grass, that tarrieth not for man - Which grass springs up without the attention and culture of man; *לֵישׁ* leish, even the best and most skillful of men.

Nor waiteth for the sons of men - *לְבָנֵי אָדָם* libney adam, for the sons of Adam, the first transgressor. The dew and the showers descend on the earth and water it, in order to render it fruitful; and the grass springs up independently either of the worth or wickedness of man. All comes through God's bounty, who causes his sun to shine on the just and the unjust, and his rain to descend on the evil and the good.

MICAH 5: 8 The remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the animals of the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of sheep; who, if he goes through, treads down and tears in pieces, and there is no one to deliver.

Verse 8

As a lion - In this and the following verse the victories of the Maccabees are supposed to be foretold.

MICAH 5: 9 Let your hand be lifted up above your adversaries, and let all of your enemies be cut off.

Verse 9

All thine enemies shall be cut off - The Assyrians, who had destroyed Israel; and the Babylonians, who had ruined Judah.

MICAH 5: 10 "It will happen in that day", says the LORD, "that I will cut off your horses out of your midst, and will destroy your chariots.

Verse 10

I will cut off thy horses - Thou shalt have no need of cavalry in thine armies; God will fight for you.

MICAH 5: 11 I will cut off the cities of your land, and will tear down all your strongholds.

Verse 11

I will - throw down all thy strongholds - Thou shalt have no need of fortified cities; I will be thy defense.

MICAH 5: 12 I will destroy witchcraft from your hand; and you shall have no soothsayers.

Verse 12

I will cut off witchcrafts - Thou shalt seek help only in Jehovah thy God. They have had neither soothsayers, images, groves, nor high places, from the captivity to the present day.

MICAH 5: 13 I will cut off your engraved images and your pillars out of your midst; and you shall no more worship the work of your hands.

Verse 13

Thy graven images also will I cut off - Thou shalt be no more an idolatrous people.

MICAH 5: 14 I will uproot your Asherah poles out of your midst; and I will destroy your cities.

MICAH 5: 15 I will execute vengeance in anger, and wrath on the nations that didn't listen."

Verse 15

I will execute vengeance - upon the heathen - And he did so; for the empires of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and others, the sworn enemies of the Jews, have long since been utterly destroyed.

MICAH 6: 1 Listen now to what the LORD says: "Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear what you have to say.

This chapter reproves and threatens. The manner of raising the attention by calling on man to urge his plea in the face of all nature, and on the inanimate creation to hear the expostulation of Jehovah with his people, is awakening and sublime. The words of Jehovah follow, Mic 6:3-5. And God's mercies having been set forth to his people, one of them is introduced, in a beautiful dramatic form, asking what his duty is towards a God so gracious, Mic 6:6, Mic 6:7. The answer follows in the words of the prophet, Mic 6:8; who goes on to upbraid the people of his charge with their injustice and idolatry, to which he ascribes want of success in their lawful undertakings, and those heave calamities which are now impending, Mic 6:9-15.

Verse 1

Arise, contend thou - This chapter is a sort of dialogue between God and the people. God speaks the five first verses, and convicts the people of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The People, convinced of their iniquity, deprecate God's judgments, in the sixth and seventh verses. In the eighth verse God prescribes the way in which they are to be saved; and then the prophet, by the command of God, goes on to remonstrate from the ninth verse to the end of the chapter.

MICAH 6: 2 Hear, you mountains, the LORD's controversy, and you enduring foundations of the earth; for the LORD has a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel.

Verse 2

Hear ye, O mountains - Micah, as God's advocate, summons this people into judgment, and makes an appeal to inanimate creation against them. He had spoken to the priests, to the princes, to the people. He had done every thing that was necessary to make them wise, and holy, and happy; they had uniformly disobeyed, and were ever ungrateful. It was not consistent with either the justice or mercy of God to permit them to go on without reprehension and punishment. He now calls them into judgment; and such was the nature of their crimes that, to heighten the effect, and show what reason he had to punish such a people, he appeals to inanimate creation. Their ingratitude and rebellion are sufficient to make the mountains, the hills, and the strong foundations of the earth to

hear, tremble, and give judgment against them. This, then, is the Lord's controversy with his people, and thus he will plead with Israel.

MICAH 6: 3 My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me!

Verse 3

O my people, what have I done unto thee? - They are called to show why God should not pronounce sentence upon them. This condescension is truly astonishing! God appears to humble himself to his creatures. You have acted basely, treacherously, and ungratefully to me; this had already been proved by the prophets. What cause have I given you for such conduct? I have required a religious service from you; but have I wearied you by a fatiguing round of difficult duties? If I have, now testify against me; and you shall be first heard, and your plea received, if it be reasonable and good. They are silent; and God proceeds, and states what he has done for them.

MICAH 6: 4 For I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage. I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

Verse 4

I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt - Where you were slaves, and grievously oppressed; from all this I redeemed you. Was this a small benefit? I sent before thee Moses, my chosen servant, and instructed him that he might be your leader and lawgiver. I sent with him Aaron, that he might be your priest and transact all spiritual matters between myself and you, in offerings, sacrifices, and atonements. I sent Miriam, to whom I gave the spirit of prophecy, that she might tell you things to come, and be the director of your females. To this sense the Chaldee, "I have sent three prophets before you; Moses, that he might teach you the tradition of judgments, Aaron, that he might make atonement for the people; and Miriam, that she might instruct the females."

MICAH 6: 5 My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD."

Verse 5

Remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted - He sent for Balaam to curse your fathers; but by my influence he was obliged to bless them. See Numbers 22 (note) and Numbers 23 (note), and the notes there, where this subject is largely considered.

From Shittim unto Gilgal - From the encampment at Shittim, Num 25:1, on the way to that of Gilgal, Jos 4:19. Balaam gave different answers in the interval between these places. We may suppose that the encampments of Israel advanced slowly to that part of Jordan which was opposite to Gilgal. The Chaldee has, "Were there not wonderful things done in your behalf from the valley of Shittim to the

house of Gilgal?" See Jos 3:1; Jos 4:20. Thus there will be a reference to the miraculous passage over Jordan. See Newcome.

That ye may know the righteousness - The just, equitable, and merciful dealing of the Most High. Recollect those things, that ye may have a proper impression of this. There are many interpretations given of this rather obscure clause; what I have proposed seems to me the most simple.

This is the sum of the address; and here the case of the plaintiff terminates, the prisoners being called to show why the sentence of the law should not be pronounced. I make no apology for using any forensic terms, as the passages before us refer to a case brought into a court to be judged, and the terms in the original are all such as are proper for a court of justice; and the thing itself is called the Lord's controversy, רִיב יְהוָה rib Yehovah, Jehovah's suit at law. And hence it is said, He will plead, litigate, with Israel.

MICAH 6: 6 How shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

Verse 6

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord - Now the people, as defendants, appear; but instead of vindicating themselves, or attempting to dispute what has been alleged against them, they seem at once to plead guilty; and now anxiously inquire how they shall appease the wrath of the Judge, how they shall make atonement for the sins already committed.

Bow myself before the high God - They wish to pray, and to make supplication to their Judge; but how shall they come before him? They have no right to come into his presence. Some offering must be brought; but of what kind, or of what value? Their sin is unprecedented, and usual methods of access will not avail. They are distracted in their minds, and make a variety of proposals to themselves, some rational, some absurd and impossible, and some even sinful.

Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings - This is reasonable, and according to the law; but this will be insufficient.

MICAH 6: 7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams? With tens of thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my disobedience? The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

Verse 7

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams - These might be procured, though with difficulty; but conscience says neither will these do.

With ten thousands of rivers of oil - This is absurd and impossible; but could even these be procured, could they all make atonement for such guilt, and ingratitude, and rebellion?

Shall I give my first-born for my transgression - This was sinful and wicked; but such offerings had been made by the Phoenicians, and their successors the Carthaginians, and this very custom was copied by the corrupt Israelites. See some cases of such offerings, 2Kgs 3:27 (note); Lev 20:27 (note).

The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? - This clause is an explanation of the former. Shall I make the first-born, the best and goodliest of my children, חַטָּאת chattath, a Sin-Offering for my soul? And thus the original is used in a multitude of places.

When they had put all these questions to their reason and conscience, they found no satisfaction; their distraction is increased, and despair is about to take place, when Jehovah, the plaintiff, in his mercy interposes:

MICAH 6: 8 He has shown you, O man, what is good. What does the LORD require of you, but to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

Verse 8

He hath showed thee, O Man, what is good - All the modes of expiation which ye have proposed are, in the sight of God, unavailable; they cannot do away the evil, nor purify from the guilt of sin. He himself has shown thee what is good; that which is profitable to thee, and pleasing to himself. And what is that? Answer, Thou art: -

I. To do justly; to give to all their due.

1. To God his due; thy heart, thy body, soul, and spirit; thy Wisdom, understanding, judgment. "To love him with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." This is God's due and right from every man.

2. Thou art to give thy neighbor his due to do to him as thou wouldst that he should do to thee, never working ill to him.

3. Thou art to give to thyself thy due; not to deprive thy soul of what God has provided for it; to keep thy body in temperance, sobriety, and chastity; avoiding all excesses, both in action and passion.

II. Thou art to love mercy; not only to do what justice requires, but also what mercy, kindness, benevolence, and charity require.

III. But how art thou to do this? Thou art to walk humbly with thy God; הִצַּנְתָּ hatsnea, to humble thyself to walk. This implies to acknowledge thy iniquity, and submit to be saved by his free mercy, as thou hast already found that no kind of offering or sacrifice can avail. Without this humiliation of soul there never was, there never can be, any walking With God; for without his mercy no soul can be saved; and he must be Thy God before thou canst walk with him. Many, when they hear the nature of sin pointed out, and the way of salvation made plain through the blood of the Lamb, have shut their eyes both against sin and the proper sacrifice for it, and parried all exhortation, threatening, etc., with this text: "God requires nothing of us but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with him." Now I ask any man, Art thou willing to stand or fall by this text? And it would cost me neither much time nor much pains to show that on this ground no soul of man can be saved. Nor does God say that this doing justly, etc., shall merit eternal glory. No. He shows that in this way all men should walk; that this is the duty of Every rational being; but he well knows that no fallen soul can act thus without especial assistance from him, and that it is only the regenerate man, the man who has found redemption through the blood of the cross, and has God for His God, that can thus act and walk. Salvation is of the mere mercy of God alone; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

The manner of raising attention, says Bp. Newcome, on Mic 6:1, Mic 6:2, by calling on man to urge his plea in the face of all nature, and on the inanimate creation to hear the expostulation of Jehovah with his people, is truly awakening and magnificent. The words of Jehovah follow in Mic 6:3-5. And God's mercies having been set before the people, one of them is introduced in a beautiful dramatic form; asking what his duty is towards so gracious a God, Mic 6:6, Mic 6:7. The answer follows in the words of the prophet, Mic 6:8. Some think we have a sort of dialogue between Balak and Balaam, represented to us in the prophetic way. The king of Moab speaks, Mic 6:6. Balaam replies by another question in the two first hemistichs of Mic 6:7. The king of Moab rejoins in the remaining part of the verse; and Balaam replies, Mic 6:8. Bps. Butler and Lowth favor this. I cannot agree.

MICAH 6: 9 The LORD's voice calls to the city, and wisdom sees your name: "Listen to the rod, and he who appointed it.

Verse 9

The Lord's voice crieth unto the city - No man is found to hear; but the man of wisdom will hear, תושיה tushiyah; a word frequent in the writings of Solomon and Job, signifying wisdom, wealth, substance, reason, essence, happiness; any thing that is complete; or that which is substantial, in opposition to vanity, emptiness, mere show, unsubstantiality. When God speaks, the man of common sense, who has any knowledge of God or his own soul, will see thy name; but instead of יראה yireh, will see, the Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, and Arabic, with twelve of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS., have read יראי yirey, they that Fear. The Vulgate reads: -

Et salus erit timentibus nomen tuum. "And thou shalt be salvation to them that fear thy name."

The Septuagint - και σωσει φαβουμενους το ονομα αυτου.

And he shall save those who fear his name. -

This the Arabic copies.

The Targum has, "And the teachers shall fear the name." That is, יהוה Yehovah.

The French Bible is very strange: -

Car ton nom volt comme il va de tout. "For thy name sees how every thing goes."

The word תושיה tushiyah, mentioned above, which occasions all the difficulty, has been read with an ע ain by the Vulgate and Septuagint, as coming from the root ישע yasha, to be saved; and it is very likely that this was the original reading. The two last letters in the word, יה, might have been easily mistaken in the MS. for the letter ע where I may suppose the word stood thus, תושע, shall be saved; and as several MSS. read יראי yirey, they who fear, instead of יראה yireh, he shall see, the whole clause might have been just what it appears in the Vulgate and Septuagint. It is also necessary to remark that the word in dispute has various forms in some MSS., which is a strong presumption against its authenticity. See Kennicott and De Rossi.

MICAH 6: 10 Are there yet treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and a short ephah that is accursed?

 Verse 10

Are there yet the treasures of wickedness - Such as false balances and deceitful weights. See on Hos 12:7 (note). This shows that they were not Doing Justly. They did not give to each his due.

MICAH 6: 11 Shall I be pure with dishonest scales, and with a bag of deceitful weights?

MICAH 6: 12 Her rich men are full of violence, her inhabitants speak lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their speech.

Verse 12

For the rich men thereof are full of violence - This shows that they did not love mercy.

The inhabitants thereof have spoken lies - This shows that they did not humble themselves to walk with God.

MICAH 6: 13 Therefore I also have struck you with a grievous wound. I have made you desolate because of your sins.

Verse 13

Will I make thee sick in smiting thee - Perhaps better, "I also am weary with smiting thee, in making thee desolate for thy sins." They were corrected, but to no purpose; they had stroke upon stroke, but were not amended.

MICAH 6: 14 You shall eat, but not be satisfied. Your humiliation will be in your midst. You will store up, but not save; and that which you save I will give up to the sword.

Verse 14

Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied - All thy possessions are cursed, because of thy sins; and thou hast no real good in all thy enjoyments.

And thy casting down - For וישחך veyeshchacha, "thy casting down," Newcome, by transposing the n and ש, reads וישחך veyechshach, "and it shall be dark;" and this is probably the true reading. The Arabic and Septuagint have read the same. "There shall be calamity in the midst of thee." It shall have its seat and throne among you.

MICAH 6: 15 You will sow, but won't reap. You will tread the olives, but won't anoint yourself with oil; and crush grapes, but won't drink the wine.

 Verse 15

Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap - Thou shalt labor to amass property, but thou shalt not have God's blessing; and whatever thou collectest, thy enemies shall carry away. And at last carry thyself into captivity.

MICAH 6: 16 For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab. You walk in their counsels, that I may make you a ruin, and her inhabitants a hissing; And you will bear the reproach of my people."

Verse 16

The statutes of Omri are kept - Omri, king of Israel, the father of Ahab, was one of the worst kings the Israelites ever had; and Ahab followed in his wicked father's steps. The statutes of those kings were the very grossest idolatry. Jezebel, wife of the latter, and daughter of Ithobaal, king of Tyre, had no fellow on earth. From her Shakespeare seems to have drawn the character of Lady Macbeth; a woman, like her prototype, mixed up of tigress and fiend, without addition. Omri Ahab, and Jezebel, were the models followed by the Israelites in the days of this prophet.

The inhabitants thereof a hissing - לִשְׂרָקָה lishrekah, "for a shriek;" because those who should see them should be both astonished and affrighted at them.

There are few chapters in the prophets, or in the Bible, superior to this for genuine worth and importance. The structure is as elegant as it is impressive; and it is every way worthy of the Spirit of God.

MICAH 7: 1 Misery is mine! Indeed, I am like one who gathers the summer fruits, as gleanings of the vineyard: There is no cluster of grapes to eat. My soul desires to eat the early fig.

The prophet begins this chapter with lamenting the decay of piety and the growth of ungodliness, using a beautiful allegory to imply (as explained in Mic 7:2) that the good man is as seldom to be met with as the early fig of best quality in the advanced season, or the cluster after the vintage, Mic 7:1, Mic 7:2. He then reproves and threatens in terms so expressive of great calamities as to be applied in the New Testament to times of the hottest persecution, Mic 7:3-6. See Mat 10:35, Mat 10:36. Notwithstanding which a Jew is immediately introduced declaring, in the name of his captive people, the strongest faith in the mercy of God the most submissive resignation to his will, and the firmest hope in his favor in future times, when they should triumph over their enemies, Mic 7:7-10. The

prophet upon this resumes the discourse, and predicts their great prosperity and increase, Mic 7:11, Mic 7:12; although the whole land of Israel must first be desolated on account of the great wickedness of its inhabitants, Mic 7:13. The prophet intercedes in behalf of his people, Mic 7:14. After which God is introduced promising, in very ample terms, their future restoration and prosperity, Mic 7:15-17. And then, to conclude, a chorus of Jews is introduced, singing a beautiful hymn of thanksgiving, suggested by the gracious promises which precede, Mic 7:18-20.

Verse 1

Wo is me! - This is a continuation of the preceding discourse. And here the prophet points out the small number of the upright to be found in the land. He himself seemed to be the only person who was on God's side; and he considers himself as a solitary grape, which had escaped the general gathering. The word קָיִץ *kayits*, which is sometimes used for summer, and summer fruits in general, is here translated late figs; and may here, says Bishop Newcome, be opposed to the early ripe fig of superior quality. See on Hos 9:10 (note), and Amo 8:1 (note), Amo 8:2 (note). He desired to see the first-ripe fruit - distinguished and eminent piety; but he found nothing but a very imperfect or spurious kind of godliness.

MICAH 7: 2 The godly man has perished out of the earth, and there is no one upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood; every man hunts his brother with a net.

Verse 2

The good man is perished out of the earth - A similar sentiment may be found, Psa 12:1; Isa 57:1. As the early fig of excellent flavor cannot be found in the advanced season of summer, or a choice cluster of grapes after vintage, so neither can the good and upright man be discovered by searching in Israel. This comparison, says Bp. Newcome, is beautifully implied.

They hunt every man his brother with a net - This appears to be an allusion to the ancient mode of duel between the retiarius and secutor. The former had a casting net, which he endeavoured to throw over the head of his antagonist, that he might then despatch him with his short sword. The other parried the cast; and when the retiarius missed, he was obliged to run about the field to get time to set his net in right order for another throw. While he ran, the other followed, that he might despatch him before he should be able to recover the proper position of his net; and hence the latter was called secutor, the pursuer, as the other was called retiarius, or the net man. I have explained this before on Job, and other places; but because it is rarely noticed by commentators, I explain the allusion here once more. Abp. Newcome by not attending to this, has translated אִישׁ אֶת חֵרֶם יִצְוֶהוּ *ish eth achihu yatsudu cherem*, "They hunt every man his brother for his destruction;" though he put net in the margin.

MICAH 7: 3 Their hands are on that which is evil to do it diligently. The ruler and judge ask for a bribe; and the powerful man dictates the evil desire of his soul. Thus they conspire together.

Verse 3

That they may do evil with both hands - That is, earnestly, greedily, to the uttermost of their power. The Vulgate translates: *Malum manuum suarum dicunt bonum*; "The evil of their hands they call good."

The prince asketh - A bribe, to forward claims in his court.

The judge asketh for a reward - That he may decide the cause in favor of him who gives most money, whether the cause be good or evil. This was notoriously the case in our own country before the giving of Magna Charta; and hence that provision, *Nulli vendemus justitiam aut rectum*: "We will not sell justice to any man." And this was not the only country in which justice and judgment were put to sale.

The great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire - Such consider themselves above law, and they make no secret of their unjust determinations. And so they wrap it up - they all conjoin in doing evil in their several offices, and oppressing the poor; so our translators have interpreted the original *ויעבתוהו* *vayeabtuha*, which the versions translate variously. Newcome has, "And they do abominably."

MICAH 7: 4 The best of them is like a brier. The most upright is worse than a thorn hedge. The day of your watchmen, even your visitation, has come; now is the time of their confusion.

Verse 4

The best of them is as a brier - They are useless in themselves, and cannot be touched without wounding him that comes in contact with them. He alludes to the thick thorn hedges, still frequent in Palestine.

The day of thy watchmen - The day of vengeance, which the prophets have foreseen and proclaimed, is at hand. Now shall be their perplexity; no more wrapping up, all shall be unfolded. In that day every man will wish that he were different from what he is found to be; but he shall be judged for what he is, and for the deeds he has done.

MICAH 7: 5 Don't trust in a neighbour. Don't put confidence in a friend. With the woman lying in your embrace, be careful of the words of your mouth!

Verse 5

Trust ye not in a friend - These times will be so evil, and the people so wicked, that all bonds will be dissolved; and even the most intimate will betray each other, when they can hope to serve themselves by it.

On this passage, in the year 1798, I find I have written as follows: - "Trust ye not in a friend. - Several of those whom I have delighted to call by that name have deceived me. "Put ye not confidence in a guide. - Had I followed some of these I should have gone to perdition. "Keep the door of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. - My wife alone never deceived me."

It is now twenty-seven years since, and I find no cause to alter what I then wrote.

MICAH 7: 6 For the son dishonours 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.

Verse 6

For the son dishonoreth the father - See the use our Lord has made of these words, where he quotes them, Mat 10:21 (note), Mat 10:25 (note), Mat 10:36 (note), and the notes there.

MICAH 7: 7 But as for me, I will look to the LORD. I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.

Verse 7

Therefore I will look unto the Lord - Because things are so, I will trust in the Lord more firmly, wait for him more patiently, and more confidently expect to be supported, defended, and saved.

MICAH 7: 8 Don't rejoice against me, my enemy. When I fall, I will arise. When I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me.

Verse 8

Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy - The captive Israelites are introduced as speaking here and in the preceding verse. The enemy are the Assyrians and Chaldeans; the fall is their idolatry and consequent captivity; the darkness, the calamities they suffered in that captivity; their rise and light, their restoration and consequent blessedness.

To rejoice over the fall or miseries of any man, betrays a malignant spirit. I have known several instances where people professing to hold a very pure and Christian creed, having become unfaithful and fallen into sin, their opponents, who held a very impure and unchristian creed, have exulted with "Ha, ha! so would we have it!" and have shown their malignity more fully, by giving all possible publicity and circulation to such accounts. Perhaps in the sight of God this was worse than the poor wretch's fall, in which they exulted as having taken place in one who held a creed different from their own. But these arose again from their fall, while those jesters at holiness continued in the gall of bitterness and bonds of inward corruption.

MICAH 7: 9 I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he pleads my case, and executes judgement for me. He will bring me out to the light. I will see his righteousness.

Verse 9

I will bear the indignation of the Lord - The words of the penitent captives, acknowledging their sins and praying for mercy.

Until he plead my cause - And wo to the slanderers, when God undertakes to plead for the fallen who have returned to him with deep compunction of heart, seeking redemption in the blood of the cross.

MICAH 7: 10 Then my enemy will see it, and shame will cover her who said to me, where is the LORD your God? Then my enemy will see me and will cover her shame. Now she will be trodden down like the mire of the streets.

Verse 10

Then she that is mine enemy - This may refer particularly to the city of Babylon.

Shall she be trodden down - Literally fulfilled in the package of that city by the Persians, and its consequent total ruin. It became as mire; its walls, formed of brick kneaded with straw and baked in the sun, becoming exposed to the wet, dissolved, so that a vestige of the city remains not, except a few bricks digged from under the rubbish, several pieces of which now lie before me, and show the perishing materials of which the head of this proud empire was composed.

MICAH 7: 11 A day to build your walls— In that day, he will extend your boundary.

Verse 11

In the day that thy walls are to be built - This refers to Jerusalem; the decree, to the purpose of God to deliver the people into captivity. "This shall be far removed." God having purposed their return, I cannot think, with some commentators, that this verse contains threatenings against Jerusalem, and not promises. See Hag 1:1-15 (note), where the subject is similar; and the restoration of Jerusalem is certainly what the prophet describes.

MICAH 7: 12 In that day they will come to you from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt even to the River, and from sea to sea, and mountain to mountain.

Verse 12

In that day also he shall come - Bp. Newcome translates: - "And in that day they shall come unto thee

From Assyria and the fenced cities;

And from Egypt even unto the river."

Calmet translates: - "They shall come to thee from Assyria even unto Egypt;

And from Egypt even to the river; (Euphrates);

And from one sea to another, and from one mountain to another."

This, says he, gives an easy sense; whereas we cannot tell where to find those fortified cities spoken of by other translators. The Israelites were to return from their captivity, and re-occupy their ancient country from Assyria to Egypt; that is, from the river Euphrates to the river Nile; and from the Mediterranean Sea to the Ocean, and from Mount Libanus to the mountains of Arabia Petraea, or Mount Seir. See Amo 8:12. This prediction was literally fulfilled under the Asmoneans. The Jewish nation was greatly extended and very powerful under Herod, at the time that our Lord was born. See Calmet.

MICAH 7: 13 Yet the land will be desolate because of those who dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings.

Verse 13

Notwithstanding the land shall be desolate - This should be translated in the preter tense, "Though the land Had been desolate;" that is, the land of Israel had been desolate during the captivity, which captivity was the "fruit of the evil doings of them that had dwelt therein."

MICAH 7: 14 Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock of your heritage, who dwell by themselves in a forest, in the midst of fertile pasture land, let them feed; in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old.

Verse 14

Feed thy people with thy rod - בִּשְׁבִיטָךָ beshibtecha, "with thy crook." The shepherd's crook is most certainly designed, as the word flock immediately following shows. No rod of correction or affliction is here intended; nor does the word mean such.

Solitarily - They have been long without a shepherd or spiritual governor.

In the midst of Carmel - Very fruitful in vines.

Bashan and Gilead - Proverbially fruitful in pasturages.

MICAH 7: 15 "As in the days of your coming out of the land of Egypt, I will show them marvellous things."

Verse 15

According to the days - This is the answer to the prophet's prayer; and God says he will protect, save, defend, and work miracles for them in their restoration, such as he wrought for their fathers in their return from Egypt to the promised land.

MICAH 7: 16 The nations will see and be ashamed of all their might. They will lay their hand on their mouth. Their ears will be deaf.

Verse 16

The nations shall see and be confounded - Whether the words in these verses (Mic 7:15-17) be applied to the return from the Babylonish captivity, or to the prosperity of the Jews under the Maccabees, they may be understood as ultimately applicable to the final restoration of this people, and their lasting prosperity under the Gospel.

MICAH 7: 17 They will lick the dust like a serpent. Like crawling things of the earth they shall come trembling out of their dens. They will come with fear to the LORD our God, and will be afraid because of you.

MICAH 7: 18 Who is a God like you, who pardons iniquity, and passes over the disobedience of the remnant of his heritage? He doesn't retain his anger forever, because he delights in loving kindness.

Verse 18

Who is a God like unto thee, etc - Here is a challenge to all idol worshippers, and to all those who take false views of the true God, to show his like. See his characters; they are immediately subjoined.

1. He pardoneth iniquity. This is the prerogative of God alone; of that Being who alone has power to save or to destroy.
2. He passeth by transgression. He can heal backsliding, and restore them that are fallen.
3. He retaineth not his anger forever. Though, justly displeased because of sin, he pours out his judgments upon the wicked; yet when they return to him, he shows "that he retaineth not his anger forever," but is indescribably ready to save them.
4. He delighteth in mercy. Judgment is his strange work: he is ever more ready to save than to destroy. Nothing can please him better than having the opportunity, from the return and repentance of the sinner, to show him that mercy without which he must perish everlastingly.
5. Because he is such a God -
 1. "He will turn again." His face has been long turned from us, because of our sins.
 2. "He will have compassion upon us" pity our state, and feel for our sorrows.
 3. "He will subdue our iniquities." Though they have been mighty, he will bring them down, and bruise them under our feet.
 4. "He will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Will fully pardon them, and never more remember them against us. Instead of חַטָּאתָם chattotham, Their sins, five MSS. of Kennicott's and De Rossi's, with the Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, and Arabic read חַטָּאתֵינוּ chattotheynu, Our sins. He

will plunge them into eternal oblivion, never more to come into sight or remembrance; like a stone dropped into the "depths of the sea."

MICAH 7: 19 He will again have compassion on us. He will tread our iniquities under foot; and you will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

MICAH 7: 20 You will give truth to Jacob, and mercy to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.

Verse 20

Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob - The promises which he has made to Jacob and his posterity. Not one of them can ever fall to the ground. "And the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn;" viz., that "in his Seed all the families of the earth should be blessed;" that the Messiah should come from Abraham, through his son Isaac, by Jacob and David; be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel. And this promise, and this oath, God has most signally fulfilled by the incarnation of Christ, who was sent to bless us by turning away every one of us from his iniquities; and for this purpose he was delivered for our offenses, and rose again for our justification; and repentance and remission of sins are preached in his name to all nations. The proclamation was first made at Jerusalem; and that the prophet refers to this, is evident from the use made of these words by Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, when, under the full afflatus of the Spirit of God, he quoted this prophecy of Micah, as fulfilled in the incarnation of Christ, Luk 1:72, Luk 1:73. The Chaldee paraphrases this last verse with spirit and propriety: "Thou wilt give the truth to Jacob his son, as thou hast promised by oath to him in Beth-el. And the mercy to Abraham and to his seed after him, as thou didst swear to him amidst the divisions. Thou wilt be mindful of us on account of the binding of Isaac, who was bound upon the altar before thee.

And thou wilt do us that good, which, from the most ancient days, thou hast promised to our fathers by an oath." Between the divisions, refers to the covenant made between God and Abraham, Gen 15:9-11, Gen 15:17, Gen 15:18. Well might the prophet exult in his challenge to earth and hell. Who Is a God Like unto Thee! Hell is speechless, earth is dumb. Infidels dare not open their mouths!!! Hallelujah! מִי אֱלֹהִים כְּמוֹךָ mi El camocha! Jesus is the mighty God and Savior, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, and saving to the uttermost all that come unto God through him. Blessed be God! Reader, lay this to heart.