

03 Advent: Micah (Handout)

Micah 5.1-5a, 7.14-20

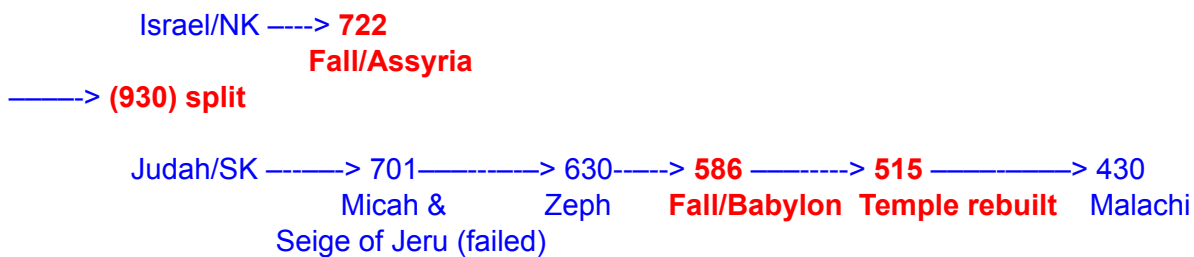
Type [bit/ly.nlncmu](https://bit.ly/nlncmu) into the address bar of any browser for a series overview and session notes.

A. Getting started – Tim

- Tell us about a time when you worshipped in a very large, formal, liturgical church.

Micah background

Adam/Eve... Noah... Abram, Isaac, Jacob/Israel —> Exodus (1450 BCE)...



B. Micah 5.1-5 – Tim

Mobilize! Marshal your troops! The enemy is laying siege to Jerusalem.

They will strike Israel's leader in the face with a rod.

A Ruler from Bethlehem

2 But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf.

3 The people of Israel will be abandoned to their enemies until the woman in labor gives birth. Then, at last, his fellow countrymen will return from exile to their own land.

4 And he will stand to lead his flock with the Lord's strength, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. Then his people will live there undisturbed, for he will be highly honored around the world.

5 And he will be the source of peace. When the Assyrians invade our land and break through our defenses, we will appoint seven rulers to watch over us, eight princes to lead us.

Questions on the text

- In v1, to what seige does this refer?
- Can you guess why Micah calls the town Bethlehem Ephrathah?
- To what do you think v2 points? .
- Can you remember other biblical stories centered in Bethlehem?
- There are several biblical metaphors for God's relationship with his people. Which one shows up in this passage?
- How can we make sense out of the second sentence in v5?

C. Micah 7.14-20 – Ryan

The Lord's Compassion on Israel

O Lord, protect your people with your shepherd's staff; lead your flock, your special possession. Though they live alone in a thicket on the heights of Mount Carmel, let them graze in the fertile pastures of Bashan and Gilead as they did long ago.

15 "Yes," says the Lord, "I will do mighty miracles for you, like those I did when I rescued you from slavery in Egypt."

16 All the nations of the world will stand amazed at what the Lord will do for you. They will be embarrassed at their feeble power. They will cover their mouths in silent awe, deaf to everything around them.

17 Like snakes crawling from their holes, they will come out to meet the Lord our God. They will fear him greatly, trembling in terror at his presence.

18 Where is another God like you, who pardons the guilt of the remnant, overlooking the sins of his special people? You will not stay angry with your people forever, because you delight in showing unfailing love.

19 Once again you will have compassion on us. You will trample our sins under your feet and throw them into the depths of the ocean!

20 You will show us your faithfulness and unfailing love as you promised to our ancestors Abraham and Jacob long ago.

Questions on the text

- What qualities of a shepherd/king do you think Micah has in mind?
- What qualities of a sheep do you think Micah has in mind for the followers?
- According to verses 16-17, how will the nations respond when God performs His wonders?
- Why would violent nations or other coercive governments fear true power and leadership from God?

D. Connecting the text to contemporary life – Tim

- How can remembering that we follow the good shepherd help us?
- How can we open ourselves up to the guidance of the Good Shepherd this week?
- Where do you see followers of Jesus exercising shepherd-like characteristics today?
- How can we point others to this Good Shepherd?
- Over the past several months we've studied 4 prophets: Jeremiah, Malachi, Zephaniah, and now Micah. What do you think it is that makes a prophet more than a priest/pastor, teacher, or counselor? What other things do these prophets have in common? I hope you will think more about this question and bring your thoughts next week when we finish up our Advent series from the prophets.

E. Benediction & closing prayer – Ryan

From Psalm 80 & Luke 1:47-55

O Shepherd of Israel,
O God, enthroned above the cherubim,
display your radiant glory!

Show us your mighty power.
Come rescue us!
Make your face shine down upon us.

How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!
He shows mercy from generation to generation.

For the Mighty One is holy,
and He has done great things for me.

03 Advent: Micah (Teaching notes)

Micah 5.1-5a, 7.14-20

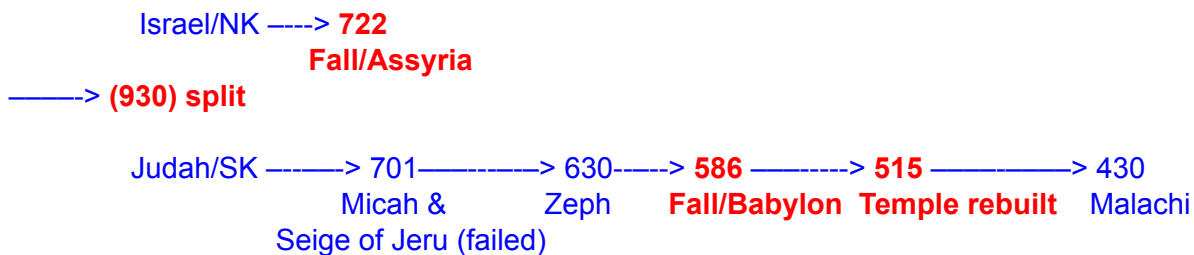
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A. Getting started – Tim

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Micah background

Adam/Eve... Noah... Abram, Isaac, Jacob/Israel —> Exodus (1450 BCE)...



- Micah was without pedigree. He was a contemporary of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah.
- He worshipped in a fancy Temple full of polished liturgy, though surrounding armies threatened.
- He started prophesying before the Northern Kingdom fell and continued after, all the way to the time of Hezekiah. His book alternates between judgment and salvation.
- The question behind Micah's book was how can God use his sinful people to bless all nations? The answer: God will judge his people, give many to foreign powers, and save a remnant through whom he'll eventually give them a king (Messiah) from the line of King David.
- Today's passage is confusing in its use of the terms Israel, Judah, Assyria.

B. Micah 5.1-5 – Tim

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A Ruler from Bethlehem

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3 The people of Israel will be abandoned to their enemies until the woman in labor gives birth. Then, at last, his fellow countrymen will return from exile to their own land.

4 And he will stand to lead his flock with the Lord's strength, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. Then his people will live there undisturbed, for he will be highly honored around the world.

5 And he will be the source of peace. When the Assyrians invade our land and break through our defenses, we will appoint seven rulers to watch over us, eight princes to lead us.

Questions on the text

- In v1, to what seige does this refer? – *As part of the Assyrian invasion of the Northern Kingdom, there was a siege on Jerusalem which God rebuffed. Micah may have written this about that time. Or he may be predicting the Babylonian siege which would come later. Or maybe he meant the sacking of Jerusalem in 70AD. Or something later or even in our future. In this whole passage, “Israel” may actually mean the Jews, And Assyrians may be a pseudo term for any of the future kingdoms that threatened from the north and east. Old Testament prophesy is confusing like this.*
- Can you guess why Micah calls the town Bethlehem Ephrathah? – *Jesse, the father of David, was of the clan of Ephrathah. They were probably adjacent villages that eventually merged.*
- To what do you think v2 points? – *Jesus... because Matthew 2.1-6 says that when the wise men come to Jerusalem looking for the newborn King of the Jews, they are told Micah 5.2. Matthew probably didn't figure this out himself, he was the beneficiary of Jesus explaining how the OT scriptures pointed to him (Luke 24.25-32, 44-49).*
- Can you remember other biblical stories centered in Bethlehem? – *Isaac buried Rachel here; the Ruth/Naomi/Boaz story happened here; it's the place where Samuel anointed David to become the second king of Israel.*
- There are several biblical metaphors for God's relationship with his people. Which one shows up in this passage? – *Shepherd/sheep. Can you name some others? Royal/legal, Familial/adoption, Nuptial/marriage, Body of Christ.*
- How can we make sense out of the second sentence in v5? – *Describe the limited pixels with which prophets had to see the future. Assyria was the aggressor during Micah's time so he seems to have assumed they'd be the attackers. They did attack Jerusalem, but the Lord prevented them from conquering it. 150 years later, Babylon would conquer Jerusalem. I'm not sure what to make of the 7 rulers is about.*

C. Micah 7.14-20 – Ryan

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Questions on the text

- What qualities of a shepherd/king do you think Micah has in mind? — *Among other things, The shepherd provides both objective peace and a sense of wellbeing.*
- What qualities of a sheep do you think Micah has in mind for the followers?
- According to verses 16-17, how will the nations respond when God performs His wonders? —
- Why would violent nations or other coercive governments fear true power and leadership from God? — *Micah notes that “true” power protects, guides, forgives and gives compassion, and ultimately loves. Jesus is the model of this.*

D. Connecting the text to contemporary life – Tim

- How can remembering that we follow the good shepherd help us? – *It assures us that we are not alone, that someone of strength cares for us and will protect us. We can go about our business without fear of outside enemies. We know if we are lost, the shepherd will come to retrieve us. So it gives us a sense of wellbeing.*
- How can we open ourselves up to the guidance of the Good Shepherd this week? –
- Where do you see followers of Jesus exercising shepherd-like characteristics today? –
- How can we point others to this Good Shepherd? – *Obviously, our methods cannot include coercion except that parents provide their children during their formative stages.*
- Over the past several months we’ve studied 4 prophets: Jeremiah, Malachi, Zephaniah, and now Micah. What do you think it is that makes a prophet more than a priest/pastor, teacher, or counselor? What other things do these prophets have in common? I hope you will think more about this question and bring your thoughts next week when we finish up our Advent series from the prophets. – *Unpack [Biblical Prophets](#).*

E. Benediction & closing prayer – Ryan

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O God, enthroned above the cherubim,
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