

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

MICAH 4:6-8; 5:1-9

(Prepared by Gene Thompson)

1. When have you had to wait longingly for something that you were greatly anticipating, i.e., a birthday, a trip, the birth of a child, a child to come home, a wedding day?
2. How did you feel about the waiting?
3. How far in advance did you begin preparations for the exciting day?

In last week's study Micah delivered a message of judgment that seemingly left no hope. Jerusalem would be destroyed and where the beautiful temple stood would be nothing more than a briar thicket. This was not only hard to hear but difficult to believe.

In our study today God is going to reveal, through Micah, some exciting news about Israel's future. His message has both relatively short term as well as eternal implications. We are reminded of how God uses humble beginnings to change the world. Micah painted a picture of peace and security for those who fully trusted the Lord.

The first promise of the coming Messiah is in Genesis 3, and then again in Genesis 12 when God promises Abraham that his seed will be a blessing to all nations.

4. How far in advance did God prepare for the coming of the Messiah? (From eternity past, before time!)

It was a challenge for them to find hope in the message Micah delivered last week and sometimes we find it difficult to find hope in our world today. "The question should be pressing upon us by now: Where is the hope of restoration? Is there realistic hope for our world that extends beyond our own individualistic dreams? Is there any hope that our world will start spinning in the right direction, or are we bound to destroy ourselves and one another forever? God gives us a promise of restoration, a picture of restoration, and, as we look to the New Testament, the experience of restoration."—Steven Um.

The Lord will gather to Himself all the injured and lame who had been scattered in exile and with the remnant build an eternally strong nation.

IN THAT DAY! Read Micah 4:6-8

Beginning with *on that day*, Micah connected what he was about to say with what he had prophesied in verses 1-4 regarding the future— "in the last days."

1. Who do these verses say beyond a doubt is in control? (Yahweh!)
2. What was the declaration in these verses? (God would assemble the lame and those who had been taken far away and build a strong nation!) **See Heb. 12:22-24.**
3. Where would God build this strong nation? (Mount Zion or Jerusalem. These terms speak of the same location: Mount Zion, Daughter Zion, Daughter Jerusalem. People living there.)

If one is to believe what we studied last week it is almost impossible to believe these verses. That's where faith enters!

4. How do the actions of God in these verses reinforce our understanding of the sovereignty of God? (When Micah delivered this message the outlook for Israel and Judah was somewhat hopeless. Assyria defeated Israel—Northern Kingdom—during Micah's ministry. Then turned their attention to Judah but Judah repented, and God spared them a while longer. But Babylon captured Judah just over a century later. Despite the hopelessness of their situation God's promises would be fulfilled.)
5. How does the promise of a future bring hope when enduring God's discipline? (The promise was to the nation not to individuals, but they did not know when it was to come about, therefore they had hope—confident assurance. Heb. 11:1 "Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen." Faith is what we cling to, especially during difficult times.)

When we are in painful situations we can look to the future and by faith believe God reigns supremely and someday all who have accepted Christ as Savior will spend eternity with Him—Eph. 2:5-7

Micah told about a future ruler born in Bethlehem who would lead after the remnant returned from exile. This humble ruler would shepherd God's people, instituting peace throughout all the earth.

ONE WILL COME! Read Micah 5:1-6

One commentary says that verse 1 should be the last verse in chapter 4. None the less, it is talking about the nation being under siege and about to be captured. Although it was forbidden in the Law of Moses, it was customary for nations surrounding Israel to cut themselves when under very trying circumstances. To strike a judge or king on the cheek was to show great contempt.

This verse most likely refers to the coming siege by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 588-586 BC when Jerusalem fell. It appeared that all hope had been lost. BUT!

1. What does verse 2 proclaim to the people? (In today's vernacular, "It ain't over till it's over!" God would send a King to rule over His people who had existed from eternity past.)
2. What is significant about where this King would be born? (**Bethlehem Ephrathah's** main notoriety was its place as David's hometown. Bethlehem means "house of bread." Ephrathah distinguishes this place from some other little villages named Bethlehem.)

This is one of the most well-known texts in the Old Testament.

3. What do we learn from the fact that the King of kings and Lord of lords was born in a small, insignificant village? (It doesn't matter how insignificant you may be to everyone else when God chooses to use you His power will be sufficient to accomplish the mission if you just yield to Him.)

It appears they are abandoned by the Lord, but the time is not yet. The one in labor here is most likely Israel.

4. When He does come what will He do? (Shepherd His people. He will also be their peace—external and internal satisfaction and sufficiency.)
5. How does the image of the promised ruler being a shepherd bring confidence and hope? (The upmost concern of a shepherd is the care of his sheep. If our Savior is like a shepherd, we will be provided with all we need and protected.)

In verse 6 He would deliver them from the Assyrians. Nimrod was the first great king mentioned in the Old Testament—Gen. 10:8-12. He ruled in the land where the Assyrians came from.

Israel would need to hold to this message of hope as dark days descended on the horizon.

THEN THE REMNANT! Read Micah 5:7-9

1. How can the remnant be a blessing to some and bring judgment to others at the same time? (The descendants of Abraham would finally fulfill their purpose in being a blessing to the nations. Those who accept the Messiah will be blessed like dew or a shower on the grass is refreshed. Those who reject Him will face eternal judgment.)
2. What role does trust in God play for the remnant? (It gives them ultimate hope. They have faith to endure until the end. They will experience God's eternal blessings.)
3. How does the remnant point to God's grace and justice? (God always has a message of grace and hope when He meets out His justice.)

There is always hope for the repentant heart even in the midst of God's judgment!

God provided hope for the people of Israel with the promised return of a remnant of believers who would remain faithful to Him. As believers in today's world, we too are called to be faithful.

CHALLENGE!

As Israel was called to be a light to the nations, we are called to shine the light of the gospel in the world around us.

1. How can the gospel be shared without being judgmental? (Walk the talk. Share your testimony about what God has done in your life. A real, live example of what God can and has done is hard to reject.)
2. To what extent are you being obedient to God?

Pray: There are dozens, if not hundreds, of prophecies in the Old Testament about the Messiah which Jesus fulfilled. Thank our Heavenly Father for sending His Son to provide salvation for all who believe. Help us be faithful in sharing the Good News of the gospel!