

THE BOOK OF MICAH
Lesson 15, Chapter 7 Conclusion
END

We left off at Micah 7:11 & 12 last time. It read:

CJB Micah 7:11-12 ***¹¹ That will be the day for rebuilding your walls, a day for expanding your territory, ¹² a day when [your] people will come [back] to you from Ashur and from the cities of Egypt, from Egypt and from as far as the Euphrates River, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain.***

In these two verses we hear the reverberation of a sarcastic mocking question asked by Israel's enemies, who up to now had become most successful in oppressing them. This question appears in the middle of verse 10:

CJB Micah 7:10 ***"...Where is Yehoveh your God?..."***

The sneers and jeers of Israel's unbelieving enemies are about to be silenced, when a complete reversal of fortunes happens that they learn the hard way just who Yehoveh is. It comes upon them on "that day" when it finally, but assuredly, arrives. Because "that day" or "the day" is always eschatological in time frame, whenever it appears in the Bible (that is, it is in the End Times future), then we can take it to mean that here. It hasn't happened yet, but all the signs of that day approaching or having just entered into it, are present...now... on earth... in alignment of what the Prophets, as well as Yeshua, have told us to watch for.

While this ought to stir up great excitement upon all God worshippers, at the same time we need to be sober about how this is going to play out, and it is not going to be pretty. The terrible things that happen worldwide are described in various places in both the Old and New Testaments as having no historical equivalent. Just as the awesomeness of Heaven is beyond our minds to comprehend, so will be the horror of all but the climaxing moments of the End Times. But, as Micah is speaking now of Israel's vindication and restoration,

then it is the good and lovely things of the End that are being described at the moment.

I want to review for just a couple of minutes the final subject of our previous lesson. In order to do that, I need to use a couple of different Bible versions to make my point.

YLT Micah 7:11 *The day to build thy walls! That day -- removed is the limit.*

KJV Micah 7:11 *In the day that thy walls are to be built, in that day shall the decree be far removed.*

The issue is near the end of this verse where the CJB says “a day for expanding your territory”, the YLT “removed is the limit”, and the KJV “shall the decree be far removed”. The word that all these verses are struggling with is **choq**. **Choq** has the scope of meaning to include limit, boundary, decree and even something that is owed. The only way to properly interpret this is to abandon both popular Christian and Jewish doctrine and instead look to the historical era and the context in which we find this word used.

Christian scholars and Bible teachers nearly unanimously ascribe the meaning as the decree is abolished, and that decree is either the words of the Prophets and the Torah as regards Israel in general or the Law of Moses in specific. That is, Israel’s glorious future is abandoned by Yehoveh in favor of Him giving that glory and future to the gentile Church. Jewish scholars tend to see this as the long-promised entry into a new Golden Era for Israel, and so all limits and curses against them are being canceled by God. What we can say for certain is that God is going to do a new thing in the End Times that goes beyond the spectacular and the unprecedented. Israel will be at the center of it. It will be joyous for Israel and the opposite for the nations of the world.

The Church also says that this return and restoration refer to a single person: the “he” of verse 12. Except, that the word “he” is incorrect and only Bibles like the KJV use it. All other versions that don’t modify the grammar to suit them use the word “they”. So, this is a group of people and not a single

person. Of course, for Christendom, their bent is to say that the “he’ is about Jesus. Certainly the return of Yeshua is involved in the climactic events of the End Times, but that is not the point of verse 11.

Verse 12 then speaks of the “they” as being the hordes of people coming from every direction, back to the Holy City of Jerusalem. The “they” in this context are the dispersed Israelites. Why say Jerusalem and not Judah, or Israel, or the Holy Land in general? It is that when the phrase “rebuilding your walls” is used, it is referring to Jerusalem and then using that reference figurately as a way to represent all of the Holy Land. The term “your walls” is also being used figuratively of Jerusalem, and of the Holy Land in general, and of the Israelites as whole. It is not unlike in our modern world when making London to be representative of England as a whole, or figuratively as the British people as a whole, because London is the seat of their government, and a government is representative of a nation and its people. It is not meant to be mysterious; it is only a common way of speaking that was well understood in the era it was written.

In the end, regardless of nuances and details, here we see the establishment of Israel as it was always meant to be by God, but due to the unfaithfulness of the people, it had never been achieved. This is the ideal Israel. The holy place where God dwells and rules. The place that is a bright beacon of truth, sitting on a hill with a light that draws all the people of the world to it. The place where the purest truth and righteousness go forth. It’s coming and it’s near.

Let’s read the remainder of Micah chapter 7.

RE-READ MICAH CHAPTER 7:13 – 20

Verse 13 is what some scholars call “transitional”. Up to now Micah has been speaking of a wonderful future for Israel, but that abruptly stops. That is, verse 13 reverts to desolation. After that, verse 14 picks back up the theme of redemption, restoration, and blessing.

The first words of this verse present an instant division of thought and meaning... the division concerns the scope of its effects. It starts with “and the

land". The Hebrew used is **eretz**, which can mean both land and earth. So, is this referring to the land of Israel, or is this referring to planet earth in general? Is this meaning that for Israel one condition will be occurring, but an opposite one for the rest of the earth? Or does it mean this is speaking only of the Holy Land and Israelites? While the popular theology is that it means the entire earth, that seems to defy the context of this chapter that is all about Israel. In fact, very likely the best English words to use to begin this chapter ought to be "**but** the land" and not "**and** the land" or "**and** the earth". The word "but" meaning however or nevertheless, which some Bible versions do include. So, the flow of the text is that before this wonderful future for Israel can be apprehended (as we've just been reading about), there will be a time of devastation and desolation for the land of Israel. Why? Just a reminder from God that sins demand justice. God's promised future restoration doesn't invalidate God's promises of punishment. There is no change of mind occurring.

I will acknowledge that as some Christian scholars see this as meaning that while Israel is being vindicated and restored, the rest of the world has suffered desolation and destruction, this cannot be completely discounted. In fact, it could very well be something that proves true both ways at the same time. Israel has to suffer desolation as proper justice for their sins **before** restoration can begin, AND while Israel is being restored the remainder of planet earth is undergoing destruction because the nations had come to invade Jerusalem and the Holy Land. I suppose this will simply have to be placed into the category of "wait and see".

CJB Micah 7:14 *Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock that belongs to you, who live alone, like a forest in the middle of a fertile pasture. Let them feed in Bashan and Gil'ad, as they did in days of old.*

We also need to look at this verse in a more literal rendering.

YLT Micah 7:14 *Rule Thou Thy people with Thy rod, The flock of Thine inheritance, Dwelling alone in a forest in the midst of Carmel, They enjoy Bashan and Gilead as in days of old.*

So, now that we have moved past the transitional role of verse 13, we get back into the flow of restoration for Israel. What we are reading here mostly resembles a poetic prayer. Micah is more or less committing restored Israel into God's care. He speaks of God in His role as the Great Shepherd, and so the people are depicted as His flock. There is some ambiguity over the nature of God's rule in that it speaks of how He shall rule as using His **shebet**. Various versions generally choose between interpreting this word as either rod or staff. **Shebet** has such a wide range of meaning that it can mean either of those things or even mean a club or a scepter. The conundrum is that while God is depicted as the Great Shepherd, then one would think the meaning of **shebet** is staff, as in a shepherd's crook. However, because the concept of ruling over the people is the sense of the opening words, it carries a notion of meting out strict justice like a judge. So, then the word rod fits better because the sense of rod is as the authority to judge.

I lean towards this being a Shepherd's crook because of the opening word of the verse, which in Hebrew is **ra'ah**. **Ra'ah** means to pasture, feed, graze or tend, but can also mean to be a friend. So, while the word "shepherd" isn't there, the role and characteristics of a shepherd is. This word is a gentle word; not harsh. So, I think we probably ought to think of a shepherd lovingly tending over his flock with his shepherd's crook, caring for them as opposed to being a strict ruler or judge. With that tone in mind, then the 2nd half of the verse entails the extent of the pasture... that is, the extent of the pastureland being spoken about. The tonal shift is noticeable and important because it has gone from God vigorously confronting Israel and threatening them, to comforting them and being a gentle father.

The locations are then spoken of as where this pasture will be. Carmel is on the eastern side of the mountain range from modern day Haifa (Haifa is a coastal port city), that is more or less in central Israel. Gilead is on the east side of the Jordan River, where modern day Jordan exists. Bashan is further to the north where the Golan Heights and southern Syria exist today. All 3 of these areas are representative of fertile regions, good for pasturing sheep or for growing crops and orchards. Here, it also stands for the entire land... the extent of the good land... God has given to Israel to inhabit.

The mention of Israel dwelling alone jumps out. Clearly, unlike our times when enemies live within the State of Israel (Muslims primarily, but also some anti-Israel Christians) that constantly cause the Israelis trouble, that will no longer be the case. The other nations will finally accept and respect Israel's borders and sovereignty and faith, and that this land was set aside for the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and no one else. This doesn't mean that other ethnic groups might not live there, but if they do it is because they are welcome and they are considered as true citizens of Israel who worship the God of Israel in truth.

As this verse ends, we hear that in ancient times (relative to Micah) all these places were safe and relatively peaceful. The era this can only be referring to is when Israel was a united kingdom under David and then Solomon. If we go back 5 more centuries or so to Moses and then Joshua, that was not the case, because these areas were notoriously troublesome for Israel. What Israel was experiencing in Micah's day was the opposite of this. Jeremiah underlines the gist of what we're reading here in Micah.

CJB Jeremiah 50:17-20 ¹⁷ *"Isra'el is a stray lamb, driven away by lions. First to devour him was Ashur's king; and the last to break his bones is this N'vukhadretzar king of Bavel."* ¹⁸ *Therefore Yehoveh-Tzva'ot, the God of Isra'el, says: "I will punish the king of Bavel and his land as I punished the king of Ashur."* ¹⁹ *I will bring Isra'el back to his pasture, to graze on the Karmel and the Bashan, on the hills of Efrayim and in Gil'ad until he has his fill.* ²⁰ *In those days, at that time," says YehovehI, "Isra'el's guilt will be sought, but there will be none, and Y'hudah's sins, but they won't be found; for I will pardon the remnant I leave.*

So, while the Christian Church has decided that we can just cross-out Israel and Judah in the Prophets and substitute "Church", that is decidedly a serious doctrinal error. In truth, to call it an error is much too lenient as this implies accidental. This doctrine merely reflects the Church's intention to make Christianity a purely gentiles-only religion that is granted all the blessings and promises God originally gave to Israel. This doctrine can make gobbledygook out of the Old Testament and Prophets with this agenda driven belief. It

doesn't matter, because the truth is here for all to see. Besides, Micah 7:14 calls Israel "the flock of thine inheritance". That leaves all other nations and all other faiths out.

CJB Micah 7:15 ***"As in the days when you came out of Egypt, I will show them wonders."***

Verse 15 is God's reply to Micah's poetic prayer of verse 14. The returning remnant from all the nations will experience miracles like their ancestors did as Moses led them out of bondage in Egypt. God guarantees that He will be there to aid Israel and see to it that what He has ordained will come to pass. As I've mentioned before, the miracle of the return of the 10 Lost Tribes is well underway, and we are witnesses to it if we care to be. Micah 7:15 is happening... although we can be sure that even greater, more powerful, miracles are yet to come to turn this trickle of returnees to a flood. It is only by God's wonders that this is happening. Until the first few years of the 21st century, Israel did not want this return. They saw these tribes of people that identified by the various names of the 10 tribes of Israel as fraudsters, even as a threat. This is because to most Jews, what really makes a Jew a Jew is practicing cultural Judaism, something most of these tribes didn't do. It also was and remains a common refrain (a tradition) that the Jewish people represent all that remains of all the tribes of Israel, even though historically and in every other rational way, the Jews represent only the tribes of Benjamin and Judah.

What is also miraculous, is that the modern state of Israel finally officially granted the members of these scattered non-Jewish Israelite tribes the right to come home, without first having to convert to Judaism (although many did and continue to). These wonders, however, do not stop with the return of the people, but also with all that goes with it. How was it that the powerful Egyptians were defeated and let God's people go? It will happen for the constantly harassed Israel in our time in the same way it happened in Egypt. Micah says in chapter 5 that God will actually take away the Israelis' powerful military weapons when their battle with the nations starts in earnest. In Egypt, the Hebrews never fought the Egyptians in order to leave; God did it all. In the End Times return of Israel to their land and to world stature, God will decimate

the nations that come to fight with Israel, but victory won't be because of Israel's military prowess. Just as God did it via 10 miraculous plagues in Egypt, He will do it in equally as wonderful ways when the War of Armageddon begins. So, this is literal and not hyperbole.

Verses 16 and 17 are a couplet and so need to be read together.

CJB Micah 7:16-17 ***¹⁶ The nations will see and be put to shame, in spite of all their power. They will cover their mouths with their hands, and their ears will be deafened. ¹⁷ They will lick the dust like snakes; they will emerge from their fortresses trembling like reptiles that crawl about on the earth; they will come with fear to Yehoveh our God, afraid because of you.***

The first few words of verse 16 are something we have seen before in regards to Israel, in modern times as well as in antiquity. I think it's important that we see it, notice it, and interpret those things about Israel that are now in the recent past is these same terms. What Israel has been able to do to their enemies is astounding and makes no rational sense at all.

First, within 24 hours of Israel being given recognition by a vote of the UN as a new and sovereign Jewish State on May 14th, 1948, a coalition of 5 Arab League armies attacked Israel with their well-armed militaries. Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan with tanks, modern air forces, and thousands and trained soldiers fell upon Israel. Israel had none of these kinds of forces or weapons. They had no air force or tanks. They had no national military. They were a weakly armed bunch of Jews with a few militia groups that didn't trust one another, each having differing political views. And, yet...somehow Israel won and chased those 5 armies out of their newly declared country, tails between their legs. The Arab nations plus Egypt were humiliated and put to shame with a sting that was only the first of more stings to come. Those stings are vivid to their minds to this day. Israel's victory made no rational sense. They were outmanned several to one, they were completely outgunned, and still they achieved victory. The Lord fought for His people just as He promised He would, so the outcome was determined before the first bullet was fired in anger.

In 1967, the Israel government learned through their intelligence apparatus of a pending surprise attack by Jordan, Syria, and Egypt. Israel by now did have a standing army, had acquired some modern military weapons, but still in comparison to those 3 nations' powerful and large militaries, it would seem like no contest. So, rather than wait to be attacked, Israel took the initiative and launched a pre-emptive strike against those determined nations. Not only did Israel win overwhelmingly and were able to defend their own nation, but they also captured from these enemies the Golan Heights of Syria, the Gaza Strip, the so-called West Bank that was part of Jordan, and the entire Sinai Peninsula that had belonged to Egypt. This was an incredible humiliation for these nations... even worse than in 1948... that greatly shamed not only themselves but also the religion of Islam worldwide. Only God could do such a thing, which He did just as promised.

In 1973, two of those shamed nations, Syria and Egypt, worked together and launched a surprise attack on Israel on the High Holy Day of Yom Kippur; Israel had become complacent and was caught totally unprepared. These 2 nations that had lost huge chunks of their national territory to Israel were determined to reverse that humiliation. In the first few hours of battle Israel was, literally, overrun. But somehow, they reversed the situation and won. It ended really closer to a stalemate, but the Arab nations cheered as with the first 72 hours it looked like a total Arab victory and Israeli slaughter. Many miraculous stories came out of that war. I personally know a decorated IDF colonel who had one of the most amazing experiences of them all. He was shot, lying critically wounded near the Syrian border, when he was run over by one of his own military's tanks. He lay helpless, crushed and broken near death in a field. He heard Arab voices from the Syrian army approaching all around him. Suddenly an impossible to bear bright light lit up the night sky, and a voice from the sky told this man that he would not die, but instead he would be God's messenger to take an oracle to the world that one day, the Temple in Jerusalem would become a house of prayer for all nations. The sound of Arab voices suddenly went silent. He was eventually rescued and spent the next year in the hospital, having his body literally re-constructed.

A few years later this man met a couple of former Syrian soldiers that had defected to Israel, who had been at the very place at the same moment he was so wounded and injured and bleeding-out. He asked them why they and their comrades so suddenly left. They said that their platoon of men was working their way through the field of tall grasses looking for wounded soldiers from both sides, when suddenly this huge light appeared in the form of a gigantic flaming angel. It stood before them blocking their path. The angel said not a word. But it so terrified every last member of his platoon that they ran with all their might back to where their main forces were. They had no explanation for this but were adamant this happened to them. God saved Israel, and this man, in ways that are too incredible to be anything but a miracle.

Folks, this is going to happen again only on a wider scale and in a larger scope than what is imaginable. Today Israel is well-armed, ready, and the IDF is one of the most formidable militaries in the world. They will be even more powerful when someday, not long from now, the nations of the world will unite their forces to resolve the Israel Problem once and for all. A huge multi-national force will attack Israel, and Israel will be reasonably confident that with their forces, advanced armaments, and cunning strategies they will win. But the Prophet Micah tells us that in a most strange way God will intervene. First, He will neutralize those advanced weapons Israel has as they are being attacked, and then He will soundly defeat that multinational force with His own miraculous power.... Israel being a grateful but stunned nation. However, it is the opposite story for the gentile nations of the world.

They will see (meaning they will experience) all this... probably watching on their TVs and Smartphones, but some on the battlefield... assuming the outcome because of the enormous firepower the nations, combined, can wield. But as they watch... "They will cover their mouths with their hands, and their ears will be deafened." They will not believe what they are seeing and hearing because it is impossible to happen. They will be thoroughly confused. These, of course, are those who don't believe God's Prophets. They will be Islamic nations, completely secular nations like Europe, and nations that profess God and Christ to some degree (like the USA) but refuse to accept God's Bible as having relevance for today. They will continue to believe that Israel may have

been God's focal point and set apart people many centuries ago, but now that position has been removed from them and given to others. Islam believing it is them; Judeo-Christian leaning nations believing it is not Islam but the Church.

Never think or believe that this will be a war of atheists versus God worshippers. This will far more likely be very much a battle of faiths for some nations, a battle for wealth for others, and a battle for world dominance for the remainder of those who believe that stubborn Israel is the one thing holding the world back from having peace.

Moving on to verse 17, the enemies of Israel will be "licking the dust" like a snake. This is an idiom for the humiliation of the defeated. It is interesting that in this verse, the term "snake" is preceded by the article "the". So, we are better to translate it in its biblical vocabulary as "the Serpent". And we know that biblically the Serpent is identified with the Adversary or what Christians call Satan and The Devil. I have no doubt this narrative in Micah is meant to take us back to the 3rd chapter of Genesis for a connection.

^{CJB} Genesis 3:14 *Yehoveh, God, said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all livestock and wild animals. You will crawl on your belly and eat dust as long as you live.*

Next, verse 17 speaks of the leaders of these nations emerging from their bunkers and trembling with fear and confusion because of what has just happened. They will fall on their faces in utter terror before Yehoveh, because they will suddenly realize that these impossible things that have happened can be explained in no other way than the acts of a wrathful, long-ago dismissed as myth... God of the Bible: The God and protector of Israel.

God is a God of patterns; and the divine pattern has been repeated many times over, just as the prophecies of this happening and then their fulfillments have been repeated many times over as the centuries come and go; just in ever ascending scope and widening extent.

Verses 18 and 19 are also a couplet that needs to be read together, as it was with verses 16 and 17.

CJB Micah 7:18-19 ***¹⁸ Who is a God like you, pardoning the sin and overlooking the crimes of the remnant of his heritage? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in grace. ¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us, he will subdue our iniquities. You will throw all their sins into the depths of the sea.***

The character and nature of God that has been revealed since Genesis 1:1, is sort of summarized here as to why He has taken such actions against the nations and has favored and blessed Israel. This has to be Micah praising God for the redemption and restoration of Israel that was promised so very long ago. God's grace cannot be measured.

It is interesting that this phrase "who is a God like you" is essentially the same as Micah's name that means "who is like Yehoveh?" This foundational question, that is also an expression of awe and praise, is from very ancient times well before Micah. In almost Psalm-like tone we read:

CJB Exodus 15:11-13 ***¹¹ Who is like you, Yehoveh, among the mighty? Who is like you, sublime in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders? ¹² You reached out with your right hand: the earth swallowed them. ¹³ In your love, you led the people you redeemed; in your strength, you guided them to your holy abode.***

This expression while being essentially a praise is also rather rhetorical with the expected response by God's people that is "no one!" That we have such a God that offers forgiveness of sins, and a means to have those sins atoned for and set-aside forever is because of His attribute of grace. And, yet, gentiles, please notice who this is offered to. It is to "the remnant of His heritage", which is always, biblically, Israel... and never the nations.

While God's anger and wrath is real, it doesn't last forever. But His compassion and love do... for His people. This is not a new thought; it is an end-to-end biblical theme.

CJB Jeremiah 50:19-20 ***19 I will bring Isra'el back to his pasture, to graze on the Karmel and the Bashan, on the hills of Efrayim and in Gil'ad until he has his fill. 20 In those days, at that time," says Yehoveh, "Isra'el's guilt will be sought, but there will be none, and Y'hudah's sins, but they won't be found; for I will pardon the remnant I leave.***

For those who still cling to the false, manmade doctrines of the Constantinian Church, where in this (and so many other biblical passages) do you find any mention of YOU partaking in this grace and compassion? God says He will forgive **Israel's** guilt and forget Judah's sins. How do you manage to erase those people and insert yourself into their place? First, such an erasure never occurred and according to God is virtually impossible. But second, God did make a way for gentiles to join into the promises He made for Israel. I don't have the time to go into all this now, but on your own go to the Torah Class study on the Book of Romans and pay special attention to chapter 11. If it is easier for you to read in book form rather than online, then go to HolyLandMarketplace.com and purchase my book of commentary on Romans (it is the only place you can get it). What Paul says in Romans explains so very much about the faith that Christ taught, as over and against the popular doctrines taught by the Church.

CJB Micah 7:20 ***You will show truth to Ya'akov and grace to Avraham, as you have sworn to our ancestors since days of long ago.***

The climactic words of Micah's book tell Israel, and us, that all those promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will finally happen.

I can do no better than to quote a favorite teacher and scholar of mine, Walter Kaiser, Jr.

The last 3 verses of this book are linked with the book of Jonah for the afternoon reading in the synagogue on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Once every year, on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, the Orthodox Jew goes to a stream or river and symbolically empties his sins from his pockets into the water as he recites Micah 7:18 – 20.

This is the *Tashlich* service, named after the Hebrew word for “you will cast”. It symbolizes that God can and will take our sins, wash them down the streams of running water and bury them deep in the depths of the ocean. God not only forgives our sins if He is omniscient, let it be remembered that what He does when He forgets our sins is to remember them against us no more!

These promises from God to do just this were always directed to His Israelite people AND to all who would join with them. God’s promise is all bound up in His everlasting covenants with Israel, of which, somehow, a gentile must be joined. How? Read the book of Romans.

CJB Psalms 105:8-10 *⁸ He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded to a thousand generations, ⁹ the covenant he made with Avraham, the oath he swore to Yitz'chak, ¹⁰ and established as a law for Ya'akov, for Isra'el as an everlasting covenant*

This concludes our study of the profound and deeply contemporary Book of Micah.