

Deliverer King for the Remnant Part 2

Micah 5:1-15

(5:4) Last week we looked at the deliverer king, verses 1 to 5a, that God promised Israel, after God had abandoned them. In our verses today, we have a picture of what the Messiah's kingdom will look like, under this divine king. It makes sense to describe the Messiah from Bethlehem as a shepherd like figure first. A kingdom must have a king who makes peace occur so the nation can feel safe and prosper.

(verse 5a) But please notice, this King will be their *peace*. It is not an accident this is the first description of the King. He, himself is peace. This is more than just bringing in peace from violence and war. The Hebrew word for peace also means economic prosperity for all in the Old Testament. We know it means personal spiritual peace. Jesus Christ is called the Prince of Peace because He restores every broken relationship, provides a well-ordered balanced life, social, economic, and political order, plus offers the assurance of eternal life. Jesus is the only reason we can live peacefully with God.

(Luke 2:14) It is not an accident the angels declared Jesus' birth to the shepherds, by proclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth *peace* to those on whom his favor rests." It will be perpetual, unceasing peace.

This is a silent announcement there will be no fear – in the kingdom of this deliverer king. When peace is a part of our lives, externally and internally, as the Bible tells us, we can fear not, in all the ways fear comes on us. "He will be their peace," is a phrase we must not over-look, make light of, or quickly pass by. And it can be applied to all peoples and nations as we looked at in the Mountain of the Lord verses.

(Isaiah 9:6-7) *Prince of Peace* is one of the Messianic titles that Isaiah gives Jesus. "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, *Prince of Peace*." Note the ending of this list of titles. "Of the

greatness of his government & *peace* there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne & over his kingdom, establishing & upholding it with justice & righteousness from that time on & forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this." That is quite a declaration for a people whose government is so corrupt. Everyone wants real full complete peace.

Micah wants us to see what this glorious messianic age he predicted in chapters 4 & 5 will be like. He lays out some specifics. First about the *remnant nation's military power*. Second, we are told which of their *religious practices* will not continue.

Micah is decisive in the way he describes this. He tells us the ruler will be their peace and now he shows us what that means. They will be a protected people. The new king will be strong. To Micah's listeners, that would mean freedom from fear, war, and from Assyria. That's where we focus on now in the second part of **(verse 5)**

We have to guess what the phrase, "*we will raise against him seven shepherds, even eight leaders of men,*" means. Commentators say, it is a figurative way of saying, "many leaders, an indefinite number of leaders, more than enough leaders to deal with any problem." This means there will be an abundance of volunteers, of people power Israel will enjoy when Almighty God carries gathering his people from the godless nations to establish his kingdom.

It seems, Micah is moving beyond the current difficulties to a time of deliverance. Many commentators think Assyria is a symbolic term, here, a figure of speech, for all of those who would attack God's people, past, present, and future. This fits in with the total scope of Micah's message about "all the nations" who oppose Israel. (4:11-13; 7:16-17)

(verse 6) We gather this from the phrase Micah uses: the *land of Nimrod*. If you were to go back into the book of Genesis and look up "Nimrod," you would see that Nimrod is the area Assyria comes from, but that's not the only part of the area. (Gen 10:8-12)

There is a much wider area described in which Nimrod holds sway. You can probably guess the other place that Nimrod controlled. It is Babylon. The Old Testament prophets keep talking about the dual threats of Assyria and Babylon, and Micah prophesies deliverance from both. So, Micah uses known enemies of his time, & expands their danger to all enemies. But the Deliverer King, overpowers them all.

(The Deliverer King's POWER is emphasized!)

The ruler uses a sword. This is mentioned twice, following the Hebrew habit of saying the same thing twice, in different ways. It is not a peaceful transition. The deliverer king comes with power as he invades the land. I suspect this felt good to the ears of Micah's audience. It probably feels good to Messianic Jews today, as well as Christians full of eschatological ideas. God will come and rescue us from our enemies, forever, both nearby and from far away. Physical enemies and spiritual evil.

This theme of power is developed more in **verse 7**. It is a salvation oracle of deliverance for the remnant among the nations. We must ask, is this just for the Jews, or followers of Jesus, or both? Is it for all people & nations?

If we are honest – it feels good when someone get's what's coming to them – especially when we do not like them or disagree with them. This seems to me to be our normal way of feeling when we live with unjust corrupt rulers, or see clear evil, like decimating Ukraine and misuse of guns. It is an attitude & hope that power over comes what we think is wrong. Just straighten things out, now, God. We are tired of patiently hoping! Fix the problems. We want peace now!

It is important to notice, this is all our Creator's work. Even though we do some of the fighting, it is really the Almighty who delivers us. We know the old saying is true, power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. We see it all around us today. Even in churches and especially in governments and businesses. But the emphasis is God's power does this.

It is good to pay attention to the line, "*the remnant of Jacob will be in the midst of many peoples.*" The people of God will affect the world around them. They are not isolated. They are not inwardly focused. They will be scattered all over the world and impact people. We know this was, is true of Israel, and it is true of Christians. But what does the rest of the verse mean? What is the analogy?

Well, I think it means, the remnant is a blessing to the world. These insignificant believers will influence the world like dew and rain showers do. What is more refreshing to the earth and to people than water? Again, the language is important. The blessing comes from God, not the people. These people will be salt and light and yeast for His Kingdom, as Jesus said. (Mt 5:13; 5:14-15; 13:33) This ties in with the coming king's power theme of these verses.

The tone in **verse 8** is also about power, but it is not like in verse 7. It seems out of harmony with these verses, & even the opposite of verse 7. We must not get wrapped up too much in the details and miss the point of the illustration. The language here shows the relentless force, of a lion going after prey and that dew and showers come from God's hands.

We see a conflict between pacifist and military influence on the nations. Both express hope for peace. Verse 7 describes peace by peaceful gentle means. But in verse 8, the lion Israel, is let loose among the nations – to make peace by violence. We have the same tension today.

Influence people for good on the one hand or maul and mangle them without any rescue. It is like verse 7 has one author and verse 8 has a different author. Does this mimic our feelings about life situations on different days? We see that even the Bible struggles with violence and different ways to bring about peace. Jesus is called the "**Lamb of God,**" by John. (1:29) And in Revelations (5:5) John gives Jesus the title of "**Lion of the Tribe of Judah.**"

Verse 9 continues the same thinking of verse 8. Here we have word picture of a warrior with a

weapon in hand in triumph over enemies who are destroyed. Sounds grim. Is this mirroring God's mix of feelings about his created world? Both metaphors show the steady determination of God to have ultimate triumph over this world. The nations will not be able to withstand the power of God in the end times.

But then **verse 10**, is pacifist again. It is like having whip lash as we read this information. God in that day will take away the horses and chariots. The war machines we are building at a ferocious pace are destroyed. Previously we were told that swords and spears would be banished. Here it is horses and chariots. The military machines of this earth are gutted. That will take a miracle that only God can do. Especially since our economies depend on war.

Then **verse 11** is easily misunderstood. Most of the world's population today is in cities. We could easily think this verse tells us to go back to the farm. Get back to the Garden of Eden so to speak. But what we need to know is that cities and towns and even villages back then, were generally walled fortresses. Their villages were built to be military strongholds. Forts. They were associated with war, military might and security. Reflect on the pictures we see of Afghanistan and Iraq. Or the walls Israel has built to keep out Palestinians.

Micah here continues his theme of destroying military might. This verse anticipates a time of security and peace where it will no longer be necessary to hide behind walls and castles. The remnant will live in open spaces, in nature, and not have to hide in close proximity with others.

Micah is really making the point that the power we depend on in this world will be worthless in God's future kingdom. The pride we have in being strong in military might hinders peace. In fact, all military might, and thinking will be done away with, outlawed, and forbidden. For this to occur our military industrial complexes in each nation will have to change focus – including all those suppling items like clothes, shelter, and food. A lot of people will have to find other jobs. Our economies will be very

different as we will have more money for things that build up our society. Maybe we will have lower taxes! Much more could be said about how the remnant will be living under the rule of the Deliverer King.

Then in **verse 12**, Micah does what he often does. He switches focus. He takes aim, as he has before, at pagan worship. But this time the focus is on what people will not be able to do. The Almighty will destroy our witchcraft. It is the same harsh language of power used in verses 9, 10 & 11. God says, "I will destroy your horses, demolish your chariots, raze your cities, tear down your strongholds, destroy your witchcraft, and you will no longer cast spells."

God is really getting aggressive. He takes a verb used to describe judgment on the world, and he uses it to describe the pruning process of his people. It is showing how desperately he wants his people, the remnant – to be pure. What is happening here is the Lord is going to take away everything from his people that would cause them to turn away from him.

First, he does away with our reliance on their resources; specifically, their military might. Judah was tempted to trust in its ability to defend itself. The offensive weapons of verse 10: the chariots, the horses. The defensive weapons of verse 11: the cities, the strongholds. And now, their pagan worship.

Micah tells us not to trust in those things, but to trust in God. If we think about it, this is human nature. When we are afraid of something, is the first thing that comes to our mind that God loves us and will care for us and protect us? We tend to trust in our resources that we can see and can manipulate and control. But God strips that away from his remnant people, including worship of human made false gods, idols of all kinds, and philosophies.

Gideon Story – Judges 6-7

Israel did evil in the sight of God.

But God's power and love protected them.

An example of this that we see in the Scriptures is the story of Gideon. God told him to go off to battle, and he took with him 22,000 men. The story is, God kept saying repeatedly, "No, that's too many. Cut that down. No, that's too many soldiers. Reduce the number." It is not an accident that eventually, Gideon ended up with 300 men, & he was victorious. Why? Because God provided the victory with his power, not swords and spears and numbers.

(Verse 13) So, it should not surprise us that God secondly, also, does away with all idolatry. He does away with relying on other gods. He attacks all false religions that are designed to provide security and contentment outside of God. He says he will do away, for example, with sorcery. Now what is sorcery, witchcraft? Sorcery's purpose is to control the future. It is to provide security by knowing and controlling the future. We may not try incantations, but do we try to control the future by our investments and through circumstances?

God says he will do away with fortune-telling. Fortune-telling doesn't control the future, but it is knowing the future so we can manipulate things ahead of time. It does not matter what methods we use, horoscopes, or tarot cards or astronomy, or reading tea leaves, or palm reading or whatever. The point being made here, and in many places in the Bible: this is not godly. These practices do not please our Savior. Why? Again, just like with relying of military power or economic alliances or political power, Israel and we are not to rely on anything but our Creator.

(verse 14) Our success in life is always and only achieved by dependence on Almighty God. Anytime, and in anyway when we try to have resources outside of God to be secure – we are doomed. By our own habits, attitudes, actions, worship, and idols. So often we are our own worst enemy. We put our short-term feel-good desires before our own eternal good.

In these verses we see how aggressively God will do away with all of this, and he will do away with all idols, with their images, pillars,

and their Asherah poles. Asherah worship is tied into temple prostitutes. All this emphasizes God is purifying his remnant people. *He will take vengeance in anger and wrath.* He is making the remnant people fit for the blessings he has for them. But they must be purified first. Micah may consider cities as centers of pagan worship – so of course they must be wrecked.

(verse 15) And again, the nations that do not obey the Lord will receive vengeance and anger. One resource I found, said that in our scripture today, some variation of the phrase, ***"It shall be in the last days,"*** is repeated often. It is lost in translation and the repetition. But this phrase is there in the Hebrew because it is important to realize this scripture offers a continual warning and promise about last days. God the powerful ruler deliverer king will come. He comes even now in power. And here Micah tells us, without even using the word, purify. Our Creator Savior must purify his remnant people from dependence on all gods, including military power and false worship.

What is the remnant Micah often refers to? It is about God gathering Israel back together again. The church today might be considered a remnant. By now I hope we realize, Micah is not just a prophet for Israel when he was alive.

He is a prophet for us. Much of what he offers and describes and condemns, fits our world today. As the church increasingly is exposed by its sins, and more and more lack of influence on society and politics, we feel we have lost influence. It is easy to find people making fun of the church for many reasons, and rightly so. We feel like we are a remnant. But we still have a key important role to play in this world. **The church relates to the world in two ways: blessing & judgment.** As the church, we here in this place, bring the gospel to the world and our neighbors, it always has one of two effects. It either has the effect of life – like dew and rain and mercy, or of death and judgment.

The Apostle Paul says:

But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and

uses us to spread the **aroma** of the knowledge of him everywhere. (verse 14)

For we are to God the pleasing **aroma** of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. (2 Corinthians 2:15)

To the one we are an **aroma** that brings death; to the other, an **aroma** that brings life. And who is equal to such a task? (verse 2:16)

Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God. (2 Corinthians 2:17)

Followers of Jesus are called to have the fragrance, the smell of purity, peace, holiness, and of mission.

The people of God always have one of those two effects. This should give us confidence and hope. The world will fare according to how they hear the message of the gospel. But Micah tells us, the gospel, the kingdom, the ruler, and his remnant, will be completely victorious.

In conclusion, a day is coming, Micah says, when a ruler will return who will put all things right. He will come to establish his kingdom and provide security and peace for his people. The king will set them apart from all others. That ruler is Jesus. He has come from the humblest of places, the smallest of towns, from Bethlehem, from the weakest of origins.

He came not as a rich man, nor as a king, but as a servant. He has come to redeem for himself a remnant people, and he's coming again to rule and to reign over them.

Do you know this Jesus? Is he making you more and more into his image? Do you long to be numbered among his people? You can be by faith in Jesus Christ and what he has done. There is no one like Jesus. There is no hope except Jesus. Embrace and follow him. Do it now. Jesus is where there is real true peace.

Do we give off God's aroma?