
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.