
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 $\gamma\pi$ 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 איש את אחיו יצודו חרם 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! **מי אל כמוך** 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.