

Micah 5:5-15

Micah 5:5 – **“When the Assyrian comes into our land
and treads in our palaces,
then we will raise against him seven shepherds
and eight princes of men;**

5:6 – **“they shall shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword,
and the land of Nimrod at its entrances;
and he shall deliver us from the Assyrian
when he comes into our land
and treads within our border.**

1. A quick switch from the peaceful reign of the future shepherd/king of Israel to the invasion of “the Assyrian”
2. Who is “the Assyrian” and who does “Assyria” refer to? Placing this historically is a challenge:
 - a. Sennacherib – but, there was no coalition that successfully resisted Assyrians. In fact, Assyria was successful in overrunning all of Judah and forcing Jerusalem to pay tribute.
 - b. Nebuchadnezzar – why not say “Babylonian”? Plus, Babylon was not stopped.
 - c. Antiochus III the Great (22-187 BC) – why not say “Greeks”. The Maccabees did stop the foreign invasion and conduct successful military efforts outside the land of Israel.
 - d. Figure of speech for world powers or the nations that came, come or will come sometime in the future against Israel –
 - i. If this refers to world powers in the future then this is a prophecy of Israel’s ultimate victory
 - ii. This matches Micah’s book where he is looking at “many nations” oppressing Israel in 4:11-13 and 7:16-17
 - iii. Israel is restored to their land in the distant future for the kingdom age from “Assyria” in Micah 7:12
 - iv. Hosea 3:1-5 – The oppression that began under the Assyrians would continue until the age of the Messiah
 - v. Isaiah 11:10-11 used “Assyria” as the place Israel would return from for the final eschatological restoration.
 - vi. Zechariah 10:10 refers to “Assyria” in 520 BC as the place Israel is regathered
 - e. The anti-Christ and his kingdom –
3. “seven shepherds” and “eight leaders”
 - a. This is not a specific prophecy of 7 and 8 individuals appearing at some point in history
 - b. The use of these numbers in this way is a way of predicting the abundance of manpower available to Israel at this time. It is an indefinite number of leaders that God will use to accomplish this historic task of regathering and organizing his people coming back from “Assyria”
 - c. Examples of progressive numbers being used to speak of completeness, total, growing, or a undetermined large number are:
 - i. Eccl. 11:2 – “Give a portion to seven, or even to eight, for you know not what disaster may happen on earth.”
 - ii. Proverbs 30:15, 18, 21, 29 – “The leech has two daughters: Give and Give”. . . “Three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand”. . . “Under three

things the earth trembles; under four it cannot bear up". . . "Three things are stately in their tread; four are stately in their stride."

- iii. Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6 – "For three transgressions of [Damascus], and for four, I will not revoke the punishment" (7x)
- iv. This is also common in Ugaritic
- v. In contemporary text this is not a literal number(s) but used to indicate an indefinite and likely larger number: "and his seven concubines" . . . "and the eight wives of Baal"

d. What is unique about the mention of multiple "shepherds" and "leaders" is 5:1-5 was just talking about the one, unique coming king/shepherd.

5:7 – "Then the remnant of Jacob shall be

in the midst of many peoples

like dew from the Lord,

like showers on the grass,

which delay not for a man

nor wait for the children of man.

5:8 – "And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations,

in the midst of many peoples,

like a lion among the beasts of the forest,

like a young lion among the flocks of sheep,

which, when it goes through, treads down

and tears in pieces, and there is none to deliver.

5:9 – "Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries,

and all your enemies shall be cut off.

- 1. National promises are in 5:7-9
- 2. Two times "the remnant" is compared to something small or singular in an overwhelming situation, but rises to overcome and dominate:
 - a. "like dew...like showers" – blessing all the nations
 - b. "like a lion...a young lion" – judging all the nations
- 3. Both times the remnant rises:
- 4. But, one is gentle (dew, rain) and one is destructive (lion, young lion).
 - a. Dew, rain is a blessing and causes growth and refreshing...blessing
 - b. Lion, young lion is a hunter and devours...judgment.
 - c. When the remnant returns they will serve God's purpose of bringing both blessing and judgment.
- 5. These verses match the remnant in 4:6-8
- 6. The lion among the helpless sheep is comparable to the bull in 4:13
- 7. The "many peoples" and the "flocks of sheep" are the nations identified as "adversaries" and enemies" in 5:9

**5:10 – "And in that day, declares the Lord,
I will cut off your horses from among you
and will destroy your chariots;**

**5:11 – "and I will cut off the cities of your land
and throw down all your strongholds;**

5:12 – "and I will cut off sorceries from your hand,

and you shall have no more tellers of fortunes;

5:13 – **“and I will cut off your carved images**

and your pillars from among you,

and you shall bow down no more

to the work of your hands;

5:14 – **“and I will root out your Asherah images from among you**

and destroy your cities.

5:15 – **“And in anger and wrath I will execute vengeance**

on the nations that did not obey.

1. 5:10-15 is a reference to the purification of Israel upon their return. Israel has always had foreign and faulty alliance and allegiances to nations and false religions. These were to be severed forever.
2. Nationalistic pride and military strength was not what Micah and Yahweh were wanting the people to trust. Remember Isaiah’s words to Hezekiah when facing Sennacherib.
 - a. Isaiah 2:12-22
3. Religious efforts and seeking after the spiritual dimension (outside of Yahweh) were pursued.
 - a. Isaiah 2:6-11
4. Points of cutting off:
 - a. Horses – military strength and foreign aid
 - b. Chariots - military strength and foreign aid.
 - c. Cities - military strength and foreign aid. These are walled cities
 - d. Strongholds - military strength and foreign aid. These are fortified cities.
 - e. Sorceries
 - f. Tellers of fortunes
 - g. Carved images
 - h. Pillars – these are sacred pillars which are stones set up on an end in a sanctuary. This is associated with the male deity in the Canaanite religions. Part of a high place
 - i. Work of your hands (idols) –
 - i. Isaiah 2:8 – bow down to the work of their hands
 - ii. Hosea 8:5 refers to man-made images which blaspheme the transcendent God.
 - j. Asherah images – symbols of the mother-goddess, the wife of El.
 - k. Cities which is a word for idols, and not referring to cities here.
5. Nations that did not respond to the Lord throughout this intervening time period. This connects back to the purpose of the book in 1:2...the nations need to pay attention to what the Lord is doing to Israel:

“Hear, you peoples, all of you;[a]
pay attention, O earth, and all that is in it,
and let the Lord God be a witness against you,
the Lord from his holy temple.