

## MICAH

### THE ARGUMENT

IT is by custom become necessary, in writing the arguments on the several prophets, to tell of what country the prophet was; and where the Holy Ghost observes it we may not slight it. Our prophet was, no doubt, of the tribe of Judah, but of what note his family was for riches, authority, or credit appears not to us; these might be eminent for any thing I know, but not mentioned, because his call to, his abilities for, and his discharge of the prophetic office, needed no credentials or countenance from any such external advantages. It is unquestionable he came from God; and his whole prophecy is of Divine authority; Jeremiah gave testimony to it, and cites some considerable authority from the opinion of certain elders of that time who held him to be a prophet sent of God, **#Jer 26:17-19**. He was not, as some were, confined to one kingdom, but had his commission enlarged to preach to the kingdom of Israel and Judah, which were now grown old in sin, and universally corrupted with idolatry and impiety, with inhumanity and cruel oppression, with falsehood and deceits, ingratitude to God and forgetfulness of him, vain confidences in the lying promises of false prophets and in their ceremonial services; all which Micah doth (as faithful in his office) openly, severely, and impartially discover, reprove, and threaten in princes, prophets, and all the people of both kingdoms; which are so closely joined by the prophet, that it requires a very steady and quick eye to discern which of the two is most directly concerned in the prophet's discourse, or whether both are equally intended, yet so as in order of time Israel first, and Judah next. His phrase, and connexions, and transitions are many times obscure, and fairly capable of different accounts, as every one will see, who can and will read the Hebrew text, and the paraphrases or commentaries of men learned in that kind of learning. The prophet's style is very lofty, as is his contemporary Isaiah, many times, and I little doubt they were acquainted and conversed with each other: his discourses have a very particular respect to the temper of those times he lived in, and will be clearest understood by those that do distinctly read over and digest the history of Israel and Judah, as

they are reported in 1 Kings and 2 Kings from the first apostacy of Israel from God and their revolt from the house of David. But more especially the stories of Judah, through the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; and of Israel: through the times of Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea; in which most of the sins here reprov'd and threatened did reign, and which were, whilst Micah lived, punished according to his word with sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity: he lived to see Israel made a desolation and a hissing, and survived this dead kingdom about ten years. Judah's calamity followed surely, and not slowly, for within one hundred and thirty or one hundred and thirty-three years Jerusalem was ruined and the Jews carried captives to Babylon. Many passages of our prophet have both their literal and historical reference, and their spiritual and mystical: in this latter I have been sparing, because the design of the present work was to give the plain literal sense, yet I have seldom (if ever) omitted to point out the mystery. If any one see more into this, and be larger in it than the author, let such one know, the author had his reasons why he said so little, though he saw more, of the mystical reference of the words to the Messiah, his birth, his kingdom, the redemption of the elect, the calling of the Gentiles, and other evangelical truths contained in our prophet, who did certainly preach the gospel as well as the law to his hearers.

## MICAH CHAPTER 1

The time when Micah prophesied, **#Mic 1:1**. Micah showeth the wrath of God against Israel and Judah for idolatry, **#Mic 1:2-9** A lamentation for them, **#Mic 1:10-16**.

Ver. 1.

**The word of the Lord that came:** thus Hosea begins his prophecy, **#Ho 1:1**, and **#Joe 1:1**, and **#Jon 1:**, and **#Zep 1:1**, which see.

**Micah:** though Hierom, Epiphanius, and Dorotheus are said to report this Micah to be the same with the son of Imlah, **#1Ki 22:8**, yet R. Sol. Jarchi's reason why this could not be is satisfactory, for one generation and almost a half intervened between Ahab and Jotham; Ahab died about A.M. 3046, Jotham began to reign about A.M. 3190, by which it appears there were one hundred and forty-

four years between Micaiah the son of Imlah and Micah our prophet.

**The Morasthite:** whether Mareshah, rebuilt by Rehoboam #2Ch 11:8, (called also Beth-gebarim in after-time,) of which #2Ch 11:14 of this chapter, or whether Moresheth, of which #2Ch 11:15, gave him this surname, and whether because Micah was born there or else did dwell there, is not easily resolved, nor material if it were resolved.

**In the days of Jotham:** it is not said what year of Jotham this prophet begun, it is probable it was about the beginning of Jotham's reign, A.M. 3190, of which we have this character, #2Ki 15:34,35, *He did right, &c., yet the high places were not removed.* Religion was not wholly corrupted as in Israel, yet was it exceedingly abased with their own mixtures.

**Ahaz;** the very worst of all Judah's kings, all things considered; he brought the Baalitical idolatry into Judah.

**Hezekiah;** the best son of the worst father, who reformed Judah. How long Micah prophesied during his reign we can but conjecture, possibly till the fourteenth year of Hezekiah. So this prophet may be supposed to have prophesied sixteen years in Jotham's time, as many under Ahaz, and fourteen under Hezekiah, in all forty-six years, and survived the captivity of Israel ten years, which he lamented as well as foretold.

**Kings of Judah;** Judah only named, but Benjamin is included.

**Which he saw:** see #Am 1:1.

**Concerning Samaria;** the metropolis of the kingdom of the ten tribes, and by a well-known figure put for the whole kingdom, as Jerusalem, chief city of Judah, is, by the same figure, put for the whole kingdom. As both had linked together in sinning, God doth link them together in suffering, and commands Micah to do so.

Ver. 2.

**Hear:** the prophet here by proclamation requires earnest attention to his word. So Moses, #De 4:26 30:19 32:1; so the psalmist, #Ps 50:1,4; and so Isaiah, #Isa 1:2 34:1.

**All ye people;** either all the people of both kingdoms, all Israel and Judah, or else universally all people of all kingdoms whatever, both of that present age and all of future ages. *Hearken, O earth:* it may be taken for the meaner sort of people, the commonalty; but I rather incline to interpret it as both a tacit reproof of the deafness of this sinful and hardened people, with whom Micah now contends, and an appeal to the senseless creatures, or a summons to bring them in evidences for God against those kingdoms.

**All that therein is;** animate or inanimate creatures, all that are on the earth. If we interpret earth for the meaner sort of people, then this fulness of the earth will be the whole multitude of the people. It is a lofty strain, such as those of Moses, **#De 32:1**, David, **#Ps 1:1, isa 1:1,2**, and **#Jer 6:19**.

**Let the Lord God;** the mighty, holy, gracious, and faithful God, Lord of heaven and earth; who knows all your ways, who is a just judge, and a severe avenger of obdurate sinners.

**Be witness against you,** by his word, the voice of his law, by his prophets whom he hath sent, by the judgments he doth execute according to his menaces; as by his sovereignty he is supreme judge, so by his omniscience and truth he is an authentic witness against you, O house of Jacob.

**From his holy temple;** either from his temple at Jerusalem, or else from heaven, as **#Ps 11:4 Hab 2:20**.

Ver. 3.

**For, behold;** there is great reason for my earnestness with all people, and therefore once more I advise you to consider it well. Behold, attend to what is said.

**The Lord cometh forth;** who is Judge himself, **#Ps 50:1,4**, whose holy majesty you have provoked to displeasure, who is a jealous God, and hath an almighty power to dash his enemies into pieces. He cometh forth as a judge prepared to hear, determine, and punish. Now when God, who is in all places at all times, is said to come forth, it is not to be meant of his leaving a place where he was, to come to a place where before he was not; but it is to be understood of his discovering his presence by some effects of it, which before in that place were not, discovered.

**Out of his place;** heaven, the place of his glorious throne.

**Come down;** show by the effects of his power, justice, and wisdom that he is more eminently present there.

**Tread upon;** trample under foot, stain, abase, and break.

**The high places of the earth;** all that is high, excellent, and matter of your glorying, whether the flourishing state of your kingdoms, or the power of your kings, or strength of your fortresses, temples, and altars, or cities and palaces. In that day the haughtiness of man shall be laid low, and the pride of man shall be brought down, **#Isa 2:17**. Your sins will procure this to you, O Samaria and Jerusalem, of which God is my witness I have plainly told you.

Ver. 4.

**The mountains shall be molten:** if literally understood, we know it hath been so: when God will kindle that fire which shall burn up the earth, and the works of it, as he will when he cometh finally to judge the world, it shall be done again. But figuratively mountains are mighty states and kingdoms, flourishing with prosperity, and which do think the foundation of this sure as mountains. So **#Am 6:1,2 Hab 3:6 Isa 2:14**, Or possibly these mountains may be, by a synecdoche, put for those who dwell on them, mountaineers, who were usually more fierce, secure hardy, and of difficult access, and therefore less regardful of threats and punishments.

**Shall be molten under him:** which way soever you take mountains, yet the effect of God's powerful anger and justice shall be this, they shall be no more able to bear his indignation, or withstand it, than that which like wax melts before a strong fire.

**The valleys;** which either are emblems of the lower sort of men, or the men that dwell in the valleys with their cities built there, which might hope to escape the storm, lying more under covert. But such shall be the sweeping, searching, and rapid storm of God's judgments, that no places, no persons shall either withstand or divert them.

**Shall be cleft;** or rent in sunder, broken up, as the word **#Ge 7:11**, and slide away.

**As wax**, which doth easily and speedily dissolve, and run before the fire.

**And as the waters that are poured down a steep place;** which immediately spreads itself and runs down the precipice, not able to keep together in one body, but scattered one part from other, loseth itself without remedy; so shall the glory and strength of Samaria melt away before the fire of God's displeasure executed by Shalmaneser, and by Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar on Judah.

Ver. 5.

**For the transgression;** the singular for the plural, the many transgressions committed amongst them; but especially that flood of iniquity which, springing up in Samaria, did overflow the whole kingdom, idolatry, pride, luxury, cruelty, and oppression.

**Of Jacob;** the sons of Jacob: the ten tribes most likely are here meant by Jacob.

**Is all this;** all these, many and great, inevitable and irresistible, judgments of God foretold. and which will overtake and utterly ruin these sinners.

**The house of Israel;** the people of the kingdom of Judah, called here by the name of Israel. Or else this and the former phrase may comprehend the twelve tribes, which were fallen from God's law and worship, and be an elegant ingemination to confirm the thing spoken.

**What is the transgression?** or, *who is*, i.e. the spring and cause of that overflowing transgression? who brought in the abominable idolatry?

**Of Jacob:** here is meant the kingdom of the ten tribes, (the head of which was Samaria, where the kings of that kingdom had their royal residence, where they worshipped idols, whence they issued out their edicts, and which became example to the rest of the Israelitish kingdom.

**What are the high places?** or, *who is*, i.e. cause of the high places, and the idolatry there practised?

**Jerusalem;** which was chief city of that kingdom, and place where their kings dwelt; had the same influence on that kingdom as Samaria had on the ten tribes; there was the example they imitated, thence the laws they obeyed contrary to God's law.

Ver. 6.

**Therefore;** for these sins of Samaria, and the kingdom of Israel.

**I will make;** not by an immediate hand from heaven, but by the Assyrians under the conduct of Shalmaneser, they shall do it as my servants, saith the Lord.

**Samaria as a heap of the field;** much like #Isa 25:2; that beautiful city shall be made, and so left, as a ruinous heap in the field.

**And as plantings of a vineyard:** in planting vineyards, they did dig up the earth, and cast it up in hillocks, cast out all the stones; so shall they make this city.

**I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley:** the city was built on a high hill, and a deep valley beneath it; now when it was sacked by the Assyrians, they pulled down the buildings, and cast the stones thereof into that valley; so God did by them throw down the stones of Samaria.

**And I will discover the foundations thereof;** raze the walls, fortresses, and public buildings of this city to the very foundations of it, nor leave one stone upon another, as #Mt 24:2 Lu 19:44 desolation upon Samaria for her sin such a desolation as shall not leave the least footsteps of Samaria in the place where once it stood.

Ver. 7.

**All the graven images;** erected in honour to the idols they worshipped, which usually were the images or similitudes resembling their idols, their gods of silver, gold, or stone and brass, or wood.

**Shall be beaten to pieces;** pulled out of their chapels, shrines, or repositories by the conquering Assyrians, who would as was customary with such nations, deal with the gods as with enemies conquered, trample upon them, and use them most contemptibly; and when they break into pieces idols of rich materials, it was to

carry them away with them as their booty; others were broken in contempt of them.

**All the hires**, or rewards, or gifts, which idolaters thought their idols gave them, as **#Ho 2:5**; or the rich gifts given for the honour and service of the idols by deceived idolaters; or all the wealth Israel got by leagues with idolaters.

**Shall be burnt with the fire**; when their cities or temples are burnt, as no doubt many were burnt by the Assyrian before he could reduce them to obedience, in which conflagrations many rich donatives belonging to idols were consumed to ashes, or melted down.

**And all the idols thereof will I lay desolate**; thus shall the idols of Samaria be made desolate, i.e. their temples burnt, their images either beaten in pieces in contempt, or to be carried away (if the materials they were made of were worth the carriage); however, they shall neither remain, nor be worshipped any more in Israel or Samaria, but be carried away captives with their captive worshippers.

**For she**, the kingdom of the ten tribes, or Samaria, gathered it, their wealth, or the rich presents made to their idols, or both, of the hire of a harlot; as harlots get rich gifts of their lovers, so did this deceived people think, and say, that their idols gave them the wealth they had; or else as impudent adulteresses, that hire lewd men to come in to them; so this hire was that these blind idolaters (like shameless adulteresses) gave to their idols.

**And they**, these rich presents,

**shall return to the hire of an harlot**; shall be either turned by the Assyrians to the service and honour of their idols, presented as gifts in acknowledgment of their greatness and prosperity, to be the blessings their idols have. given to them, as **#Ho 10:6**; or else thus, as what is got by harlots brings shame and a curse with it, and never continues long, but is as basely wasted as it was gotten, so shall it be with all the ill-gotten goods of these Samaritan idolaters, and all their wealth.

Ver. 8.

**Therefore**, because of those dreadful slaughters and devastations made in Israel and Samaria,

**I will wail**, solemnly, as when they who are skilful in lamentation do at funerals bewail in most affective manner to stir up the like sorrow in others: see **#Am 5:16**.

**And howl**; the same in a word of like sense, to ascertain the thing, and to intimate the doubled sorrow, the multiplied miseries of this people.

**I will go stripped and naked**; as one spoiled of his clothes by force, or as one that in bitterness of passion hath cast off his upper garment, or as if discomposed in mind through the greatness of his vexations; now this the prophet either speaks as fellow sufferer with them, or as intimating what they should be reduced to at last: so **#Isa 20:2,3**: whether of these, or whether both, I determine not.

**Dragons**: see **#Mal 1:3**: rather *jackals*, which haunt desolate places, and make great and hideous noise by night, by their wailing, or doleful cries, in which it is said they answer one another, and fill the air with the sound and travellers with fear: these creatures are between a fox and wolf for bigness, and seem somewhat like each in qualities, and probably their noise may be as mixed of the barking of the fox and howling of the wolf. It is possible the prophet by this kind of wailing would intimate the near approach of the Assyrian lion, hungry and thirsting, and pursuing the prey; as the jackal runs a little before the lion, so this wailing of the prophet should be followed very suddenly with the roaring of the lion.

**Owls**; a melancholy creature, and loves night, and makes a most unpleasant noise, haunts desolate places, and so fitly is an emblem of Israel's doleful, desolate state: others render it ostrich, which makes a doleful cry in the deserts: either will fit the place.

Ver. 9.

**Her wound is incurable**; the wounds of Samaria and the ten tribes; her own sins, God's just displeasure, and the enemy's rage have deeply wounded her, she is senseless, impenitent, and furious against her Physician, and she shall at last die by sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity.

**It is come unto Judah;** the contagion of her sins, and the indignation of God against it, and the enemy's successes, viz. Sennacherib's, or Nebuchadnezzar's, like a flood have reached to Judah also; and this is the reason why the prophet foretells such mourning, and is willing to personate it to awaken both kingdoms to repent and turn to God.

**He is come;** the insulting, conquering, and cruel enemy, or, in the neuter gender, it, i.e. the evil, is come, i.e. in the prophetic style, will certainly and suddenly come.

**Unto the gate of my people;** either signifying the Assyrians besieging Jerusalem, as Sennacherib son of Shalmaneser did some few years after the sack of Samaria, or else by

**gate of my people** is meant the city where the sovereign court of judicature to the whole kingdom is, denoting the victories of the Assyrian over the rest of the kingdom of Judah, or else the victories of Nebuchadnezzar.

**Even to Jerusalem:** this seems added to explain the former phrase.

Ver. 10.

**Declare ye it not at Gath;** do what you can to keep your griefs to yourselves, let them not be public, that the Philistines, your bitter enemies, should know how sad it is with you and rejoice at it. Gath was a principal city of the Philistines, and though this only is mentioned the rest are understood: such phrase you have **#2Sa 1:20**. Weep ye not at all; you that are of Israel or Judah, make no public weeping, that your cries and tears should inform your enemies in Palestine how deplorable your state is, let not your griefs be their joys.

**In the house of Aphrah:** we render it as a proper name of some city or town; though of no great note, yet we meet with one, **#1Sa 13:23**, in the tribe of Benjamin; a second we find in Manasseh's lot, and was the place where Gideon's father dwelt, **#Jud 6:11**: these towns were somewhat remote from the Philistines, and there the prophet does direct then, to weep with the greatest expressions of it, and to keep it private from the Philistines. Others account the word to be a common name denoting

**dust**, and so give the sense, in the house of dust roll thyself in *dust*. Roll thyself, or, I have rolled myself, viz. in compassion to the miserable Israelites, or as a pattern to which they shall conform; so the word as written, but as by direction of the Masorets it is read, and as there it is rendered,

**roll thyself**, it directs and foretells; it foretells what they shall do at last, and directs what they should do at present. They shall be brought to sit, nay, to wallow in the dust, and in foresight of this it would become them to sit in the dust now.

Ver. 11.

**Pass ye away:** the imperative is here put for the future, and the prophet does here foretell and threaten what shall befall this people, they shall go before the enemy into captivity. *Saphir* denotes either the beautiful and pleasant habitation, and so may be applied to any pleasant seat, such as were many in Judea; such were Samaria and Jerusalem, which perhaps are here intended. Or else it is the proper name of some particular town or city: who read Eusebius will meet with such a village in the mountains between Ashkelon and Hebron, or (as later it is called) Eleutheropolis.

**Having thy shame naked;** stripped by thy conquering enemy, so that thou shalt not have so much left as shall cover thy nakedness; with shame shalt thou be thus led into captivity, and change all thy beauty into shameful nakedness.

**Zaanan;** a place rich in pastures and sheep, say some; others take it for the proper name of a particular place in the tribe of Judah; it is likely at this time it might be some considerable garrison full of people and soldiers.

**Came not forth;** neither sent out succours to relieve their neighbouring besieged town Bethazel, but stood on their own guard, nor yet durst send out any to condole the captive state of their neighbours.

**Bethazel;** a strong town taken and wasted by the Assyrians, the people carried captive under the eye of the inhabitants of Zaanan, who mean time dare not stir or make many signs of sorrow.

**He;** the invading enemy, say some, others say it is the inhabitant of Zaanan.

**Shall receive of you his standing:** who refer this to the enemy make this the sense, viz. That the enemy should make his stay among them till he had conquered, spoiled, and captivated them; or, that he should by severe dealing make them pay dear for their obstinacy in defending their town against his forces, that he should strip them of all to recompense his expenses of treasure, time, and blood in taking them. But they that refer this to Zaanan and its inhabitants make this the sense, That they should take their measures, and judge what the enemy would do against them by that which he had done against Beth-ezel their neighbour.

Ver. 12.

**For;** yet, or certainly, as the Hebrew particle is often to be rendered.

**The inhabitant;** one put for all, because all should fare alike.

**Maroth:** some say it is by transposing the letters put for Ramoth; others say it is, as the word imports, the *grieving*, embittered cities; others take it for the proper name of some lesser place in Judah.

**Waited carefully;** long, earnestly, and patiently.

**For good;** for peace, prosperity, and what might make them happy.

**Evil;** of trouble, sword, famine, and pestilence, all sorts of evil comprised in this one:

**Came down,** in mighty tempests, or as a sweeping rain.

**From the Lord;** by his special command and charge, and as a punishment inflicted on them from heaven.

**Unto the gate of Jerusalem;** the flood of affliction by the Assyrian swallowed up other towns and cities, and swelled high to the head city Jerusalem, as partly by Sennacherib's invasion, but more fully by Nebuchadnezzar's besieging and taking Jerusalem, and carrying the citizens captive to Babylon.

Ver. 13.

**Lachish;** a very strong fortress on the confines of Judah towards the kingdom of the ten tribes, and which, as it did to the last stand out against Sennacherib, so it is very probable they did boast of their strength and valour.

**Bind the chariot to the swift beast;** either to flee from the sword of the enemy, and to seek safety in-another country, forsaking their own; or else by way of derision, You will be besieged and cooped up by the Assyrian, and then you may harness your horses or mules to carry you in chariots about your own streets; or else the prophet foretells Sennacherib's commanding post-chariots to carry his messengers to summon Jerusalem to yield up all to him.

**She** Lachish, is the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion; from thence idolatry spread itself into Judah and Jerusalem. Lachish, nearest to idolatrous Israel, took the infection of them, and conveyed it to Judah, or Jerusalem, here called

**the daughter of Zion.**

**For the transgressions,** not only the idolatry, but other sins also, **of Israel,** of the ten tribes,

**were found in thee;** thou didst receive and worship the same idols that Samaria did.

Ver. 14.

**Therefore;** forasmuch as thou hast imitated Israel in sin, and been at least an occasion to Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah to commit the same sins.

**Shalt thou,** Lachish,

**give presents:** though I do not remember the sacred story reporting this in matter of fact, we read not what presents were given, or by whom sent, or when; yet as it was foretold by the prophet, so no doubt it was fulfilled, and the inhabitants of Lachish courted the assistance of the Philistines against the Assyrian, and possibly against the Babylonian.

**Moresbeth-gath;** a known city or town of the Philistines, called here Moresbeth-gath to distinguish it from a town of the same name in the tribe of Judah and in the valley of Zephathah, where

Asa smote Zerah, the Ethiopian king, who invaded Asa with a million of men.

**Achzib:** this was also a city of the Philistines not far from Mareshah, Ashkelon, and Gaza; it was a maritime town and strong. There was another city of that name toward Tyre also, but of this the prophet doth not speak in this place.

**A lie;** a lying refuge, or a prop that should break under them that leaned upon it, as Egypt proved a broken reed to Judah when trusted to: in the Hebrew there is an elegant allusion, which the translation cannot express.

**To the kings of Israel;** some say it is meant of the kings of Judah, but we find not that Hezekiah made any use of the houses of Achzib when Sennacherib invaded him. It is more probable the kings of the ten tribes are meant, and that Hoshea did rely on Gath. Achzib, &c., and on the friendship of the rest of the Philistines, to join with the Egyptians, or to give them a quiet passage through their country to help Israel against the Assyrian.

Ver. 15.

**Yet will I bring;** the Lord will cause the Assyrian to rise up and prosper in his wars, to the subduing and possessing of the cities of Israel and the Philistines.

**An heir;** the Assyrian, who in the right of conquest shall possess, and account himself heir of what he possesseth.

**Mareshah;** most think the prophet speaks of Mareshah in his own country, but I think the Assyrian did not inherit that, though he might inherit that of the Philistines.

**Adullam;** famous for its strength, say some; but I rather think it better known for the cave where David lay hid, #1Sa 22:1. It was made a town of defence by Rehoboam, #2Ch 11:7. It was once a royal city, and had several villages belonging to it, #Jos 12:15.

**The glory of Israel;** ironically (say some) called thus, minatorily threatening that the glory of Israel should be brought as low, into as mean condition, as Adullam. Others think it should be read, *and to the glory of Israel*, that is, Jerusalem; so there should be an ellipsis of (duw) the particle conjunctive. Others think it is the prophet's deep sigh at the thoughts how the glory of Israel is laid

in the dust. Others think it was then considerable enough at that time to be called the glory of Israel, though we know not how.

Ver. 16.

**Make thee bald;** O Judea and Israel, in token of sorrow for these wasting judgments, tear off thy hair with thine own hands.

**Poll thee;** shave off with the razor and by others' hand what thou canst not tear off.

**For thy delicate children;** for the loss of them, some being slain, others starved or swept away with pestilence, and the residue carried captive; express thy deep sorrow for these miseries conformably to the custom of bitter mourning, **#Job 1:20 Isa 3:24 15:2 Jer 7:29.**

**Enlarge thy baldness;** make thy baldness greater than usual, for the occasion does require and will justify it.

**As the eagle;** which loseth at once her strength, courage, and beauty, and languisheth in her baldness.

**For they,** thy delicate children,

**are gone into captivity from thee;** never to return more: or not till a long captivity expire.

## MICAH CHAPTER 2

God's judgment against oppression, **#Mic 2:1-3.** A lamentation for the removal of his people, **#Mic 2:4-6.** A reproof for their injustice and delight in false prophets, **#Mic 2:7-11.** A promise of restoration, **#Mic 2:12,13.**

Ver. 1.

The prophet now denounceth judgment against oppressors in particular, of which sort of men Judah had too many, and Israel had many more at that day.

**That devise iniquity;** contrive and frame mischiefs to others, how they may be ruined, as appears **#Mic 2:2,** and all the gain that can be made of their fall may be brought into the hand of the contrivers; which was the sin of the great ones in Israel, who for near forty years together were plotting to undo one another. And work evil: here is a dislocation of the words, unless the prophet

would intimate to us, that in God's account the resolving to do evil is doing it.

**Upon their beds;** when they should rest from making trouble to others, as well as rest from their labour and troubles of the day, when they should praise God for their own ease, safety, and rest, then their inhumanity and cruelty is forecasting how to grieve, vex, and swallow up others.

**When the morning is light;** so soon as they rise, and that is early; when such practices are in design, these cannot sleep till they make them fall on whom they fix their designs.

**They practise it;** finish or execute their mischievous purposes. Because it is in the power of their hand; they care not whether there be either justice or reason for what they do; if they have power enough to do, they will take confidence to do it, and never blush.

Ver. 2.

**And they,** who devised mischief, **#Mic 2:1,**

**covet fields;** first set their minds upon their meaner neighbour's estate, think how convenient it lieth to theirs, as Ahab thought Naboth's did for him.

**And take them by violence;** by power wrest the estates out of their hands, at their own rate; or, if they will not so part with them, these mischievous oppressors will act a Jezebel's part with Naboth, which was no hard matter to do in Israel, during the times that ran parallel with those of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

**Houses,** in which their poorer and innocenter neighbours dwelt; but perhaps these houses spoiled a prospect, or straitened the great ones, who, right or wrong, will have them, that they may enlarge their own houses, orchards, or gardens.

**Take them away;** they tear, devour, and swallow up the poor man.

**His house;** his family, which by this means is left to poverty and beggary.

**His heritage:** this explains the former, and addeth somewhat to the greatness of their sin, that this is done against ancient right and

possession, which the oppressed plead, nay, in a case where God hath forbidden them to sell their heritage, #Le 25:23 Nu 36:7 1Ki 21:3.

Ver. 3.

**Therefore;** for this great, inhuman, cruel oppression. Thus saith the Lord; the Lord by his prophet declareth what he will do, and adviseth them to consider it, for it is a most manifest retaliation or punishing the offenders, so that every one may see God deals with them, as they dealt with their oppressed neighbours.

**Against this family do I devise an evil;** they devised, now God will devise; theirs was evil against others, God will devise evil against them; theirs was evil of sin, God's is an evil of just punishment, against their family, as they devised evil against the family of their poor neighbours. God will bring the Assyrian power upon them.

**From which ye shall not remove your necks;** they laid snares where open force would not suffice, so that the poor could not get out of their hands, but were impoverished and enslaved; so God will deal with them by the Assyrian, from whose power they shall not escape.

**Neither shall ye go haughtily;** you have made others hang the head, so shall you now. For this time is evil; you great ones have made it all evil time, evil for sin against me and the innocent, and for cries and griefs to the poor; I will make it an evil time, full of penal calamities and miseries on the whole family or posterity of Jacob.

Ver. 4.

**In that day;** when God shall retaliate, as #Mic 2:3, when he shall by the Assyrian captivity fulfil what here is threatened by the prophet.

**Shall one take up;** there shall be taken up, or be in common ordinary use among those that know what is befallen you.

**A parable;** or taunting, scorning proverb; this tells them how their Assyrian conquerors should reflect reproach and shame upon captive Israel, much like that #Ps 137:3, which the Babylonians used toward captive Judah.

**Lament with a doleful lamentation;** your friends for you, and you for yourselves, shall mourn most bitterly, as the import of the Hebraism is, *lament with a lamentation of lamentations*. So though all are not alike affected, yet every one shall carry it towards miserable Israel according as they are affected, condoling their sad state, or insulting over them.

**We be utterly spoiled:** this is the sum of their mournful lamentation over their own state; Our land wasted, our friends slain, our cities taken, plundered, and sacked, our houses and goods either taken away from us or burnt, and our persons no more our own, but captives, under the power and will of our enemy; thus spoiled, nothing is any longer ours.

**He;** the Assyrian, say some; God, say others; indeed God did it by the Assyrians. Hath changed the portion; the estate, wealth, plenty, freedom, safety, joy, and honour, into poverty, famine, servitude, danger, grief, and dishonour. The land of Canaan was the inheritance, and all the conveniencies it afforded were part of the portion of Israel; but, O doleful change! these all taken away from Israel, and given to others.

**My people;** it is either the prophet, who calls them his people, or rather, every one of Israel that useth this lamentation, Who saith

**my people. How hath he removed it from me!** how dreadfully hath God dealt with Israel! removing their persons into captivity, and transferring their right and possession to enemies!

**Turning away he hath divided our fields;** either, thus turning away from us in displeasure, God hath divided our fields among others, given them to the enemy, and he hath divided them to whom he pleaseth, to his own people and soldiers; or else this word turning away may be rendered returning, and be spoken of the enemy, when he returned he did divide our fields; or, as the margin of our Bibles, *instead of restoring* our fields, which we hoped, and our mistaken leaders promised, God hath given the enemy success and power to divide our fields, and to allot them to others.

Ver. 5.

**Therefore;** because your sins, so great, universal, and incorrigible, have provoked God to frame and design this

desolation against you, and because he will punish you according to your ways.

**Thou;** either oppressor, spoken thus as to one, that it might comprehend every one of them, who are described #Mic 2:2, or else this thou is the whole family, spoken of #Mic 2:3; perhaps both these may best be meant here.

**None that shall cast a cord by lot;** none that shall ever return to this land, to claim an inheritance there, or to see it allotted by line, and given to them to possess it. The prophet here alludes to the manner of dividing fields and inheritance of old in use among them, as in Joshua's time. So both the whole family in general, and the great ones, oppressors and extortioners, are more particularly menaced with an utter and perpetuated exclusion out of the land in which they sinned, and whence they are carried captives; whoever do, neither they, nor their posterity, shall possess inheritances in it.

**In the congregation of the Lord;** they should no more be the congregation of the Lord, nor should their children be so, or stand in the congregation of the Lord at any time hereafter, to claim their portion among God's people. Thus they are rejected and disinherited, and this to this day is verified on the main body of this people.

Ver. 6.

**Prophecy ye not;** it is manifest that our version here intends this as an interdict, or prohibition, laid upon the true prophets, whose hearers were so far from amending and turning unto God in compliance with his counsel, and obedience to his commands given out by his prophets, that rulers and people agree to silence the prophets, and expressly forbid them to distil or drop their severe predictions against the kingdom.

**That prophecy** faithfully, as Isaiah, Hoses, Joel, and Micah now did.

**They,** or my true prophets, saith God,

**shall not prophesy to them;** shall cease from further troubling and terrifying these people, who fear not my judgments, and will not by repentance prevent their miserable captivity and shame. So

God doth in his displeasure grant their desire, and gratify the interdict in judgment against them.

**That they shall not take shame;** that they may, as they seem resolved to put off all blushing and shame, go on without checks or rebuke, till they be utterly ruined: they are impatient of that shame they should take to themselves for their sins, and therefore would not hear the truth; so it shall be, and they shall not be shamed to repentance, but they shall be ashamed in their ruin. This seems the meaning of the words in our version, and I will not add any other, though there are several versions which somewhat vary from ours.

Ver. 7.

**Named;** you are in name, not in truth, you call yourselves, and would be called by others, the seed and posterity of Jacob.

**The house of Jacob;** you glory in Jacob, whom God blessed, guided, and preserved, and you think he should so bless you; but you nothing think how Jacob feared, obeyed, and worshipped God, you are not honest, plain-hearted, and upright with God as he.

**Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?** the power, goodness, wisdom, and kindness of God is not less now than formerly, he is as merciful to design good, as gracious to promise, as great and good to perform his word; but the reason he doth not promise good to you, but threatens punishment upon you by his prophets, is all from yourselves; it is for your sins; you do the things that must be discountenanced, and if you would hear better things by the prophets, you must do better, you must do what God requires by them.

**Are these his doings?** are these severer proceedings against you the doings your God delighteth in? Doth he choose to take this way? Doth not mercy better please him? He would be more pleased to speak comfortably to you: do you as Jacob did, and God will deal with you as he did with him.

**Do not my words do good?** my words promise all good, and my prophets declare good to those that are indeed the house of Jacob. All the ways of God are in an even tenor, mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant and testimonies to do them, as **#Ps 25:10**.

**To him that walketh uprightly;** that with honest hearts walk in the ways of God; but froward sinners, and dissembling hypocrites, cannot with reason expect the same usage from God, who will give peace and show mercy to Israel, whilst the workers of iniquity are led out to punishment. This whole verse is excellently cleared by the prophet Isaiah **#Isa 59:1-3**, &c.

Ver. 8.

This verse to me seems to be designed as a proof of the perverseness and iniquity of this people, and consequently a justifying of God, and his prophet, threatening severity against them: they flattered themselves, and were angry with the prophet; but God doth in these words convince them that they could not with reason expect better tidings. For from a long time since they have revolted from me, and

**of late** they have renewed, with addition of new violence to their old. All of them have

**risen up**, and acted hostilities among themselves; Israel against Judah, and Judah against Israel, and of late the ten tribes have conspired against one another, subjects against their kings, and great ones against the meaner sort; all places' are full of the sins and woeful effects of civil seditions, and the treasonable practices of violent men.

**Ye pull off the robe with the garment**, you strip those to their skin, take away their clothes, and leave them naked,

**that pass by securely;** that in peace, and fearing no evil, go about their private affairs,

**as men averse from war;** disliking such rebellious, bloody, and oppressive-courses, and wishing every one might enjoy his right without plunderings, sequestrations, confiscations, and decimations, for not being of their party. All which we may easily believe attended the factious and rebellious times which succeeded after Jeroboam's death, briefly mentioned **#2Ki 15:8**, &c., which read with this verse, and diligently consider how it paints out those times of Israel's sinning.

Ver. 9.

**The women;** the poor disconsolate widows, whose husbands you had first slain with the sword of war, or unjustly condemned to death; or else the wives of husbands whom you had oppressed, and by perverted judgment had condemned to forfeit their estates.

**Of my people:** this aggravates the sin, that this was done against Israelitish women, not strangers, against those that were by peculiar provision of God's law to be tenderly and mercifully dealt with, #Ex 22:22.

**Cast out;** disseised, and turned out, as if unworthy to dwell longer in their old habitations, which they pretend forfeited, as Paradise by Adam, who was therefore in this very word east out, #Ge 3:24, or as Hagar out of Abraham's family, #Ge 21:14.

**Pleasant houses;** either pleasant for situation, such seats were to these as dangerous as Naboth's vineyard was to him, or else pleasant to them because they were their own, where they enjoyed their husbands and children, and wished no more preferment, content with their beloved habitation, and domestic conveniencies,

**From their children have ye taken away;** you have by your violence and oppression ruined their posterity, turned their children out of houses and estates, which were secured by the law of God from any legal alienation and sale beyond the jubilee; you have confiscated them for ever.

**My glory;** which was the glory of my bounty to them, in use of which they did give glory to me, and by continuance of which they might have lived above contempt.

**For ever;** either continually you have done this, or what you have done you intend to stand for ever.

Ver. 10.

**Arise ye, and depart;** you inhabitants of Israel, especially you oppressors, bestir yourselves. and prepare for your departure out of this land; for, will ye nill ye, so it is, you shall be carried away: the words also may fairly be applied to the oppressed, to lessen the troubles they were under, and to advise them to retire out of this land.

**This is not your rest:** though it was given this people for a rest under God's wing, yet it was on condition of continued obedience; but since they do not observe the condition, they shall never find the expected rest; one trouble shall succeed another, until the captivity sweep them all away, both oppressors and oppressed; these therefore should grieve the less at their present trouble, nor grudge to transplant themselves.

**Because it is polluted,** with many, and great, and old sins,

**it shall destroy;** spew them out as a burden intolerable to the earth that bears them, as **#Le 18:25**; this polluted land shall be destroyed.

**A sore destruction;** such as may well require a lamentation; such as **#Mic 2:4**; a grievous desolation, such as never shall be repaired.

Ver. 11.

This people were weary of true' prophets, and silenced them, **#Mic 2:6**, but they were fondly taken with the false prophets, and what these promised them; and these, as here described, are by a dreadful judgment on this people permitted, or left to deceive them.

**If a man walking in the Spirit and falsehood;** a prophet that pretends to walk in the Spirit, i.e. to have the Spirit of prophecy, and on that pretence takes the boldness to promise pleasing things in God's name, whereas he never received such promises of good from God.

**Do lie,** against God, and to the people.

**I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink:** Micah, and his real-contented brethren, foretell scarcity, war, dismal calamities, and an Assyrian captivity of all for ever; I tell you these are idle dreams, you shall have plenty, and good days, and may eat, drink, and be merry; such times of evil you shall never see.

**He shall even be the prophet,** by a just and dreadful judgment from God, as well as by an unhappy and fatal choice of the people, **#1Ki 22:6,10-12**, with **#1Ki 22:34 Eze 13:3,10**.

**Of this people;** doomed to unparalleled misery by God for their sins, and pulling it upon themselves by their obstinate impenitence and blindness.

Ver. 12.

There are three different interpretations of this verse, of which it is hard to say which is most agreeable to the intent of this scripture; I will propose all three, and leave each reader to choose for himself. First, Some will that these words be a continuation of the false prophet's preaching prosperity and good days. So the words are a promise made to them contradictory to the menaces of the Lord by Micah; he foretold all would end in destruction; the false prophet foretells the assembling of all the seed of Jacob into their land and cities, and bringing back the remnant of the captive Israelites carried away by Tiglath-pileser, and their safety in their own fold as the flock of Bozrah, and should make great noise of joy and rejoicing in their multitudes. All which, spoken by the false prophet, Micah refutes in the 13th verse. Secondly, Others make it an evangelical promise of the restitution of Israel by the Messiah, and many Jews agree with Christian expositors herein, though, the Jews refer it to a temporal restitution, not yet fulfilled: the Christians refer it to a spiritual, partly fulfilled, yet more fully to be accomplished hereafter; and suitably to this hypothesis they interpret all the passages of this text and the 13th verse; both which will very fairly bear the sense by these put upon them, and may be the mystical sense of the words, but we, who inquire into the literal meaning, think it advisable not to swell the volume by long digressions. A third opinion ought to be considered ere we can choose which we shall adhere to. Now the third opinion, in expounding the text, makes it a commination or dreadful threat against this people, and thus suits it:

**I,** i.e. God, offended with them. Will surely assemble; by his providence will cause to come together.

**O Jacob;** he calls to the house of Israel to consider it.

**All of thee;** all who were fleeing, upon hope of what their false prophets promise, to return to their own land and cities.

**I will surely gather the remnant of Israel;** the same thing in little different words, repeated to assure us the truth of the thing.

**I will put them together;** all that remain of the ten tribes (for some were before carried away by Tiglath-pileser) shall most assuredly be gathered together, that they may all be in one covey covered with the Assyrian net.

**As the sheep of Bozrah;** in multitudes like those flocks.

**As the flock in the midst of their fold;** whence none of the sheep can get out and make their escape: so should this people be enclosed and taken.

**They shall make great noise** of cries and lamentation for their distresses and lost condition.

**By reason of the multitude of men;** such great multitudes cooped up, shall hideously lament. their own condition, like multitudes that suffer shipwreck together: all this God will bring upon them by the multitude of the Assyrian soldiers which come up against them.

Ver. 13.

In the opinion of those who account the 12th verse to be part of the flattering discourse of false prophets, this verse is the prophet Micah's reply to those false teachers; so far is it from truth that God will restore the remnant, and establish them, that he assures them the contrary will surely and suddenly befall them; and these do in the same manner expound the words as they of the third opinion, mentioned **#Mic 2:12**, thus:

**The breaker;** the Assyrian with his mighty host, i.e. Shalmaneser and his army.

**Is come up;** the *present* put (after the style of the prophets) for the future, because the thing was near, and very certain.

**Before them;** the people of Israel might see them, would they open their eyes; the preparations for this expedition are visible to all that will observe what is doing abroad. The mighty army of the Assyrian king shall ere long approach the confines, enter the land, invest the cities, yea, the metropolis of Israel.

**They have broken up;** no frontiers shall be strong enough to keep them out of the land.

**Have passed through the gate;** no cities so strong with walls and gates, which the Assyrian shall not take and possess, and enter in through the gates, as of his own cities.

**And are gone out by it;** and securely go out too.

**Their king,** Shalmaneser,

**shall pass before,** in triumphant manner,

**them,** his own army, and the captive Jacob.

**And the Lord,** offended with the Jews,

**on the head of them;** leading and succeeding the Assyrians in this war.

### MICAH CHAPTER 3

Micah reproveth the cruelty of the princes, **#Mic 3:1-4**, and the falsehood of the prophets, **#Mic 3:5-7**. His zeal in showing the sins of the princes, priests, and prophets, and their illgrounded security, **#Mic 3:8-12**.

Ver. 1.

**And I said:** in further discharge of his prophetic office, and his direction from the Lord, the prophet proceeds to preach.

**Hear;** attend diligently, and give good ear. I pray you: being to address to governors, he entreats their attention, as we have the Hebrew particle here rendered, which might have been rendered now, and so the Gallic version doth render it, and the particle signifieth both.

**O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel;** you that are by birth heads of the families, and by office princes and rulers in Israel and Jacob, i.e. in the kingdom both of the ten tribes, and more particularly the two tribes, as appears from the last verse of this chapter.

**Is it not for you?** are you not bound by office? do not men expect? doth not God require? doth not the public weal engage you to be well skilled in the laws of God?

**To know judgment;** understand, approve, conform to and rule by equity, and the just laws of your God. You, princes,

magistrates, and ruling officers, ought to know and do judgment and justice; you of all men should know and do right.

Ver. 2.

**Who hate the good:** in practice and affection these rulers were directly contrary to what they should have been and done, they hated not only to do good, but they hated the good which was to be done, and those that did it; and what kind of men may we judge they were who hated good men, and what was good, and by consequence hated also God himself?

**Love the evil;** choose, embrace, encourage, delight in, and prefer both evil works and evil workers, and take pleasure to do evil yourselves: the worst character that can be given of any sort of men.

**Who pluck off their skin from off them:** you by office are shepherds, and should feed, guide, heal, protect, and love the flock, but you use them as cruelly as the shepherd, who, instead of shearing of the fleece, would pluck off the skin, and flay them.

**And their flesh from off their bones;** another proverbial speech of the same import, and chargeth highest injustice and inhumanity upon these princes and rulers: see **#Eze 22:27 Zep 3:3**.

Ver. 3.

**Eat;** maintain themselves and their followers, nay, live in luxury and excess, revelling in banquets and feasts, as the word is many times used, **#Am 6:4**.

**The flesh;** the estates, goods, and livelihood of their subjects, neighbours, and brethren.

**My people;** whom I have chosen, maintained, and allotted an inheritance unto, of whom I once said, Who toucheth them toucheth the apple of mine eye, **#De 32:10 Zec 2:8**.

**Flay their skin from off them;** with barbarous cruelty and unheard-of injustice strip off (as butchers strip the sheep they kill) the very skin; or as hunters, which having taken the prey, wearied and worried first by their dogs, do strip off the skin to sell, and eat the flesh in feasts and riotous banquetings.

**They break their bones;** an allusion to wolves, boars, or lions, which devour the flesh, tear the skin, and break the bones of the innocent, weak, and defenseless lambs or sheep; thus our prophet tells these rulers plainly what they were, did, and how barbarously cruel and wicked.

**Chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron:** these bloody murderers, princes, and chieftains are here compared to cooks, and the subjects, weak neighbours, are compared to the bare bones which the cook doth by his art prepare for the pot, and to the flesh cut small for the caldron, that all might be boiled and extracted out to make pottage, and delicious broths or jellies: thus the great ones used the meaner sort, who lived under their jurisdiction. Possibly the prophet may aim at the bloody, cruel, and devouring times under Shallum, &c., or to that reported of Menahem, #2Ki 15:16, when probably much of this was done according to the very letter.

Ver. 4.

**Then;** when that time and those miseries which Micah foretells shall come upon them, #Mic 1:6-8 2:3, when God shall retaliate and pay these great ones in their own coin. They; the cruel oppressors, these tyrannical judges, that pitied none, devoured all, and feared not the Divine vengeance.

**Cry unto the Lord,** as if they were his, and as if he were bound to deliver; they then shall own he can, and none else can deliver them, and they will expect a saving hand after all their rebellions against and contempts of God.

**But he will not hear them;** as they heard the cry of the oppressed, but would not hear; so God will hear the cry of their distresses, but not hear the requests they make; he will do no more for them than as if he did not hear them, he will be as a stranger to their case.

**He will even hide his face from them;** they turned away their face from beholding and pitying the poor, now God will turn away his eye from them, and, as if unconcerned, leave them to their own distresses, and their enemies' rage and cruelty. At that time: this is added to assure them they should have least respect from God

when they need it most; so they shall receive what they gave, judgment without mercy, as it is #Jas 2:13.

**As they have behaved themselves ill in their doings:** this speaks both the reason why, and the manner how, God will thus leave them to the oppressor; the greatness of their sin deserved this, and such was the quality of their sins, that nothing fitter than a retaliation to punish the sin, convince the sinner, teach the world righteousness, and to vindicate God.

Ver. 5.

**Thus saith the Lord:** now Micah in the name of the Lord foretells what shall become of false prophets, he had frankly dealt with the seculars, now he deals as plainly with the ecclesiastics.

**Concerning the prophets that make my people err:** though he give them the title they assume to themselves, yet he doth very fully describe them, and shows they are false prophets; they err, and make others to err with them. Israel is too apt to mistake his God, and his ways; these false prophets make them err more, both concerning their former ways of religion and civil policy, and concerning their present danger and duty, and concerning future judgments and punishments.

**That bite with their teeth,** when they are furnished with gifts, and well fed.

**And cry,** Peace; they promise great prosperity, they pretend to give assurance from God that all shall go well with Israel, and none of the dismal woes threatened by Micah and such-like prophets should ever be verified on them.

**And he that putteth not into their mouths;** but those who will not feed these false prophets, that bid them not welcome to their tables, nor make good cheer for them,

**They even prepare war against him;** they do threaten with war, and all calamities that attend it; or else, as enemies prepared, they work them all the mischief they can, and show what god they serve, even the god of this world, and their own bellies.

Ver. 6.

**Therefore;** because of their irreligious and atheistical pretences to Divine revelations, and to come from heaven with promises

directly contrary to God's purpose and word, even when their consciences told them they did lie herein. Night of ignorance, and loss of gifts; but since they had none such as they pretended to, I see not how they could lose them. I rather take this night to be a night of distresses, a time of great calamities upon these prophets more than ordinary, and upon all the people they seduced. Unto you; deceivers, and false prophets.

**Ye shall not have a vision;** you shall no more pretend to have a vision, you shall not dare any more to foretell any thing to this people.

**It shall be dark unto you;** a very calamitous time to all, but most to you who lived upon lying visions, and now shall starve for want of them.

**Ye shall not divine;** have neither skill nor will any more to set up for yourselves in that trade; being found great impostors, and such as have seduced this people into sin first, and misery next, they will be enraged against you, and you shall not safely appear among them.

**The sun shall go down over the prophets;** a proverbial speech, and contains much the same that night and dark do contain. Perhaps this intimates the visible hand of God extraordinarily against them, and making their sorrows the more dreadful, as darkness by the sun going down at noon, would speak itself an extraordinary judgment, and most terrify the world.

**The day shall be dark over them;** the best circumstances any of them shall be in shall be so sad and woeful, that they shall not know which way to take for themselves or direct for others.

Ver. 7.

**Then;** in the days of this calamity, which shall confute all the flattering promises of these prophets.

**The seers,** who called themselves, were accounted by others, and were advised with as men that had visions from God, were prophets in name and repute with the deceived people.

**Be ashamed;** their impostures being detected, they shall be covered with shame, the people shall talk what they are, and tell them to their faces wherever they meet them that they are false

and lying varlets, not worthy to live, and the very consciences of these men shall then fly in their faces and upbraid them.

**The diviners confounded;** diviners here are seers, slid being confounded the same with ashamed; this ingemination adds to the thing spoken, at least a fuller verification of it.

**They shall all cover their lips;** so lepers did, #Le 13:45; and men ashamed and mourners did thus, #Eze 24:17,22. So these shall mourn and pine in their shame.

**For there is no answer of God;** God doth not answer them; rather, because the answer they had formerly given and pretended to be from God now appears not to have been from him, they should therefore by the sentence of the law be stoned, #De 13:10 Zec 13:3: so Elijah dealt with Baal's prophets, and it is like these false prophets detected might fear the like from those they had deceived.

Ver. 8.

**But truly,** notwithstanding this shame and silence covering these false prophets, yet, saith Micah,

**I am full of power;** courage, vivacity, and ability, becoming a prophet of God.

**By the Spirit of the Lord;** not from himself, but from the Spirit of God given to him, and duly qualifying him to the faithful discharge of the prophetic office; and without fear, flattery, by-respects, or self-seeking, I have already, and still do, and will declare the sins, duties, and dangers of this people, that they may repent and be saved, or my God may be justified when he judgeth, and this people may know the difference between a false and true prophet.

**And of judgment;** a spirit of judgment to discern aright times and seasons, to discern right from wrong, truth from lies, and pure worship of God from idolatry, and what are the consequents of all these to a people who decline from the way of truth and purity, or adhere to it.

**And of might;** resolution, undaunted in speaking God's word to the greatest of men; as I have dared, I still do dare to tell the heads

of Jacob and princes of Israel what they do against God, and what God will do against them.

**To declare unto Jacob his transgression;** with impartial reproofs, with severe menaces from God, to preach against Jacob's transgressions.

**And to Israel his sin;** the same repeated. All the twelve tribes have sinned, and God will visit.

Ver. 9.

This verse is word for word the same in the former part of it with the former part of the first verse of this chapter; we refer thither for explication of it. The prophet having asserted his Divine call, and avowed his faithfulness in the prophetic office, #Mic 3:8, he here gives us one more proof of it, dealing roundly with the magistrates in both kingdoms, Israel and Judah.

**That abhor judgment;** whereas judgment should be their great delight, as it is of every good magistrate, these had hearts that detested it, were weary of the directions of God's law in their polity, and hated to be controlled by it.

**And pervert all equity;** where you can, you wrest the law to countenance your unequal proceedings, and wrong those you should right, and acquit those you should condemn. And there is many a woe denounced against such.

Ver. 10.

**They;** heads, princes, judges, and great ones among them.

**Build up;** enlarge or beautify, and fortify.

**Zion;** the houses in Zion, or perhaps may be meant the temple and its buildings, and the royal palace of the kings of Judah.

**With blood;** with wealth and gifts which these builders made themselves masters of by violence, taking away the life of the owners, or else fining and amercing them. By this course they wrested part of their estates from them, by the other they seized all; they also for gain sometimes acquitted the guilty, and freed them in capital cases, and so sold the blood of the innocent.

**And Jerusalem with iniquity;** by such injustice Jerusalem was brought to ruin at last, though some particular persons and

families did raise themselves, their houses and palaces, to a present largeness and stateliness.

Ver. 11.

**The heads thereof judge for reward;** whereas the judges were God's deputies, to hear and determine causes, as the merit of the causes were found, without respect of persons, they should have been careful to give such judgment as God would give; for the judgment is the Lord's, and he sits in the midst of the judges. These corrupt judges attended little to the cause, but much to rewards, and with them the greatest bribe made the justest cause, and he was most guilty who was poor and could not, or honest and would not, give the expected reward. This was most directly against the law of God, #Ex 23:8 De 16:19, and expressly cursed, yet it was the common course and practice with them.

**The priests thereof teach for hire:** these men should have impartially declared the law of God to all, told them what was clean or unclean, what was prohibited, what permitted, what commanded; what was safe to them, being pleasing to God, and what dangerous to them, being offensive to their God: but these for hire would direct them how to please themselves, and though they broke the law, not be guilty; to extort, yet not be guilty of usury; to kill an enemy, yet not be guilty of murder, nor break the sixth commandment; to be unnatural to parents, yet not sin. Who paid them well, should find them most excellently skilled in the casuistical divinity the Jesuits at this day are masters of.

**The prophets thereof divine for money;** which being extraordinary persons raised of God, and sent by him to deliver his message impartially to all his people, to all ranks of men among them, without fear, flattery, prejudice, or any by respects; there were in this people at this day a sort of men called prophets, but were indeed mere fortune-tellers, as we call a vagabond sort of persons among us, and these made a trade of divining, and as if it were in their power to frame future things to the mind and humour of men, for a good round sum of money they would sell prosperity to them; for they never told great good to come to any but such as gave a great reward, and little money with them never purchased the news of a great advantage; and whoso had first the misery to be poor, that they could not buy, or else were wiser than to believe

these impostors, these were sure to be told a sad story of troubles and afflictions. There were many disciples of Balaam, #2Pe 2:15, they loved the wages of unrighteousness.

**Yet will they lean upon the Lord;** whilst magistrates, priests, and prophets are thus abominably corrupt, yet they will presumptuously lean upon the Lord, and flatter themselves that he is present with them, that he owneth them as his peculiar people. *And say;* yea, they boast so.

**Is not the Lord among us,** as our God, our Shield? whereas he was among them, but provoked to be their enemy, though they will not believe it.

**None evil can come upon us;** so they do falsely conclude, against all the word of God, and against all his true prophets' admonitions, no evil of affliction, such as war, famine, and captivity, can come upon them. Thus far these corrupt Jews.

Ver. 12.

By this it appears that this sermon was preached to Judah and its governors, priests, and prophets, who were thus wicked in Ahaz's time, and probably continued so in the beginning of Hezekiah's time. Jeremiah puts this out of all doubt, #Jer 26:18, saying that Micah spake these words to all Judah. As for the time, it was in all likelihood before the thirteenth year of Hezekiah, say some; I rather think it was in the very beginning of Hezekiah, and that this might awaken them of that age to comply with Hezekiah in the reformation. Zion here is threatened as endangered, nay ruined, by the sins of magistrates, priests, and prophets: they thought that Zion should be their safety, however they sinned; God by his prophet assures them the quite contrary, their sins should be the danger and destruction of Zion.

**For your sake;** because your sins are so great and many. God would have spared Sodom for the sake of righteous men, these may be safety to a city; but God will not spare the wicked for any place's sake, nor shall a temple be more security to a wicked people than heaven was to sinning angels. Though these flagitious men cried out against Micah, and suchlike men, as a public danger, truth is, the injustice, idolatry, and inhumanity of public persons were the great danger.

**Ploughed as a field;** either by the enemy and conqueror, thereby forbidding it to be ploughed without his leave, or by such as remained after the body of the people were carried captive. Jerusalem, one of the goodliest cities of the world, proud in its lofty and beautiful buildings, the city of the great King, shall become heaps; shall all lie in rubbish, its stately buildings shall be demolished and lie buried in their own ruins.

**The mountain of the house,** holy mountain, on which the temple, one of the wonders of the world, did stand, beautified with rarest buildings,

**as the high places of the forest;** shall lie so long waste as to be run over with wood as a forest, and be a lodge of wild beasts.

#### MICAH CHAPTER 4

The establishment of Christ's kingdom, #**Mic 4:1,2**; the peace of it, #**Mic 4:3-5**. The restoration, #**Mic 4:6-10**, and victory of the church, #**Mic 4:11-13**.

Ver. 1.

**But:** this particle, which ushers in the following promise, doth also bid us look to somewhat before spoken, of a very different complexion; that was news of a total and a long-continued desolation, but this is of a happy restitution, which doth refer both to a temporal deliverance out of Babylon's captivity, and to a spiritual deliverance out of ignorance, superstition, and all other ways of false worship. This latter is the principal, the former is typical, and so shall we consider them.

**The last days;** or the latter days, at the expiring of the seventy years' captivity, (near two hundred years from Micah's time,) as type of the days of the Messiah's kingdom, which are most usually called the last days.

**The mountain of the house of the Lord;** the city Jerusalem; or, more particularly, the mountain on which the temple did stand, called *the house of the Lord*; the hieroglyphic of the church of Christ in gospel times.

**Shall be established;** literally, and in the type, fulfilled when the second temple was built by the Jews returned out of captivity.

Spiritually, and in the antitype, accomplished when Christ did establish his church by the preaching of the gospel, and laid the foundations of it so that the gates of hell should never prevail against it, and made it this promise.

**It shall be exalted above the hills;** as the mountain or hill on which the temple stood was by this honoured above other mountains and hills, so shall it, after desolation and reproach of seventy years, be honoured with the temple rebuilt upon it for God's true worship, whereas on other hills the heathens worship idols. So the gospel church and the way of worship to God shall excel all modes of religion.

**People;** the Gentiles as antitype, those who came up with Israel out of Babylon, said to be servants and maids, **#Ezr 2:65**, above seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven, many, if not all, of them proselyted to the Jewish religion, and a type, as well as first-fruits, of the Gentiles to be converted in the times of the Messiah. This number we are sure of; as for that Josephus reports of four thousand and seventy four of a mixed multitude, we look on with no more credit given than to his report of four million six hundred and twenty-eight thousand of Judah and Benjamin, Antiq. lib. 11. cap. 4.

**Shall flow unto it;** come in freely, continually, and in multitudes, which in the type was fulfilled, partly at the return out of Babylon, and partly in after-days when Darius Hystaspes favoured the Jews and encouraged them, as Josephus reports, Antiq. lib. II. cap. 4, consonant with **#Ezr 6:3-12**; and we have reason to believe that God so disposed Darius's mind to favour them, that it might occasion some to embrace the Jewish religion. But all this type was eminently fulfilled in the conversion of those multitudes we read of brought in to Christ by the preaching of the gospel in the apostolical times.

Ver. 2.

This was in part, and as a type, fulfilled when so many proselyted and circumcised servants of several nations, amassed in the Babylonish kingdom, left their native country, and in love to their Jewish masters, and more to the God of the Jews and his law, came up with them to Jerusalem and the temple. Afterwards,

when the wonderful deliverance of the Jews, and the advancement of their countryman Mordecai in the Persian court, brought the people and their religion into request and credit, many turned Jews, through the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, #Es 8:17, were circumcised, became-proselytes of righteousness. And in the times succeeding through the reigns of five kings, for ninety years, the Jewish affairs and religion continued in a tolerably good condition. In Alexander's time, and under the Maccabees, also, this prophecy was partly fulfilled, when Ishmaelites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Idumeans submitted to the Maccabees, and by Hyrcanus's command, and with their own consent, the Idumeans were circumcised; as Josephus, Antiq. lib. 13. cap. 17. This, notwithstanding the words, had a fuller accomplishment, and still shall have, under the gospel days in these times of the Messiah, to which, as to the antitype and principal mark, they are levelled, no doubt.

**Come;** so the captive Jews, by the decrees of Cyrus and Darius released from captivity, did certainly call, persuade, and encourage each other to leave the strange lands in which they had been captives, and to go up to Jerusalem, and to build that and the temple, and to restore the worship of God; and zealous proselytes did, as the eunuch lord treasurer to queen Candace came up to Jerusalem to worship. So that we meet many proselytes at Jerusalem, #Ac 2:5,10,11, whither they were wont to come before the gospel was published. Now as this was a fulfilling of this prophecy in part, so the conversion of the multitude of the Gentiles to Christ is much more eminently a fulfilling of it.

**To the mountain of the Lord;** to the temple at Jerusalem, type of Christ and the gospel church.

**To the house of the God of Jacob:** this explains the former passage, and doth, as that, respectively look to the worship of God at Jerusalem, and in gospel days. He will teach us of his ways, out of his law, both in points of worship and judicature, by such as Ezra and Nehemiah, by such as Zechariah and Haggai, and by scribes acquainted with the law of God; this to last till Elias, forerunner to Christ, should prepare his way, and the Messiah should come to teach his people, and publish the gospel of the kingdom, by apostles and succeeding preachers.

**We will walk in his paths;** as was the duty of returning captives, and as, indeed, many of them did after their return walk more exactly in the ways of God, and especially kept themselves from idolatry; yet this was a fulfilling of this prophecy in type, presignifying what hath been done this one thousand six hundred years and more, under the preaching of the gospel; before Jacob only, now all nations see the salvation of God.

**For the law shall go forth of Zion;** in Jerusalem and Zion is declared the only way of worshipping God before Messiah comes, and from thence the only law of right worshipping God shall go forth. when Messiah is come.

**And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem;** an elegant ingemination of the same thing in somewhat different words, which as they respect both type and antitype, so must be applied to each respectively.

Ver. 3.

**And he;** God, by those governors, high priests, and prophets (taking his word for their rule) set up of God, types and servants of the Messiah, who in due time and in a fuller accomplishment of this prophecy shall by himself, during the days of his dwelling in flesh, and by his Spirit, and word, and officers he hath appointed, unto the end of the world.

**Judge;** rule persons, determine controversies, appoint ordinances, enlighten minds, convince sinners, and convert them, as **#Ps 2:8**.

**Among many people;** as the knowledge of God, and the worship of God, after the restitution of the captivity, was somewhat more extended by the coming in of many proselytes, as is noted **#Mic 4:1,2**, and this as a type prefiguring the largeness of the kingdom of the Messiah or the gospel church, so when Christ set up his visible kingdom, and commissioned his apostles, it was to teach all nations, **#Mt 28:18,19**.

**Rebuke strong nations afar off;** by the captive Jews he did convince some of those mighty nations among whom the Jews did live seventy years; and though they were far off from God, his law, his temple, and true worship, he brought them over, they were made proselytes to the true God; so now much more is this fulfilled in the turning the mighty nations, the Roman empire and

many other nations, from dumb idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, **#2Th 1:9,10**.

**They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks;** all that do heartily embrace the gospel shall be of a peaceable disposition both in their private and public capacities, and shall, as much as in them is, follow peace with all men. They shall gladly see wars cease, and turn their weapons of war and slaughter into instruments of husbandry, **#Isa 2:4**.

**Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation;** those which receive and obey the gospel shall not, unless necessitated to it, enter into a course of war and bloodshed.

**Neither shall they learn war any more,** to make it the employment of their life for their maintenance, or the chosen way to riches and honour.

Ver. 4.

**But they,** the redeemed of the Lord, redeemed from Babylonish captivity, and brought back into their own land, the type of a greater redemption by Jesus Christ,

**shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree:** the planting vines and fig trees was one part of that husbandry which the Jews made great profit by; to this husbandry they were much addicted in times of peace, **#1Ki 4:25**, and when peace, security, and riches or plenty are promised, among other ways of expressing it, this is one: so **#Zec 3:10**. So in the type, the Jews returned (whilst they walked in the ways of the God of Jacob) did enjoy safety and plenty, as **#Eze 34:25-28 36:8,9**, &c. This was made good in the gospel days more universally and fully, both in outward and inward peace under the Messiah.

**None shall make them afraid;** those that were once enemies shall be friends; the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, **#Isa 11:6-9**. These proverbial allusions do assure us that they who were redeemed out of Babylon, and the servitude of sin, should enjoy their own with great safety and security, which literally was performed to the returned, resettled captives, and spiritually or mystically is made

good among those that are redeemed by Christ, and who embrace the gospel.

**For the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it:** this gives us the greatest confirmation and assurance of the future accomplishment of the prediction and promise; the merciful, wise, faithful, and almighty God hath spoken it; he hath promised it, whose word spoken, commanding it should be, can make their state what he saith it shall be.

Ver. 5.

**For:** this is either a reason why they should be so safe, or else a declaration of their resolution to take this course, that it may be so with them, and so the Hebrew particle may certainly be rendered.

**All people will walk every one in the name of his god;** it is a received rule that they ought, and it is a constant practice with the nations, they will pray to, depend on, and serve their gods, and think by this course to receive their expected blessings; they are constant to their gods, **#Jer 2:11.**

**We will walk in the name of the Lord our God;** seek the Lord, embrace his law and worship, wait on him as the Fountain and Giver of all good: as he is the Lord who can give us vines and fig trees, and can give us safety under them; as he is our God, and engaged by promise to do all this for us; in his name we will walk, and so shall we be safe and enjoy all good from him; we will have no other lovers, nor go after them, though we have done so, **#Ho 2:6,7.** This was in letter and in part fulfilled, when upon their return out of captivity they did abandon all false gods, and worshipped God alone. And it is fulfilled more eminently in all the Israel of God, who turn from dumb idols to serve the living and true God.

**For ever and ever;** unchangeably, through the succession of ages, among the restored Jews and the redeemed Gentiles.

Ver. 6.

**In that day;** called last or latter days, **#Mic 4:1;** in the day wherein I shall restore my captived people, and in the day I shall redeem mine elect. *I will assemble;* first, and in part, by the edicts of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, for the release of the captives, their return to Jerusalem, and for the rebuilding the temple, and

for restoring the worship of God; but more fully by the preaching of the gospel, publishing salvation by Christ, to whom the gathering of the Gentiles was to be, #Ge 49:10.

**Her that halteth;** see #Zep 3:19; weakened with the hard usages of oppressing conquerors; who were as lamed ones, unable to walk: such were the impoverished Jews in the Babylonish captivity, utterly unprovided for so long a journey; and it is likely they were unresolved, too, whether to go or not go, halted between a desire of going and a fear of the difficulties that would unavoidably attend their poverty. Now the bounty and favour which God moved in the Persian kings toward the Jews was such, that these poor were encouraged to set forward on the journey. This word is to this day fulfilled, in that Christ doth by the power of his Word and Spirit make his people a willing people, determines their resolution, and enables them to perform it, and to give up themselves to God.

**I will gather her that is driven out:** in this phrase,

**I will gather,** does God by Ezekiel, Eze 28:25, promise the recovery of his people from captivity; and so does Jeremiah, #Jer 31:8, almost in the same manner promise the restoring of captive Judah. Here they are said to be

**driven out,** i.e. of their own land, into a strange land, where they are captives, #Jer 8:3,16:15 23:24:8,9 29:14 Eze 4:13. The Lord will by his power and goodness gather those whom Nebuchadnezzar scattered through his kingdom, and Christ will much more gather to his filled those who were captives to Satan.

**Her that I have afflicted:** this in the letter refers to wasted and impoverished Israel, on whom God laid an affliction of seventy years.

Ver. 7.

**Her that halted:** see this phrase opened, #Zep 3:19, and in this chapter, #Mic 4:6.

**A remnant;** which, as they were preserved for a seed, so they should as fruitful seed take root and increase, and continue to the coming of the Messiah.

**That was cast far off;** that was cast off by God, and by the hands of Babylonians were carried away captives into remotest parts of the Babylonish kingdom.

**A strong nation;** so the Jews did grow up in multitudes and strength, as appears by the Jewish wars which were by them waged in the days of the Maccabees.

**The Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion;** the true God, Lord of heaven and earth, shall be their God alone, him they shall obey in his worship, law, and temple in Jerusalem.

**From henceforth, even for ever,** i.e. to the end or period fixed for the Mosaic and legal institutions, for a very long time, not simply for ever. This was partly fulfilled to this people in their return, and reestablishment in their own land and in Jerusalem; but the final, full, and eternal accomplishment hereof is now fulfilling, and shall continue so, under the Messiah, till fulfilled in the gathering all the elect to Christ in grace on earth, and in glory in heaven.

Ver. 8.

**O tower of the flock:** some refer this to that tower Edar, in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, built there for the shepherds' more convenient watching over their flocks. The prophet may possibly allude to this. In the church, Christ's flock, there is a tower built for defence of his flock, but it is that name which is a strong tower, to which the righteous run, and are safe. But there was a tower of this denomination in Jerusalem, through which tower the flocks of sheep were driven into the sheep market; this one tower, by synecdoche, put for the whole city Jerusalem.

**The strong hold;** Ophel, as it is in the Hebrew, and perhaps were better rendered a proper name of that impregnable fort, #2Ch 27:3; another considerable part put for the whole.

**The daughter of Zion;** or, O daughter of Zion; so it will be an explication of what the prophet before meant by the tower Edar and Ophel, i.e. O Zion, O Jerusalem, both in the typical and in the mystical sense.

**The first dominion;** the former dominion, not in outward splendour, but because the government and supreme dignity

among this people was restored (after seventy years' captivity) to the former royal family, and continued in it till Shiloh came. This in the type was fulfilled upon the settlement under Zerubbabel and his successors; but the whole antitype concerns the Messiah's kingdom, and the gospel Jerusalem, and is fulfilled in the spiritual glory of it. Christ's kingdom is the ancient, supreme, and most glorious kingdom; and by his redeeming us from the bondage of hell, is set up, and shall be continued firm and unmovable, more than Edar, Ophel, *Zion*, or Jerusalem typical, as #**Lu 1:32,33**, and more large than ever David's or Solomon's kingdom, #**Da 7:14**, and therefore greater in glory, for Christ is King of kings, #**Re 17:14 19:16**. This spiritual kingdom came first to the Jews, #**Ac 13:46**. It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you. The gospel was to be preached first to the daughter of Jerusalem. There the preachers of repentance and remission of sins were to begin, and thence they were to publish it to all nations, #**Lu 24:47**. This text, and such like, the blinded Jew doth take in a literal sense only, as if it promised a temporal dominion over all nations, and worldly kingdom to the Messiah, in which they expect a large share; but what is literal, and concerned the Jews alone, was limited to them that came out of the Babylonish captivity, and hath been fulfilled to them.

Ver. 9.

**Now;** now that I have from the Lord promised such great good things to you, after the seventy years' captivity, and in the days of the Messiah,

**why dost thou cry out aloud?** as if this case were desperate, or as if it would be ever night with thee, or as if thy hopes would not outweigh thy fears, or thy future joy would not counterbalance thy present griefs.

**Is there no king in thee?** thou hast lost thy king Zedekiah, and now art become tributary, but thy God, thy King, is with thee. and will be with thee to preserve, restore, establish, enlarge, enrich, and beautify thee with salvation, and to reign over thee in Mount Zion for ever, #**Mic 4:7**. Thy loss at present is great, but thy future advantage may well stop these outcries.

**Is thy counsellor perished?** hast thou none among thy wise counsellors left in thee? Hath Nebuchadnezzar cruelly slain all he took of them, and are the rest fled? Yet the wonderful Counsellor is with thee, doth consult and resolve that thou shalt not be undone, and perish for ever. Messiah, the wisdom of his Father, hath the conduct of thy sufferings, deliverance, and re-establishment, in which thou mayst at last glory.

**For pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail:** this great distress of spirit appears by thy outcries, like those of a woman in travail; of which no great reason can be given, all things considered, no more than of those of a woman at her full time, and bringing forth the fruit of her womb, to the present increase and future honour of the family; whose pains end in joy, **#Joh 16:21**.

Ver. 10.

**Be in pain, and labour to bring forth;** it may be read, *Thou shalt be in pain, and thou shalt labour*, &c.; so it will be a prediction of the troubles, sorrows, and dangers that they shall meet with in the wars against the Babylonians, and in their captivity under them.

**O daughter of Zion;** all the house of Judah, particularly you that dwell in Jerusalem and near Mount Zion. *Like a woman in travail;* whose sorrows are very sharp, but somewhat mitigated by expectation of a good delivery, and the birth of a living child: let your hopes so mitigate your sorrows too.

**For now;** ere long, within a few years, you will see or hear that Israel is carried captive (which Micah lived to see): this may be an admonition, it is certainly a token that you shall be captives too; and this came upon them one hundred and thirty years after, when in Zedekiah's time the daughter of Zion was deplorably wasted, conquered, and captivated by Nebuchadnezzar.

**Thou shalt go forth out of the city;** forced thereto by the prevailing power of the Babylonians, who took Zedekiah and those that accompanied him when they stole out of the city: these did go out when they could keep in it no longer.

**Thou shalt dwell in the field;** as conquered, made prisoners, and held so in the fields under a strong guard, until all the conquered were brought together, that they might in one body be led away.

In their journey to Babylon they were forced to lodge in the fields, also exposed to all the inconveniencies of heat in the day and of cold in the night, weary, hungry, thirsty, and faint near to death.

**Thou shalt go even to Babylon;** O daughter of Zion, thou shalt certainly be carried captive to Babylon, where thy dwelling shall be little bettered, thou shalt dwell by the river, without the city.

**There shalt thou be delivered;** by Cyrus first, and by Darius Hystaspes next, and by Artaxerxes in Nehemiah's time; all this as type of a greater deliverance.

**The Lord;** the everlasting God, thy God, whose servants the Persian kings that favoured the Jews were, and by whose motion they did incline to release them. Shall redeem; the Hebrew word points out a redemption by the next kinsman, and so fairly minds us of the Messiah, the great Redeemer of the church. And to him, and the redemption of the church by him, do these deliverances ultimately and principally point.

**From the hand of thine enemies;** who would have detained the people of God longer in slavery, or who would have hindered the rebuilding of the temple, and the re-establishment of the worship of God. Proportionably to this type doth the antitype answer, #**Lu 1:74,75**.

Ver. 11.

**Now,** i.e. ere long, the time is near at hand. Many nations; many for number and great for name, mighty in power, all that were at that time confederate with or feudatory to Sennacherib king of Assyria, or else to the king of Babylon.

**Are gathered against thee;** the present tense for the future, in the prophetic style, to express the certainly and the nearness of the judgment; they will all of them assemble and come up against Judah and Jerusalem, as Sennacherib did when he besieged Jerusalem, or as Nebuchadnezzar did when he took it.

**That say;** propose it as their design, hope for it as their end, and boast of it as easy.

**Let her be defiled;** let us use her contemptuously, tread her under foot as a common and polluted thing, let us destroy her with such spite and scorn as a defiled thing deserveth: so the phrase

**#2Ki 23:8:** let her be polluted with blood, and without respect to her former holiness let us enter, sack, and destroy her temple and palaces.

**Let our eye look,** delighting ourselves in the ruin; let us feed our envious, revengeful eye.

**Upon Zion;** upon Jerusalem, the royal palace, and the sacred temple, buried in their own rubbish.

Ver. 12.

**But they,** the gathered confederate nations, Zion's enemies,

**know not,** neither discern nor consider, the thoughts of the Lord; the design of the holy, just, gracious, and faithful God, who is the God of his people, of Israel; who will humble, but not extirpate; who will purify by, but not consume in, the furnace; God's thoughts to Israel are, to give him an expected end.

**Neither understand they his counsel;** the same thing in somewhat different phrase: this elegancy is ever added to confirm the thing foretold.

**He shall gather them;** by his secret, just, and effectual providence disposing all things to facilitate their gathering together, that they shall do, and yet God also shall do it; he as the first cause, they as the second; he moves according to his own pleasure, they move as they are second and dependent agents; they shall as a fire purge out the dross, or as a wind blow away the chaff and lightest corn, which is that God intendeth; but they consult only to extinguish the people, to cut them off that they be no more a nation.

**As the sheaves into the floor;** a plain and very intelligible simile. The husbandman gathers the sheaves into the floor to thrash them; so God gathers, i.e. in due time he will do this, and bring his enemies and his church's enemies together, that they may be bruised, broken, and destroyed utterly, This seems to look to Sennacherib's gathering his power against Jerusalem, and the circumstances well enough suit this; yet is not this to be confined or restrained to Sennacherib, but perhaps to the slaughter made on the enemies in one hundred and twenty-seven provinces in Esther's time, looking to somewhat that is further off indeed

running through all ages of the church, and shall be finally accomplished in the ruin of the antichristian kingdom: then shall that of **#Zec 12:3** be fulfilled, when though all nations gather themselves against Jerusalem, yet it is that they may be cut in pieces; when the vine of the earth shall be gathered into the wine-press of God's wrath, **#Re 14:19,20 19:15-21**.

Ver. 13.

**Arise:** this imperative may be read in the future tense, and so be an express promise; it is, however, an implicit promise made to the daughter of Zion, the Jewish church, type of the gospel catholic church, that she shall be raised out of a captive, low, and oppressed state, and this shall be by the reviving power of her God.

**Thresh;** so in a decorum to the metaphor, **#Mic 4:12**, used to express the gathering of the enemy into the floor to be broken: the future strength of the church, employed successfully (more by the arm of her Redeemer than her own) in the subduing and breaking her enemies, is here foretold and promised, as it is also **#Isa 41:15**. Christ will thus punish his enemies. So Babylon typical, as threatened **#Jer 2:33**, was beat to pieces; and so shall antitypical Babylon in due time be broken as straw that is thrashed into smallest pieces like chaff.

**I will make thine horn iron:** some taking this for the horny part of the hoof of the ox which did tread out the corn, make it to be in sense the same with the hoofs made brass; but they that take it as our version doth, for the horn properly taken, with which the horned beasts do push and thrust down, break, or wound, do express the power and strength of the church firm as iron to beat down her enemies. I will make thy hoofs brass: by this figurative speech is the strength of Zion expressed, by which she treads under foot, and breaks the power of enemies into pieces that it shall never be repaired, as straw that is thrashed in the floor and broken like chaff.

**Thou shalt beat in pieces;** in the times after the rebuilding of Jerusalem the Jews grew to such strength, that in their wars they did, especially in the Maccabees' time, break their enemies in pieces. But here is a mystical and spiritual sense of these words,

as they refer to the Messiah's kingdom, in which he will break hard hearts by the power of his word, and convert sinners to himself; and by the power of his almighty arm will defend and support his own subjects, whilst he doth by invincible strength throw down and trample into dust his and their enemies. And this power he hath sometimes evidently exercised already, in the various deliverances he hath wrought for his people, which stand recorded in the church histories. Of this strength you may truly say what is reported of the inscription in the cross appearing to Constantine, *In this thou shalt conquer*.

**Many people;** such as were enemies in disposition and carriage towards the Jews though neighbours in their situation; these were both many and mighty enemies: such Christ's church hath to contest with, and such Christ will conqueror for his church, for he it is who goeth *forth conquering and to conquer*, #Re 6:2; and all his enemies shall be made his footstool, #Ps 110:1.

**I will consecrate:** some refer this to the church, and so it may well enough be applied: the redeemed of the Lord should by their own act and deed become the Lord's. Others refer it to the Lord, he will consecrate; this is best: but both together, the Lord will, and therefore the church will; God requires it, they consent to it.

**Their gain;** the spoils of their conquered enemies, what they get out of their hand. So the tabernacle was enriched with the spoils of Egypt, and the temple built with that which David did dedicate of the spoils of enemies; and Persian bounty built the second temple.

**Unto the Lord;** to the true God, for his honour and in his service.

**Their substance;** their power, glory, and wealth, all they have and are.

**Unto the Lord of the whole earth;** with humility and low thoughts of all we do, as done to him that doth not need it, being Lord of all.

## MICAH CHAPTER 5

The birth of Christ foretold, #Mic 5:1-3; his kingdom, #Mic 5:4-7; his complete conquest over his enemies, #Mic 5:8-15.

Ver. 1.

This verse is, say some, a sharp sarcasm against Israel's enemies. Others will have it to be a repetition of the evils, and a description how far those evils should prevail, that were ere long to come upon Judah and Jerusalem, by either Sennacherib and his Assyrians, or by Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonians, to where God's people seem thus to speak: We have heard what we must suffer for a time, and how we shall be delivered and triumph at last; and since that is the order, first afflictions, afterwards salvation, delay not, O thou enemy, but now gather thyself in troops; summon in thy forces, appoint thy rendezvous, bring thy spoiling, wasting troops, thy merciless and bloody troops, and form thy army, O Assyrian: of whom much like this doth Isaiah prophesy, #**Isa 8:6-10**. And this passage of Micah may also further refer to the Babylonian army under Nebuchadnezzar, under the violence of both which they were to suffer, and from both which the Jews should have a glorious deliverance ere long. *O daughter of troops*; O Nineveh, daughter of troops: from her first founder she was a city full of troops, that spoiled, Cut off, and destroyed, and had been more than ordinarily so under Pul, Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser, and Sennacherib for ninety-five years together, in the successive reigns of these four monarchs. Babylon also in her time was as troublesome to Judah, and must be this daughter of troops also. *He*; that is, the enemy, either Assyrian, which had taken all but Jerusalem, and did invest Jerusalem too; or Babylonian, which afterward besieged and took Jerusalem, sacked the city, burnt the temple, and captivated the people.

**Hath laid siege against us**; hath in prophetic style, certainly will lay siege against the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the only people of God at that time; both king, judges, and citizens were all enclosed in the siege.

**They**, the proud, successful, and oppressive enemy,

**shall smite the judge**, the king, supreme judge,

**of Israel**; not the ten tribes, though they are usually called by this name, but the two tribes that adhered to David's family.

**With a rod upon the cheek:** this is a proverbial speech, expressing a very contemptuous usage of the person spoken of, and it was fulfilled partly when Sennacherib's general Rabshakeh did so vilify good Hezekiah, and not content herewith vilified the God of, Israel also, as #2Ki 18:19, &c.; #Isa 37:23. It was more fully and literally accomplished when Zedekiah, his children, his counsellors, and his officers of state, were most barbarously used by the insulting Babylonians, #2Ki 25:6,7 2Ch 36:13,17,18, &c.; #Jer 52:6, &c. Since all this must be done against us, make haste, O thou proud enemy, and do it, for it will end in our deliverance and thy ruin.

Ver. 2.

**But,** Heb.

**And. Beth-lehem;** not in the tribe of Zebulun #Jos 19:15, but in the tribe of Judah, styled therefore Beth-lehem of Judah, Matt. it. 1,

6.

**Ephratah;** so called, say some, from Caleb's wife; but that is not probable, for it had the name long before Caleb's wife was thought of, as appears, #Ge 35:19. It is more likely to be called Ephratah from the richness and fruitfulness of the land where it was situate, the Hebrew word whence this is derived importing fruitfulness, whence also it was called Bethlehem, the house of bread.

**Though thou be little:** some read this as an interrogation, Art thou little? which ought to be resolved by a negative, Thou art not little, and so reconcile #Mt 2:6 to this of the prophet. Some read it in the neuter gender, *It is a little thing for thee to be among the thousands,* to have a captain, or ruler of a thousand in Judah; it is much greater honour, which shall be put upon thee; out of thee shall come he that is to be chief Ruler and Head of all the people of God, the Messiah. Much like phrase is, that #2Ki 20:10 Isa 49:6; there is an exposition of the word *Tsair* in the text, as denoting the contrary to our usual notion of it: so #Jer 48:4. The Chaldee paraphrase explains it by sultans or princes, but I question whether one instance from the Scriptures can be given in which *Tsair* signifies great, notable, or chief; our translators have

better rendered it with supplying the adversative *though*, and make the sense plain and easy: As for Beth-lehem Ephratah, she is so little that she is scarce to be ranged among the cities of Judah which go out by a thousand, or are led out by one that is head, prefect, or captain of a thousand.

**Among the thousands of Judah:** this was the royal tribe from which the Messiah was to rise; this (as other tribes) was divided into thousands, and a head appointed to each thousand; and of these the thousand, or, in our language, the regiment, of Bethlehem was one of the least to the eye.

**Out of thee shall he come forth;** out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the city Bethlehem, shall he come, i.e. be born.

**Unto me;** for to do that great work God hath designed to do by the Messiah.

**That is to be ruler,** King and Sovereign, in Israel; amidst the Israel of God, the whole Israel, as well that after the faith as that after the flesh. Christ the Lord in the midst of them, **#Mic 4:7.**

**Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting;** whose generation, as he is the Son of God equal with his Father, is eternal: this asserts the eternity of his Divine nature.

Ver. 3.

**Therefore,** or nevertheless, as the particle will bear,

**will he,** God, the God of Israel,

**give them up,** to the Chaldeans, to be wasted by them, and to be led into captivity, and to be afflicted there for their sins committed in their own land against God, until the time, until seventy years be expired, the time appointed for the punishing the Jews,

**that she which travaileth,** the daughter of Zion, compared here to a woman in travail,

**hath brought forth;** be delivered out of captivity, compared here to a woman's bringing forth, as **#Mic 4:9,10.**

**Then the remnant of his brethren,** i.e. the brethren of the Messiah, those of Judah and Benjamin who were carried captive, shall return unto the children of Israel; being set free by Cyrus,

shall return to their own land, and be there established; and they shall return with Israel rather than to: all this referring in the letter to their redemption out of Babylon, (which was the effect of the Messiah's power and mercy towards them, as **#Mic 4:10 5:2**) hath a further reference to a more glorious redemption, and to intervening afflictions which should fall upon the Jews, from after their restitution and resettling in Canaan. unto the coming of the Messiah in the flesh when born of the Virgin; and that of **#Isa 7:14** shall be fulfilled, when Messiah, Ben David, shall set up his kingdom, and deliver the whole Israel of God from their captivity under ignorance, sin, and hell, and shall bring in the Gentiles, that remnant of his brethren, and unite them to the true Israel, and make them one church to God.

Ver. 4.

**He**, the Ruler born in Bethlehem, the Messiah, shall stand: sometimes this posture denoteth the ministry of a servant, but here it speaks the readiness, cheerfulness, firmness, and stability of both the ruler, his government, and kingdom.

**Feed;** as a Shepherd that does diligently watch over, guide, preserve, and feed his sheep, or as rulers are called shepherds. Christ is that good Shepherd, **#Joh 10:14**; and he is the righteous and holy Governor, and his government shall have no end, **#Isa 9:7**.

**In the strength of the Lord;** in the assistance which God shall give him, for Christ-man was carried through this great work, redeeming, setting up, establishing his church by the power of the Father, who was with him, and upheld him, as was promised, **#Isa 61:1-3**. All power in heaven and earth was given to Christ our Mediator, who being eternal God, of equal power with his Father, doth in his own strength overcome all enemies, removeth all difficulties, gathereth and governeth his church, and will do so to the end of the world; such visible, convincing tokens of a Divine power and glory working in him, and with those he sendeth to preach the gospel, I mean apostles, and all managed to the glory of God.

**In the majesty of the name;** by commission from the Lord, in whose name Christ came, preached, wrought miracles, and instituted his gospel church.

**Of the Lord his God,** i.e. God the Father.

**They shall abide;** his sheep, his subjects, his redeemed Israel, his church made up of converted Jews and Gentiles, shall continue, the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

**For;** the church is so redeemed and established, that Christ the Messiah might be glorified; God will give him a glorious name, therefore these things are disposed in this manner.

**Now,** either ere long, or in due time, at the set time,

**shall he,** Messiah,

**be great unto the ends of the earth;** whose redeeming grace shall be published to the ends of the earth, said his dominion, his spiritual kingdom, shall be enlarged wide as the world itself. All here spoken in this verse is too great any way to be applied to Zerubbabel, as some Jews themselves confess.

Ver. 5.

This verse, as the former, is abstruse, and the particulars are not easily accommodated to times and things.

**And this;** so the Hebrew, and it may be read as the neuter gender, and be referred to time, or thing, or both, following in the text, thus: At that time this thing shall be our peace, viz. when the Assyrian shall invade us, we shall raise by our prayers sufficient strength against him, here expressed by seven shepherds, &c. Our version supplies the defect of the substantive with

**man,** i.e. the Messiah the Ruler, who stands and feeds in the strength of the Lord. Shall be the peace, which is promised to and expected by the people of God, all their preservation and deliverances are not only for the sake, but effected by the power, of the Messiah.

**When the Assyrian shall come into our land;** as Sennacherib did within a few years after this prophecy was delivered; and then by the power and authority of Messiah was Sennacherib and his army defeated, and Judah's peace was secured.

**When he shall tread in our palaces;** which the Assyrian did in all the cities of Judah, except Jerusalem, against which he could do nothing, because God-man the Messiah was with Hezekiah and Jerusalem, as foretold. **#Isa 8:8-10 37:32-35.**

**Then, shall we;** Hezekiah, and with him the prophets and people, by prayer to God, shall prevail with God to send deliverance and salvation to them.

**Raise against him seven shepherds:** the number is certain, but put for an uncertain; and the quality of those raised is expressed by shepherds, in a decorum to the representation of the people of God by the metaphor of sheep, or flock, of which shepherds do particularly take care.

**And eight principal men:** here again a determinate number is put for an indeterminate, and for a sufficient number, that the effect may be sure. God will raise a sufficient number of deliverers for his people: this is the import of this phrase, as elsewhere six troubles and seven, **#Job 5:19.** Thus in the letter and historical reference I suppose the words do look to the wonderful deliverance of Hezekiah and Jerusalem from the Assyrian, but I doubt not they have a mystical and spiritual reference, and contain a prediction of that peace Christ did make, and doth maintain, for his churches against all enemies, typified by the Assyrian. Besides this exposition given, I must not pass over that note, viz. The word rendered peace signifieth also recompence, and so might be rendered: This shall be the recompence of the Assyrian by the seven shepherds, rendered for his invading and spoiling Judah, and for attempting against Jerusalem.

Ver. 6.

**And they,** the seven shepherds and eight principal men, i.e. those great, wise, and successful instruments of God's revenge, and of his church's deliverance,

**shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword:** this passage seems to point to the Babylonians, who did invade, waste, and subdue the Assyrian kingdom under the conduct of Merodach-baladan, king of Babylon, called also Berodach, **#2Ki 20:12.** He sent the congratulatory embassy to Hezekiah, newly by miracle cured of his mortal disease and delivered from the Assyrian, **#Isa**

**39:1,2.** This Merodach taking the opportunity of the weakness of the Assyrian kingdom, partly by the great slaughter of Sennacherib's army, and the murder of that mighty, daring monarch, and partly by the civil wars which ensued between the regicides and Esarhaddon, took arms, and succeeded in the attempt, subduing the Assyrian kingdom with force and bloodshed enough.

**The land of Nimrod;** the same, say some, with the land of Assyria but others, perhaps with better reason, refer this to Babylon, and the kingdom thereof, which by Nebuchadnezzar's hand destroyed the Jews, Jerusalem, and temple, and was afterwards destroyed by the Medes and Persians, whom God raised to punish Babylon and release the Jews.

**In the entrances:** as we read, it denoteth the fortified frontiers, the garrisons which keep all the entrances of the kingdom; it denoteth also their cities, through the gates of which was great entrance, or their courts of judicature, which were kept in the gates: both their military power should be reduced and their civil power also by the prevailing conqueror.

**Thus shall he;** in this manner shall he, i.e. the Messiah,  
**deliver us,** the Jews his people,

**from the Assyrian;** both as type of all other enemies, and he an enemy to the people of God.

**When he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth in our borders:** see this explained #Mic 5:1. I add, that what is rendered when might be rendered *because*, and note the reason why the Lord Messiah doth so deal with Assyria first and Babylon next.

Ver. 7.

**The remnant of Jacob;** both the remnant which surviveth the sacking and burning of their city and temple, and, carried captive, live in a scattered condition; and the whole remnant, according to the election of grace, whether of Jacob after the flesh or after the Spirit.

**In the midst of many people;** either among the several people under the Babylonian dominion, which may well be called many, when it is said of Nebuchadnezzar, that God gave him all nations

and kingdoms, **#Jer 27:6-8**; or else, amidst the nations, their neighbours, after their return and reestablishment in their own land. This remnant, wherever they are,

**shall be as a dew**; either subsisting and multiplying as the dew; or else, as the dew refresheth the grass, and is beneficial to it, so where this remnant is, it should be a blessing to those about them that use them friendly; so **#Ho 14:5**.

**From the Lord**; it shall be the peculiar work of God; as dew hath no other father or fountain, so the blessings on Jacob, and the blessing by him on others, shall be from the Lord. So God blesseth those that bless Abraham's seed, **#Ge 12:3**. So Cyrus received his blessings, and his Persians with him, **#Isa 45:1-4**.

**As the showers upon the grass**; the same thing in a different, but very apt expression; nations kind to Jacob should for this spring and flourish, as the grass doth by the dew and showers.

**That tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men**; it shall be the only work of God, he shall by his immediate hand bless such, as he alone, without the help of man, giveth dew and showers. As this was fulfilled in the type, before the gospel of the kingdom was preached to all nations, so it hath been, now is, and ever shall be fulfilled in ages to come. God's remnant shall be a blessing to the places they live in, and the persons they live with, as Jacob was to Laban, **#Ge 30:27**, and Joseph was to Potiphar, and to the keeper of the prison.

Ver. 8.

**In the midst of many people**; see **#Mic 5:7**; who are enemies, that do injure them.

**As a lion** for strength and courage, which *the beasts of the forest* dare not oppose: and cannot resist, so Should this remnant; much like that **#Le 26:8**.

**As a young lion among the flocks of sheep**; a second allusion of the same import, but yet with some greater emphasis; in the former comparison, the greater cattle, called behemoth, in this sheep, much lesser and weaker cattle, are compared with the lion and young lion.

**Treadeth down;** overbeareth, and throws down by his strength, and treads under foot with as much ease as a man would tread on worms, or tread down straw for the dunghill.

**Teareth in pieces;** to devour, satisfy his hunger, and repair his strength for a new assault on his prey.

**None can deliver;** that dares attempt a rescue; but the prey is left under the lion's paw, to satisfy the hungry beast: so shall Israel be after their return out of captivity, and while they keep the ways of the Lord; so they were in Esther's time, against such as would have destroyed them; so in the Maccabees' time, when they subdued the nations about them. But the conquering power of the word, the rod of Christ's strength, doth greater wonders than the sword of the Maccabees ever did. It is the mighty conquering power of the gospel that is here shadowed forth to us.

Ver. 9.

**Thine;** Messiah, or a people of God, nay both, forasmuch as whatever these can do, they do it, not in their own power, but in Christ's power.

**Thine hand;** thy strength and power, for so does the Scripture usually express strength or might.

**Shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries;** shall be greatly exalted, and shall be wonderfully successful against enemies, who in great multitudes did set upon the people of God; such were those who fought the Maccabees, and were defeated by them.

**All thine enemies,** who do obstinately hold on in the enmity of their natures, ways, and doings,

**shall be cut off;** finally, certainly, eternally, and dreadfully perish. This hath a partial fulfilling now, but its full completion will be when Christ will appear the Judge of quick and dead, when all his enemies shall be made his footstool, **#Ps 110:1.**

Ver. 10.

**In that day;** when the threats against the enemies, and the promises to the people of God, shall be made good.

**Saith the Lord:** this is added for assuring the performance of the things foretold.

**I will cut off thy horses;** not in judgment, but in mercy, for there shall be no such need of them, nor shall the church of God any more rely on them: so **#Ho 14:3**, *We will not ride upon horses*; though we have put confidence in them, we will do so no more.

**I will destroy thy chariots;** warlike chariots, prepared for war: as God alone is, so they will make him, their only trust.

Ver. 11.

**And I**, the Lord thy God, and thy Saviour, will cut off the cities; cut off the occasion of thy fortifying thy cities as heretofore thou hast done, thou shalt dwell in unwall'd towns, and need no other defence than what I am to thee.

**And throw down all thy strong holds;** demolish all thy forts, and watch-towers, and frontier guards. These here mentioned are means of defence against enemies' assaults, in which Israel had too much trusted; the others before mentioned, **#Mic 5:10**, are offensive preparations for annoying the enemy; but in the day of that peace here spoken of, there should be no enemy should invade the people of God to put them on their defence; nor should they have any need to attempt upon their enemies; and though these means are lawful to be used, yet shall it be the happiness of God's people not to need them, for their God, their Lord, is their Saviour in the midst of them, and he will cut off enemies round about them; so that virtually this is a promise to Israel that his adversaries should be destroyed, and so his fears disappear.

Ver. 12.

In this verse the Lord foretells the downfall of all unlawful arts which had been in use, though forbidden by the law of God, **#Le 20:27**. Though Israel should have consulted with God alone, yet they did consult with sorcerers. So did Manasseh, and before him, **#2Ki 17:17**.

**Thou shalt have no more soothsayers;** the very art shall be out of use, and none shall openly, as formerly, consult with them, or they make profession of foretelling events, or what a lucky day or hour to set upon an enterprise, or to curse, as Balaam would have done, an enemy to make way for victory; no more of these; the oracles ceased when Christ was born: much to this purpose **#Zec**

**13:2 Mal 3:5.** God will, in mercy to his people, take away these stumbling-blocks, these occasions of sin.

Ver. 13.

**Thy graven images;** which were for the matter of them made of wood or stone, smoothed, and fashioned to the images, which the blind idolater thought did well represent his god.

**Standing images:** statues erected in places chosen for the purpose, fixed that they move not, had this different name from their posture, the matter still the same.

**Out of the midst of thee,** O Israel, in the type, and, O Israel, antitype: this is verified among the Jews, who to this day hate images for Divine uses, and learnt this in their captivity; and it is verified in the church of Christ, which condemns all religious use of images.

**Thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands:** it was once the great sin of the Jews to worship and rely on idols; but when God shall by the Messiah redeem both his Israels, they shall no more sin thus, **#Ho 14:3**, for they shall know he is the only true God, and there is no Saviour beside him.

Ver. 14.

**I will pluck up thy groves:** the groves where some of them abused in downright idolatrous worship, others of them used superstitiously, thus beside the word; the other way, quite against the word: but after the return from Babylon, there was a great reformation in this point, and after the appearing of the Messiah there hath been a greater eradication of idolatry.

**So will I destroy thy cities,** or thine enemies; for the word, here used indifferently, signifieth both, and they will either agree to this place. If cities, they are those devoted to idolatry, which, **#De 13:15**, were to be destroyed; if you interpret it enemies, it is either an argument to confirm them that they shall not need horses and chariots, or defenced cities, or a further blessing promised upon the reforming fresh idolatry; this an effect or fruit of it, God will destroy their enemies when they have destroyed these idols which are his enemies.

Ver. 15.

**I will execute vengeance:** God speaks to our capacity, he will proceed, or act, as the Hebrew word signifieth. He is supreme Judge, to whom vengeance belongeth, and when he hath passed the sentence, and his instruments execute it, he takes it to himself: so when the Babylonians avenged the wrongs by the Assyrian done to the Jews, and when Cyrus with his Persians and Medes avenged the injuries of Babylon, this prophecy was partly fulfilled, and in succeeding times it was further fulfilled, and is now fulfilling, and so will be, until the final destruction of the wicked.

**In anger and fury:** this spoken after the manner of man; it includes the greatness of God's just displeasure, and the effects of it, which are resembled to what we do when furiously angry, act with utmost strength, and in the most terrible manner we can; so God will, with as great severity and terror as flesh and blood can bear, proceed against these heathens.

**Upon the heathen;** literally, the nations under the Assyrian monarchy first, next the nations under the Babylonish kingdom: in the full import of the words, all the nations that are enemies to the Lord, to his Christ, and to his peculiar people, who know not God, nor obey the gospel.

**Such as they have not heard;** with unparalleled terror; and so they shall be made warning-pieces to others.

## MICAH CHAPTER 6

God's controversy with his people for ingratitude, #Mic 6:1-5. What service is acceptable to him, #Mic 6:6-9. He reproveth them for their injustice, #Mic 6:10-15, and idolatry, #Mic 6:16.

Ver. 1.

**Hear ye:** see #Mic 1:2.

**Now;** whilst the Lord is willing to debate with you, before it be too late for you.

**What the Lord saith:** though it is a man like yourselves who speaketh, yet he comes from the Lord, and with the Lord's message, and it is the Lord who speaketh by Micah.

**Arise:** this is God's command to Micah, who is bidden to arise; so Jonah, **Mic 1:2**, See Poole "**Jon 1:2**". Prophets, as other men, could be content to sit at ease, and neither be troubled by others or troublesome to others; and perhaps the little success of Micah's preaching had occasioned him to retire and sit down; now God rouseth him, Get up, prepare thyself, contend thou; plead, Micah, the present cause, argue the case that is between thy God plaintiff, and thy people delinquents.

**Before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice;** plead openly, vehemently, let there be witnesses to hear the case, which is so clear on God's side, and so full against thy people, that the very mountains and hills, on which they have sinned against me notoriously, on which I have blessed them abundantly, had they eyes, and ears, and voice, would testify that I have planted them with vines, olives, fig trees, and clothed them with grass and flocks, and stored them with springs, and beautified them with cedars, oaks, and all pleasant trees of the forest; this I have done upon the mountains and hills for my people, and there they have made their groves, set up their idols, sacrificed to devils, and committed other lewdnesses not to be named. O Micah, speak as if thou wouldst make mountains hear thee to testify for me, **#De 32:1 Isa 1:2**.

Ver. 2.

**Hear ye, O mountains:** in the first verse God directs Micah to take the mountains and hills for witnesses; now in this verse he doth call upon those mountains to hear: it is a prosopoeia, an elegant personating of hearers and witnesses, as **#De 32:1 Isa 1:2 2:2**. Some by

**mountains** understand princes and nobles, and by

**strong foundations of the earth** inferior magistrates, as **#Ps 75:3**; but it may as well, or better, be an appeal to these creatures in so just a cause for their Creator.

**The Lord's controversy**, whose sovereign Majesty may well command what he pleaseth, and expect to be obeyed, and whose unparalleled goodness to Israel ought to have been uncontroverted motives to obey him in all things; yet the sovereign goodness is

slighted and disobeyed; on which he now impleads his people, brings his action against them.

**Ye strong foundations of the earth;** called before hills: it is an explanation of the former, mountains; or it may be an appeal to those deep foundations which are hid from any eye, and which seem most remote from what is done on earth; but the ill carriage, the disobedience, and sin of Israel is so notorious, that the whole creation may be subpoenaed witnesses against them.

**The Lord hath a controversy with his people;** covenant, redeemed, and only people, as **#Am 3:2**.

**He will plead with Israel;** no longer put off the cause, nor forbear to punish them and right himself, he will bring the cause to hearing judgment, and execution too.

Ver. 3.

**O, my people;** you whole house of Israel, my people chosen in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, multiplied in Egypt, and by many miracles owned, redeemed, and carried through the wilderness, and settled in the Promised Land.

**What have I done unto thee?** If I have done only good, why art thou weary of me? if thou know any evil I have done, declare it, say what iniquity hast thou found in me, as **#Jer 2:5,31**.

**Wherein have I wearied thee?** what grievous or burdensome impositions, that thou mightest justly groan under?

**Testify against me;** speak, declare, spare not; thou who canst not recount all the good I have done for thee, and who canst not find out one evil I ever did to thee, declare what it is hath caused thee to be weary of me.

Ver. 4.

Look as far back as thy coming out of Egypt, near seven hundred and forty years ago;

**for I brought thee up,** with an out-stretched arm, out of the land of Egypt, where by servants thou wert oppressed, where thy oppressors did plot thy utter extirpation, where thou servedst in the iron furnace.

**Redeemed thee;** delivered thee by mighty power, and gave Egypt for thy ransom; I made them pay dear for their detaining thee, and ill using of thee.

**Out of the house of servants;** being offspring of Canaan, they were in their father's curse doomed to be servants, and were (as servile minds are) most barbarously cruel to Israel, as appears by the bloody edict against the male children, and by requiring brick without straw; their bondage was a cruel bondage under which they groaned.

**I sent before thee Moses;** a man excellently qualified to be a conductor to them, a very learned, martial, and experienced man; he improved his forty years by the advantages of a royal education first, and next by the great employments which such persons are called to: for his wisdom and learning, his might and valour, you have witness, #Ac 7:22; the Hebrew tradition is, that he fought and got many battles, in which he commanded as generalissimo for Pharaoh. Moses was beside this admitted to extraordinary consults with God: by this means their model of polity was made very exact.

**Aaron;** a person called to the exercise of the highest office in the priesthood, to offer sacrifice, and make atonement for the sins of the people, and to be a type of the great Intercessor.

**Miriam;** a prophetess, to be assistant to her brothers last mentioned, to be example and counsellor to the women: God furnished them with magistrate, priest, and prophet.

Ver. 5.

**O my people, remember now; O Israel,** think well of it, what I did then was worthy of a grateful remembrance to this day.

**What Balak king of Moab consulted:** this man, though a great and warlike prince, yet would not adventure by plain force to set upon Israel; he wished their ruin, he contrived it, and had he succeeded in his first attempt to bring Israel under a curse, he was resolved next to attack them by force.

**And what Balaam,** a man accounted to be a prophet and a holy man, able to blast any by his curse, and able to advance any affairs by his blessing, but really he was a soothsayer, and a man of

pernicious counsels, answered him; forced against his interest and inclinations to bless Israel, #De 23:4,5 Jos 24:10, and to confess he could not prevail with God to curse Israel; so also remember how Balaam counselled Balak to draw your fathers to sin, how this snare took, and how it cost twenty-four thousand lives. The story at large you have #Nu 22 Nu 23 Nu 24.

**From Shittim:** this the place where Balak began by fair but lewd women of Midian to debauch Israel as Balaam had counselled, and so continued to Gilgal all along the borders of his dominion: or else thus, Remember, O my people, how I spared thee in the matter of Baalpeor, for which thou deservedst to be destroyed at Shittim; remember also the mercies I gave under the conduct of Joshua after Moses's death, which fell out whilst you abode at Shittim, #Jos 3:1.

**Gilgal;** where Israel first took possession of the Promised Land, and saw visibly the faithfulness of their God.

**That ye may know the righteousness of the Lord;** the mercy, justice, uprightness, veracity, as it signifies; but here it rather denotes the right on God's side in this controversy with his people.

Ver. 6.

In the foregoing part of the chapter you have God's resolution to have a hearing, #Mic 6:1,2, and his plea for himself against an ungrateful people, #Mic 6:3-5. Now in this verse you have the result, which is either an unfeigned submission, and justification of God's just proceedings, made by some of the best of this people, or else an inquiry made by men among them, who did yet retain some opinion of their own integrity; much like those #Isa 58:3, they were ready to say, We have offered sacrifices as required, &c.; what would God have us do more? Or else it is an inquiry what the prophet would further direct them to do in this case, with an intimation that they were ready to offer any sacrifices God should require of them. Or else this verse is the prophet's supposition, that some among them would be ready to inquire how they should in this case behave themselves, and so this prosopoeia fairly makes way for further direction to this people.

**Wherewith?** Heb. *With what?* what preparation shall I make for a due and right address unto God?

**Shall I,** in the person of all the people, or else in the person of the most thinking among them: this *I* is the people of the Jews.

**Come before the Lord:** it is a temple phrase, and contains the solemn attendance on God in his worship; well paraphrased in the Chaldee paraphrase, With what shall I serve before the Lord?

**And bow myself before:** this is exegetical to the former phrase, When I come to bow myself and worship the Lord, with what shall I appear?

**The high God;** such was the God of Israel, heaven his throne, the earth his footstool; idols are dunghill gods, our God alone is the God who dwells on high.

**Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings?** shall these suffice for testimony that I owe my all to God, or appease his displeasure, which justly might devour me as the fire the sacrifice?

**With calves of a year old:** it is probable this repeats (as is usual in Scripture, to confirm and affect us the more) the thing before mentioned.

Ver. 7.

**Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams?** the law did direct the offering of rams, single beasts for single sacrifices; if this be too little, they shall be multiplied, we will give many, very many; for the phrase is a hyperbole.

**With ten thousands of rivers of oil:** oil was required too in their sacrifices, in the meat-offerings of them, but in no great quantities, a log, or hin, i.e. half a pint, or three quarts; but we know such gifts are infinitely short of the Divine goodness bestowed on us; he who is our God is worthy of rivers of oil, multiplied to thousands; had we such store it should be all his. Such-like hyperbole you meet with in **#Isa 40:15-17**.

**Shall I give my first-born?** this is proposed not as a thing practicable by any rule of reason or religion, but as a proof of their readiness, as Abraham, to offer up their first-born, as he did offer

up his Isaac to God. It is much to part with any of our children, but it is more to part with the strength, and glory, and hope of our families; yet, like hypocrites, or like unnatural heathen, this they would do, rather than what would please the Lord.

**For my transgression;** to appease the anger of the Lord for my sins; would these be expiatories?

**The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?** the question is repeated to affect us the more: the words would bear this reading, Shall I give my first-born? *This would be* my sin. The fruit of my body? *These would be* the sin of my soul.

Ver. 8.

The prophet answers the inquiry made #**Mic 6:7** otherwise than these inquirers did expect: You who make this inquiry might have spared this pains.

**He**, God himself, hath already plainly enough told you this.

**Thee**, O Jews, every one of you, might from the law of God know what would please your God, and with what you ought to come before him; you might have read, #**1Sa 15:22**, that he delighteth in your obeying his word; and more early, #**De 10:12 13,20**. the same practical rule was laid down.

**What is good** in itself for you, and well-pleasing to your God; from his own mouth your holy and righteous fathers did know, and so might you, what is that good with which you should appear before God.

**What doth the Lord require of thee?** what so much? or what without? or doth he require any thing without? It is a question that must be resolved in a negative, comparative, or absolute; the Lord doth not require sacrifice without moral duties, nor doth he require sacrifice so much as such duties after mentioned.

**To do justly;** to render to every one what is their due, superiors, equals, inferiors, to be equal to all, and oppress none, in body, goods, or name; in all your dealings with men carry a chancery in your own breasts, and do according to equity.

**To love mercy;** be kind, merciful, and compassionate towards all that need your kindness, do not use severity towards any; though

the laws of man did not require you to remit of your pretences, and if you exacted all your right you did not break the laws of men, yet you should have respect to the law of love, and show mercy with delight in showing it, #Ro 12:8 2Co 9:7 Heb 13:16.

**To walk humbly with thy God;** in all duties which immediately refer to the precepts of the first table, in all religious exercise and deportment toward God, keep the heart sincerely humble toward God; think highly of him, his laws and determinations, murmur not against the final determinations God by his providence makes, complain not of any of his precepts; know and own it, thou art an unprofitable servant if thou hast done all, #Lu 17:10.

Ver. 9.

**The Lord's voice;** either by his judgments, each of which is the Lord's voice, he speaks by them; or rather by his prophets; and whether people hear it, or forbear, the Lord himself is concerned in it.

**Crieth,** as to deaf or to sleepy and secure men, who will not hear the milder and softer calls; the prophet must cry to them in the loudest manner he can speak.

**Unto the city;** to every city in Israel and Judah, but principally to Jerusalem and Samaria, places of greatest concourse, and where the men of greatest sense may reasonably be supposed to dwell, who should hear and consider.

**The man of wisdom:** man is supplied to make the sense entire, but without that supply the sense might have run plain, and wisdom will hear, which must have been resolved some way like to our translation, and I know none that better fits than that our learned translators have supplied. I know not but that the abstract, used here for the concrete, may express a superlative degree, wisdom, i.e. the wisest, will hear, &c.

**Shall see my name;** rightly apprehend and duly reverence the holiness, justice and necessariness of the proceedings of the Lord with his power and majesty in the execution of his just displeasure on brutish, hardened sinners.

**Hear;** consider well and discern.

**Ye;** citizens both of Jerusalem and Samaria, and every other city in the twelve tribes.

**The rod;** the punishments that God is now sending, by which he will plead his cause. These are called *the rod*, either because they are from God, who once was, and still would be, a Father to them, or because it is a comprehensive word, which takes in the various punishments inflicted.

**And who hath appointed it;** hath commissioned it, handleth the rod, hath chosen it out, and strikes with it, whether it be Assyrian, or Babylonian, or both, at several times. This is the plain literal sense; others there are, which are omitted because they suit not the design of this work.

Ver. 10.

**Are there yet?** after so many express laws peremptorily forbidding, so many examples of punishments on such, after so many reproofs, menaces, and exhortations by so many prophets, dare you still do so unjustly?

**Treasures of wickedness;** gotten by injurious, oppressive courses, ill-gotten wealth; the wickedness wherewith they raked their wealth together is laid up with their wealth, as the like is said, #Jas 5:3.

**In the house of the wicked:** none have thought of restoring their ill-gotten goods; the wicked fathers, who heaped them together, laid them up in their houses, and the children retain them; the house, i.e. family, of these do as their fathers, store up violence, and so do directly contrary to the first rule, #Mic 6:1, *to do justly*.

**The scant measure,** which is less than standard; see #Am 8:5; by which these unrighteous ones did both offend against God, and cozen their chapmen.

**That is abominable;** God abhors such injustice, #Pr 11:1 20:10,23 De 25:13-16. It is most hateful in his sight.

Ver. 11.

**Shall I?** it may have some reference to the prophet, as speaking of himself, appointed of God to be a reprover and impartial censurer of the sins of this people; When I am so to judge of them

by their doings, shall I flatter them, and say they are better than they are? but it better refers to God himself.

**Count them pure;** approve, justify, or acquit them, as if they were righteous, and not worthy to be punished? Shall I let them escape who are such unjust persons? This question implieth a strong negation.

**The wicked balances:** this kind is put for all the rest, wherewith things bought and sold were apportioned, and by which buyers and sellers were ascertained how much they bought.

**The bag;** in which they both kept their weights at home, and carried them about with them.

**Deceitful weights,** Heb. *stones of deceit*; they did (as in many places with us men do) use stones for weights, and this unjust people did cheat both at home and abroad, both the balance and its weights were deceitful, and condemned, #Le 19:35,36 De 25:13-16.

Ver. 12.

**For:** this is given as an evidence of the truth of the charge, and of the justness of the resolution God had declared to punish them.

**The rich men;** who of all men had least temptation to deal unjustly; they were so well provided for, that without a trade they might live, and in trading they should have been content with honest gain; they should have been examples of charity and bounty, but these are the men deepest in this guilt.

**Thereof;** of Jerusalem, Samaria, and of every traded city in the land.

**Full of violence;** full of principles, practices, and fruits of violence and rapine, their minds inclined to cheatings and dishonesty, their practices managed with fraud and falsehood, and their riches heaped up through violence.

**The inhabitants:** the disease is universal, not some few rich men, but they that dwell in the city, are wholly oppression; or perhaps thus, who come to dwell among them, soon catch the disease, and learn these ways.

**Thereof;** of all the cities of the land of Canaan.

**Have spoken lies;** have accustomed themselves to speak falsehood, there is no truth in their affirmations or negations.

**Their tongue is deceitful** in their mouth; there is not a man of plain-heartedness, integrity, and honesty among them. So David complains of his times, **#Ps 12:1,2.**

Ver. 13.

**Therefore,** for these many sins of violence, frauds, and lies,

**also will I make thee sick in smiting thee;** some read, I have begun to smite thee, so it suits well with the history of the wars, rapine, captivity, or desolation by the Syrians, Assyrians, Arabians, &c. brought upon Israel and Judah, which were the beginnings of their sorrows, and God's just punishments; but as we read it

**sick in smiting;** it will as well suit with the grammatical construction of the words, with the history too, and thus it will give the greater emphasis to the words; God will ere long so smite, that the strokes of his rod should reach the very heart, and make Israel heart-sick of his wounds, inflicted on him by the Lord.

**In making thee desolate:** this was fully accomplished, when the kingdom of the ten tribes was overthrown by Shalmaneser, and the kingdom of the two tribes captivated by Nebuchadnezzar.

**Because of thy sins;** multiplied, aggravated, obstinately retained, and not repented of.

Ver. 14.

**Thou shalt eat;** both literally and figuratively taken, for using what they have. So God threatens, **#Le 26:26.** So God did punish the Jews, **See Poole "Hag 1.6"**. But not be satisfied; not be filled with sweetness or strength in the eating, or using of what thou hast; thy sins shall bring either bitterness or insufficiency upon all thou hast, by both all shall be made useless to thee.

**Thy casting down;** thy destruction, partly by thy dissensions, conspiracies, and violences within thyself, and partly by the enemies breaking in upon thee, and bringing the war into thine own bowels.

**Shall be in the midst of thee;** thou shalt be weakened at home by thine own hands, and be wasted utterly by thine enemy, besieging thee in thy cities, and taking them.

**Thou shalt take hold:** though there is some variety of readings here, yet the plainest and most obvious sense is as we render it, whether you refer this laying hold to persons, as wife, children, or friends, whom (though they endeavour to save out of the enemies' hand, yet) they shall not be able to save; or if referred to things, goods, their most valuable and most portable goods and wealth: as men in distress and fleeing out of the reach of enemies, pack up their best movables, lay hold on their children, and carry them away into some remoter place, or strong hold; so it is likely this people did when invaded, **#Jer 35:11.**

**But shalt not deliver:** where thou lodgest thy children, and layest up thy wealth thither the enemy shall pursue thee, there besiege thee and thine; or if thou flee into other countries, it shall not be a safe refuge to thee.

**That which thou deliverest;** which thou dost for a little while, for a few weeks or months, preserve from the enemy, that thou thinkest is safe.

**Will I give up,** by unexpected and unthought of accidents to you, yet guided by the unerring and irresistible hand of Divine wisdom and power; shall be given up, fall into the hands of enemies, so that any considerate eye may see God's hand in it.

**To the sword;** to be cut off by either domestic and civil wars, or by the invading, conquering, and wasting troops of the Assyrians.

Ver. 15.

**Thou shalt sow,** be at great pains and cost in tilling and sowing,

**but thou shalt not reap;** it shall either not thrive to a harvest, or, if it does, an enemy shall reap it.

**Thou shalt tread the olives,** lay out thy labour and weary thyself in it, plant the tree, gather the fruit and tread it,

**but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil;** when thus prepared to use it, an enemy shall rob thee of it. Oil in those countries was

much in use, because of the great refreshment it gave to the whole body.

**And sweet wine:** here is an ellipsis, and must be thus supplied, thou shalt tread the grapes which afford sweet wine.

**But shalt not drink wine;** in this, as in the other two, thou shalt be disappointed, thou shalt not enjoy thy labour, nor shall thy heart be cheered with new wine, nay, thou shalt be sick with vexing, to see thine enemies' hearts glad with the wine thou hadst prepared for other guests.

Ver. 16.

**The statutes of Omri;** of which you read, #1Ki 16:25-28. He built Samaria, to be a royal city, and seat of religion brought in by Jeroboam; thus he both strengthened and put more credit upon the idolatrous worship, which was set up by Omri in a royal city. whereas by Jeroboam it was set up in places of meaner account.

**Are kept;** diligently, very much. All the works of the house of Ahab; summed up, in establishing Jeroboam's idolatry, introducing the idolatrous worship of Baal, #1Ki 16:31-33, cutting off the prophets of the Lord, #1Ki 18:4 19:10,14, and abolishing the true worship of God; besides the barbarous contriving the death of the innocent, and seizing the estate, #1Ki 21:8,9, &c.

**And ye,** of the house of Israel, though under the government of families which had no great reason to value the house of Ahab, yet you have done their works of idolatry and oppression, and you also of the house of Judah have degenerated and done like their works.

**Ye walk in their counsels;** literally fulfilled in Jehoram's reign, acts, and counsels, #2Ki 8:17,18; and in Ahaziah's, who was son of Jehoram, and grandson of Jehoshaphat, #2Ki 8:27; and so did Jehu, and his successors, all persist in the idolatry of the calf-worship, and in oppression of the poor: thus instead of walking humbly with God, they did openly depart from him, contrary to what God required of them.

**That I should make thee, &c.** eventually this was the end, or in necessary tendency it could not end otherwise, though they did not intend this, nor did God will them to do so that it might so end.

**A desolation;** an utter waste, such as should astonish those that saw it.

**The inhabitants thereof,** of the city or land, a hissing, in token of abhorrence and derision, #De 28:37 Jer 25:9,18 29:18.

**Therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people;** the reproach threatened in the law, if my people forsake me; or, Jerusalem shall be as much reproached as Samaria; or as #Eze 36:20.

## MICAH CHAPTER 7

The church, complaining of the scarcity of good men, #Mic 7:1,2, and the general corruption, #Mic 7:3,4, putteth not confidence in man, but in God, #Mic 7:5-7. She triumpheth in hopes of restoration after affliction, #Mic 7:8-13. She prayeth to God, #Mic 7:4. God answereth her with promises of confounding her enemies, #Mic 7:15-17. God's mercies to his people, #Mic 7:18-20.

Ver. 1.

All are agreed in the scope and meaning of these words, that they are designed a complaint for the great scarcity of men that feared God, did justice, and loved mercy; and so the prophet begins with a pathetical complaint,

**Woe is me!** ordinarily this phrase is minatory, but here it is lamentation, as every eye may see who discerns the propriety of the Hebrew.

**For I;** either the prophet in his own person, or else in the person of the good man; or, by a usual figure, the land may be brought in, complaining, that whereas it was once well stored, now it hath few right good in it.

**Am as when they have gathered the summer fruits;** all the fair, goodly, and ripe fruit gathered, none left, or none but evil fruit, such as the labourers thought not worth gathering up. So is the

harvest of Israel and Judah too; though I and other prophets have sown good seed abundantly, yet goodness comes up very thin and scarce: so **#Isa 24:13,16**.

**As the grape-gleanings of the vintage,** the same complaint in a like elegant metaphor, drawn from the vintage-gatherer, who leaves but few scattering single grapes. So Israel and Judah, which in bringing forth good men should have been as a fruitful vine full of clusters, but barren they have been, and are; and good men, i.e. just, compassionate, and humble men, are as grapes after the vintage is gathered.

**There is no cluster to eat;** such good men's converse would as much delight, refresh, and encourage me, as a fair cluster of grapes doth a thirsty and hungry person, but there is not one such cluster.

**My soul desired;** it speaks a vehement desire.

**The first-ripe fruit;** it is an ellipsis or aposiopesis, and to be supplied thus, *but there was, or I found, none*.

Ver. 2.

**The good man;** who loves and is kind to men in need, and is so from the sense of God's goodness, and in a designed imitation of God, is godly in the frame of his heart and course of life towards God, and beneficent to men for God's sake.

**Is perished;** is dead and gone, and left no heir of his godlike virtues.

**Out of the earth;** out of Israel and Judah too, though Hezekiah was (probably) now their king.

**None upright;** an honest, plain-hearted man, who thinketh no deceit, but speaketh the truth, that is, without crooked and perverse designs; such a one may possibly, but not easily, be found among the people of the ten anti of the two tribes.

**They all lie in wait for blood:** this proves the prophet's charge against this people, for the good and upright man imagineth not evil against any, but it is evident that in Israel (and Judah too) the temper of the most was sly, designing, and watching to do

mischief, to the ruining of families, the murdering of innocents, and seizing their estates, Ahab like, #1Ki 21 Pr 1:19.

**They hunt;** they proceed with all diligence, craft, and power, as a hunter that hath set his toils, and is now by all his arts endeavouring to bring the prey into the toils, that he may make his advantage by it.

**Every man his brother;** were they strangers they so hunted it were barbarous, but this is inhumanly barbarous, these bloody men hunt and destroy their brethren, the seed of Jacob, the worshippers of the God of Jacob, their own circumcised brethren.

**With a net;** which is spread beforehand, and laid close; so it is secret, premeditated cruelty and rapine they do universally exercise against each other.

Ver. 3.

**That they may do evil with both hands earnestly:** as we render the words, their plain sense will be, that all their diligence, that with both hands they can use, is to set forward evil and mischief. Possibly this clause might bear this reading, *Both hands are towards evil*; and then the following clause thus, *To do good the prince asketh. The prince*; the chief ruler, who commissioneth the judge, and should awe him from perverse judging, who should charge the judges as Jehoshaphat did, #2Ch 19:5,6; but, contrarily, here the prince set a price upon his own act in evil.

**The judge;** the inferior magistrate, commissioned to be judge.

**Asketh for a reward:** shameless injustice! to sell the innocent, and condemn their cause and persons, and to acquit the guilty, and pronounce them just! for a bribe to make God's authority which is in them to act so directly against itself, is abominably wicked, for God's authority to them is given that they might relieve the poor oppressed, and acquit innocency, but here innocency must buy its safety, or else is sold to danger.

**The great man;** either the advocates in their courts of judicature, or the great man of interest at court, who can do what he will there.

**He uttereth;** is bold to speak plainly what bribe he will have, he makes his own demand, whereas they did (whilst a little modest)

treat by others, and a servant or under-officer must make the bargain.

**His mischievous desire;** his unjust, oppressive design and purpose, knowing that his greatness and interest will bear him out in whatever violence he attempts against poor, weak, and unbefriended innocence; he dares for gain set any thing forward.

**So they,** all three, prince, judge, and great man, wrap it up, or twist it together, consent each to other, and jointly promote violence and bloody cruelty.

Ver. 4.

**The best;** among all naught, who is least naught passeth for best; and so must it be here, not one good, but the least evil man is by the prophet called the best.

**Of them;** of people, prophets, judges, great men, and princes.

**Is as a brier;** mischievous and hurtful to all that meddle with them; and perhaps the prophet alludes to briers infolded in each other, that shall so be devoured at last. The most upright; in the same sense upright as they are said to be best.

**Is sharper than a thorn hedge;** the same in different words, i.e. hurtful and mischievous to all.

**The day of thy watchmen;** literally taken for such as on the watchtowers observe whether enemies approach; the day in which they shall give the affrighting intelligence, and sound the alarm. Or else figuratively, watchmen, i.e. governors, prophets, and teachers, either good and faithful, or evil and unfaithful. The day which the true prophets foretold would come, which faithful teachers confirmed, good governors believed, feared, and, as Hezekiah, endeavoured to prevent, will certainly overtake you, that day of evil which your sins have provoked God to appoint. Or else, that day of good, which your false prophets have promised, your corrupt princes, judges, great men do expect and hope for, shall be a day of visitation, grievous punishment, by which the falsehood of flattering prophets shall be discovered, and the truth of Micah, and Isaiah, &c., true prophets, be confirmed.

**Cometh,** i.e. surely, speedily, and unavoidably on impenitent ones, how many or how great soever.

**Now;** when the day is come as to Samaria in its captivity by the Assyrian tyrant, and to Jerusalem in the Babylonish captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, and in many other *nows* intervening between the time of Micah's minatory predictions and the full accomplishment of them.

**Shall be their perplexity;** the astonishing, overwhelming sorrows, fears, and confusions which shall wreck these great, notorious, and impudent oppressors, hunters, and sellers of justice. They shall be perplexed because the sore evils foretold by the true prophets of God shall overwhelm them, and because the peace and prosperity promised by the false prophets is unexpectedly turned into troubles, desolation, and utter ruin to their state, cities, and families.

Ver. 5.

**Trust ye not in a friend;** most prodigiously treacherous were the people of that age, and since none upright, all lay in wait for blood, and were turned hunters of brethren, it is but necessary caution that they trust no friendship.

**A guide;** either a governor, who ought to guide; or equal, who being of intimate familiarity usually do guide; or a husband, as the word imports.

**Keep the doors of thy mouth;** watch thy words, let not thy tongue discover any secret or utter any words which may be danger to thyself, or give an advantage to thine enemy.

**From her that lieth in thy bosom;** a periphrasis of a wife in honest times; but whether in debauched times, as these are of which the prophet did speak, it may not import somewhat like that **#Pr 5:20**, I will not say: a wife, one may rationally suppose, will never disclose a husband's secrets to ruin him; yet such were the treacheries of that corrupt age, that it would be imprudence to trust a with.

Ver. 6.

**For:** the prophet here gives us a reason of his advice to be wary how and whom they trust.

**The son;** who received his being, maintenance, education, and inherits the honour as well as estate of his father; the son, obliged by most inviolable laws to please, preserve, and honour his father,

**dishonoureth,** seeks to accuse, vilify, endanger, and ruin

**the father;** whose dishonour and loss, or ruin, is also the son's dishonour and ruin; yet unnatural treachery will be so rife in those times, that the father had need keep his guard upon his very son.

**The daughter,** whose love and affection are usually more tender than the sons' towards parents, yet will forget their duty.

**Riseth up against her mother,** that bare them, that nursed them, that, more than fathers, tend, indulge, and bear with them. So monstrous shall the perfidiousness of that age be.

**The daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law:** in consanguinity there was not any faithfulness, in affinity much less may you expect it.

**A man's enemies,** the worst and most perilous enemies, who will be most ready and most able to do them mischief,

**are the men of his own house;** among relations and retainers, who by law of God and nature should have been faithfulest friends. So it fell out through the civil wars of the Jews, in their seditious and in their calamitous days. Much like to this is that of Christ, #Mt 10:21,35,36.

Ver. 7.

**Therefore,** since times are so calamitous, and all sorts of men are so perfidious, since no sure comfort or relief from those that are nearest relations, and should be dearest friends,

**I will look;** as one set in a watch-tower looks round about, and diligently observes all that stirreth; so will the prophet, speaking in the person of the faithful, the Israel of God; so did they who in Israel and Judah feared the Lord and walked with him;

**unto the Lord,** the God of mercy, power, truth, and wisdom, who can and will help.

**I will wait for,** though he do not presently appear for me, saith the church, I will with patience expect,

**the God of my salvation;** who only can, and who graciously hath promised to save his church.

**My God will hear me;** he doth hear my cry, and will deliver me.

Ver. 8.

The prophet in this verse personates the church, and brings her in bespeaking the enemy in this manner:

**Rejoice not;** let it be no pleasure or matter of glorying to time, that the day of calamity hath overtaken me.

**Against me;** Israel of God, the remnant, the faithful, which are the church of God.

**O mine enemy;** O Assyria, Edom, or Babylon. *When I fall*, into a low condition, into deepest distresses, I shall arise; I shall not always lie in them, God will raise me out of them.

**When I** (the prophet intends the good, the few righteous ones among those degenerate multitudes) sit in darkness, when affliction, war, famine, and captivity, as a dismal cloud, shall cover us, and benight the daughter of light, when fallen as low as a captive,

**the Lord shall be a light unto me;** shall support, comfort, and deliver me, his presence and favour shall, as the sun rising, dispel the darkness of the night. This is spoken more especially concerning Judah.

Ver. 9.

**I will bear,** patiently and submissively, the indignation of the Lord; the just and chastising anger of the Lord, in the effects of it upon me.

**Because I have sinned against him,** greatly, continually, both against his law and the precepts thereof, and against his love and the effects thereof. Judah was guilty of idolatry, ingratitude against God; and of injustice, unfaithfulness, and unmercifulness against one another; and these sins deserved sorer punishments than they suffered, therefore the righteous ones here justify God, and humble themselves.

**Until he plead my cause** against mine enemy, for that he will ere long do, as well as now he doth plead his own cause against me.

He will be as well a just judge against mine enemies, to avenge me on them, as he is a just God, by my sins provoked to chastise me.

**And execute judgment for me;** when that day comes, he will certainly and evidently declare his judgment to be against mine insulting adversaries, my cruel enemies, and that he doth so punish them for my sake, as **#Ps 137:7 Isa 10:5,12 Jer 30:8 Zec 1:12,15.**

**He,** the great and glorious, the holy and just God, who now chastiseth me,

**will bring me forth to the light;** as a prisoner brought out of a dark prison or dungeon into the light, is set at liberty, advanced and beautified, so shall the church be delivered and made to prosper.

**I shall behold his righteousness;** the truth and riches of his promised salvation. This made good, partly in the restitution of the captivity, rebuilding of Jerusalem by order of Cyrus and Darius, and partly before this in Hezekiah's rescue from Sennacherib's pride and rage.

Ver. 10.

**Then;** in the time of this hoped deliverance, when God shall, as I expect he will, plead my cause.

**Mine enemy;** what nation or people soever, whether Assyria, Edom, or Babylon, or whoever.

**Shall see;** as they did when Hezekiah was miraculously saved, and Jerusalem with him, out of the hand of the Assyrian, and as in the return out of Babylon, when the heathen said among themselves,

**The Lord hath done great things for them, #Ps 126:2.**

**Shame,** reproach and confusion, self-condemning reflections,

**shall cover her;** shall on all sides be cast upon her for her pride, cruelty, and inhumanity against the Israel of God.

**Which said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God?** which with insulting pride and atheism derided my faith and my God. So the

heathen either denied the omnipresence and omnipotence of the true God, or preferred their idols above him, and as if he had been a conquered and captive God, as well as his people were a captive people. So **#Ps 115:2 Joe 2:17**.

**Mine eyes:** the church speaketh assured of the truth of God's avenging her upon her enemies.

**Shall behold her;** with delight, or well-pleas'dness, the people of God shall see their enemies laid as low for their cruelty against them, as ever God suffered the enemy to lay his people low for their sins against him and his mercies. See the like expression, **#Ps 59:10 Mic 4:11**.

**Now shall she;** either shortly she shall; or else, when that time of full deliverance is come, the church shall in that day rejoice in her God, and say

**Now. Be trodden down as the mire of the streets;** be accounted and used as most contemptible and useless, the conquering enemy shall then tread the Babylonians in the dirt, and use them despitefully, and without more regard than that we have for the dirt under our feet; and this was accomplished by the Medes and Persians in their conquest of Babylon.

Ver. 11.

These words are variously expounded, but the plainest and most suiting with the letter and history to me seems to be this:

**In the day that thy walls are to be built;** O Jerusalem, the days shall certainly come, that thy walls, overthrown and razed by the Babylonians, shall be rebuilt; which was first in part fulfilled under Cyrus, but more fully under Darius Hystaspes, and Darius Longimanus, who commissioned Nehemiah to repair the walls of Jerusalem.

**Shall the decree;** either the decree of Artaxerxes, who is also called Cambyses, and who forbade the building of the temple, or else the decree of Darius Hystaspes, reviving Cyrus's decree for the return of all the Jews that would return.

**Be far removed;** for ever cease; if referred to Cambyses's decree, this shall no more hinder; or else, shall be dispersed far

and wide among all the provinces, if you mean Cyrus's decree that all may return.

Ver. 12.

**In that day**, after the Jews' return out of captivity, and Jerusalem rebuilt, he who is of Jewish race, and proselyted Gentile,

**shall come even to thee**, O Jerusalem, seat of God's solemn worship, type of the gospel church, restored to thy promised glory.

**From Assyria**; in which many Israelites were found captives when the Babylonian kingdom swallowed up the Assyrian, and were continued in that servitude by the Babylonians till the Medes and Persians overthrew the Babylonians, and proclaimed a release to all captive Jews; then from Assyria did captive Israel, i.e. some of them, go up to Jerusalem.

**From the fortified cities**; in which it is probable many Jews were kept for servile works: Shalmaneser did place the captivity of the ten tribes in the cities of the Medes, which, for aught I know, may be the cities here spoken of.

**From the fortress**: one mentioned for all the rest, and I suppose these fortresses might be frontier garrisons made for defence of the country, where the Jews were in policy placed by the Assyrian; from these places, and through all the country,

**even to the river**; to Euphrates or Chebar, where also were of the captive Jews.

**From sea to sea**; from the Caspian to the Persian and to the Midland Sea.

**From mountain to mountain**; on which many of the dispersed Jews did in all likelihood settle themselves in process of time for security and retirement, as the persecuted Waldenses and Albigenses settled in the mountainous parts bordering on France, Savoy, and Italy. Or from Mount Taurus to Mount Libanus or Carmel. In brief, from all parts of their captivity they shall return to their own country, a singular type of the redemption of the church by Christ, the bringing in the Gentiles, and enlarging the Messiah's kingdom.

Ver. 13.

**Notwithstanding**, Heb. *And*, but well rendered here *Notwithstanding*, viz. these promises of restitution, and gathering in the dispersed Jews, &c., which took not place till more than two hundred years after they were first made by the Lord to his people; accounting thus, one hundred and thirty-three years from the captivating of Samaria to the captivating of Jerusalem, seventy years the Babylonish captivity lasted, to which add the years to Darius Hystaspes ere the temple was built, and the years to Darius Longimanus ere the city was built and the walls repaired, it will amount to a considerable sum of years.

**The land**, of Canaan, shall be desolate; laid so by Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar in the ruins of this last seventy years.

**Because of them**, the sinful Jews, that dwell therein; which now in Micah's time did, or hereafter shall dwell in it, in Canaan.

**For the fruit of their doings;** as punishment for their evil doings.

Ver. 14.

That this verse contains good tidings to the people of God, both to his ancient people, type of his church in gospel days, and to the church of the converted Gentiles, is agreed on all hands, for they are either a direction and command to those God doth appoint by office to be shepherds over his flock, or a prayer to God that he would please to take the care of them, which doth include somewhat more than the bare petition for the blessing. Or it is a prediction of what shall be done for them after their return out of the Babylonish captivity, or a promise made to assure and comfort them during their captivity.

**Feed;** so Christ directs his officers, or God appointeth Christ to do this; or so the prophet for the people, or the people for themselves, pray to God that he would be their shepherd and feed them. Or the prophet doth in the imperative, instead of the future, tell them what shall be, which is a promise express enough for their support and comfort.

**Thy people;** literally, Israel after the flesh, returned out of captivity; mystically, the whole Israel of God, redeemed out of a

worse captivity; both a people peculiar to God through grace by covenant, and through Christ.

**With thy rod;** in allusion to the usage of shepherds, who guided their sheep by a pastoral staff: the peculiar and gracious providence of God over his sheep is hereby expressed, and desired or promised.

**The flock of thine heritage;** they are as sheep, weak, not able to defend or provide for themselves, a flock of innocent ones compared with their enemies; and, however they have been scattered, they are thine heritage still, which thou, O Lord, hast purchased of old: let them be so still, and do thou both possess, rule, feed, and preserve, #De 4:20 32:9 Ps 100:3.

**Which dwell solitarily in the wood;** feed, graciously protect and guide, those that in their present captive state are solitary, compassed with dangers from wild beasts; so thy people are in danger by cruel enemies, worse than wild beasts.

**Carmel;** a fruitful place and well inhabited, whether you take it for Carmel which Elijah frequented, or where Nabal dwelt, and where was rich pastures and safe feeding. *Bashan*; a place of note for fruitfulness in Canaan.

**Gilead;** equal with any of the others for plenty and safety.

**As in the days of old;** before the sins of the people caused their captivity; own them for thine and prosper them, O Lord, in their own land: a much like promise or prediction you have #Jer 1:18,19 Eze 34:25.

Ver. 15.

These words are by all looked on as the answer made to the prayer made in the 14th verse. You Jews do often reflect on the wonders your fathers saw in Egypt some hundreds of years since, and some of you think that such wonders would both establish your hope and engage your obedience for ever to God, you pray that you may be fed as in days of old; it shall be so, according to what I have done I will again do. There I slew the first-born ere they would let thee go free; that stroke of the angel I will parallel with the destruction of Sennacherib's host in one night, and so I will preserve my people and city. Pharaoh and his host were

drowned in the Red Sea, and the Babylonish kingdom shall be swallowed up by Medes and Persians to make way for my ransomed ones.

**Show unto him;** the person changed, as is usual in Scripture.

**Marvellous things;** as indeed the rescuing Jerusalem from the Assyrian power was marvellous, and the bringing Israel out of Babylon was a marvellous work of God, stirring up the spirit of Cyrus and Darius and others to release, and set free, nay, to furnish this captive people with necessaries for their journey, and for the work they were to do. So **#Ps 126:2**, it was a work all wondered at; by those passages, **#Jer 16:14,15 23:7,8**, it seems more wonderful; but the great redemption by the Messiah here typified is a most wonderful fulfilling of this.

Ver. 16.

**The nations;** the heathen, enemies to the Jews, as **#Ps 126:1-3**.

**Shall see and be confounded;** amazed at what they see and know done amongst these nations for the deliverance of his people. The enemy shall neither be able to bear the sight, nor deny the certainly of the thing; it will make them enviously look on the prosperity of the good and godly among the Jews.

**They shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf:** as men seldom fail to hear the first report of what they desire, and as seldom open their ears to that they like not; so shall, it be here, though they will not speak of it, nor desire others should speak of it, yet they should, to their great grief, see their poor captives raised out of depth of shame to the height of honour, from a contemptible remnant to a mighty nation. As this had its typical complement in the reduction of Israel out of Babylon, so it had its antitypical completion in our redemption by Christ. As **#1Co 2:9**.

Ver. 17.

**They,** the proud and cruel enemies of Israel, the Babylonians, shall lick the dust; in the most submissive, servile manner testify their subjection, promise to serve and honour the Jews released out of captivity: it is an expression which alludes to the servile manner of those Eastern complimenters, **#Ps 72:9 Isa 49:23**, and was fulfilled in the days after the return. when the kings of Persia

favoured the Jews, and (as the manner of courtiers is) in compliance with their kings the grandees forwarded the prosperity of the Jews, as may easily be conjectured from the 6th and 7th chapters of Ezra.

**Like a serpent;** condemned to eat the dust and perpetually to crawl on the dust; it seems to intimate. the perpetuity of slavery and subjection that the enemy should fall under, and that it should be on them as a curse like that on the serpent.

**They shall move out of their holes,** so the strong holds and fastnesses of the Babylonians, who kept Israel in captivity, are called, like worms of the earth; which do with trembling and haste wriggle themselves out of their holes when the earth is shaken about them, or as when ants tumultuously in their fright run about from the ant-hill scattered with the foot; so should these enemies of Israel flee out of their holds, and leave them to conquering Persians, as Isaiah foretold, **#Isa 45:1-4.**

**They shall be afraid;** a panic fear, expressed by the loosening of the loins of kings, **#Isa 45:1;** so did the conquering Cyrus proceed in the course of his victories, as **#Isa 41:2,3,** God strengthened his arm, and left the heart of Babylonians sinking within them.

**Of the Lord our God;** who did powerfully work for Cyrus in order to the delivering us out of captivity. It was our God, (saith the prophet in the person of Israel,) for his promise' sake made to us, who did those great things by Cyrus and for us.

**And shall fear because of thee;** so that the name of Jews, their power and greatness shall be terrible to their enemies.

Ver. 18.

Lest what hath been spoken of this wonderful change in the affairs of the Jews should on one hand be thought to be made for the righteousness or worthiness of this people, or else on the other hand should seem too great to be done for a sinful people, and so any should doubt whether it should be done at all, the prophet, in this and the two following verses, proposeth the ground of all this, laid on the unparalleled grace of God toward his people, who pardoneth their unrighteousness, and then of free mercy delivers them from their afflictions and distresses, changing their darkness into light.

**Who is a God like unto thee?** some observe that *El* here used signifieth the mighty God, and so render it thus, the French, *le Dieu fort*; none but the sovereign, mighty God can or doth forgive iniquity, it is a flower of the crown of Heaven, **#Ex 34:6,7 Nu 14:18 Mr 2:7**. This interrogatory and admiration is a strong negation.

**Pardoneth iniquity;** taketh away the guilt and punishment too by his pardon.

**Passeth by;** a from of speech used amongst us when we promise not to pursue an offence, or not to exact the punishment of it, or as if we either saw it not, or voluntarily winked at it, being resolved that we would not make it a cause of quarrel or breach.

**Transgression:** it will not suit our brevity to inquire the difference between iniquity and transgression, or whether they are here synonymous. and explicatory of each other; God passeth by the forfeits we make, and strips us not of our mercies.

**Of the remnant of his heritage:** this intimateth the reason why God doth, as well as to the person to whom he doth, pardon sin; that grace which made them his heritage, and reserved them to himself in the common destruction, the same grace doth as freely pardon and pass by, that it may do them good. No worthiness in them to whom it is done, and yet greatest certainty it shall be done, as **#Ro 4:16**.

**He retaineth not his anger for ever;** though in his just displeasure God did send them into captivity, yet because he doth not retain his anger for ever, their captivity shall not be for ever, he will chastise his remnant, but not consume them, **#Zec 1:3**.

**Because he delighteth in mercy;** all from the exceeding riches of his mercy; it is his delight to show mercy, and we need inquire no further: our God is so wonderfully merciful that it is his pleasure to show mercy, and if a man sometimes may give this as a reason why he doth a thing, surely our God may well expect that we should acquiesce in this account of his doing so. He delighteth to do it, **#Ps 103:8,9 Isa 43:25 57:16 Jer 3:5,12 Re 4:11**.

Ver. 19.

**He will turn again;** spoken after the manner of man, who in his anger went away resolved to right himself, but on second thoughts, laying aside his anger, turns again to be reconciled and forgive. So the next words explain these.

**He will have compassion upon us;** with tender bowels he will show himself gracious to us, **#Jon 3:9**.

**He will subdue our iniquities;** as our enemies and his, God will break the power, abolish the dominion of sin, which whilst it reigned provoked God and undid us, it polluted and ruined us; but God will pardon the guilt and abrogate the law of sin, and so restore his people, suitable to that **#Eze 36:29-34**.

**Thou wilt cast:** here is a hypallage of the person from the third to the second person, yet without any lessening the sense in strength or clearness.

**All their sins;** a usual expression in Scripture to set forth the full and eternal pardon of sin; here it is emphatical, all their sins.

**Into the depths of the sea;** whence ordinarily we account things can never rise or be found more.

Ver. 20.

**Thou,** O God of mercy, wisdom, power, and faithfulness, whoever are honoured with being thine instruments and servants in doing somewhat herein, the work is thine, thou wilt raise up a deliverer, Cyrus shall be thine anointed to do this great work.

**Wilt perform,** Heb. *give*, actually bestow what thou hast in mercy promised.

**The truth;** nothing so certain as the word of God, it is the truth by way of eminency, his promise is yea and amen.

**To Jacob;** the posterity of Jacob; he was that plain-hearted man who now gives name to all the upright and honest among his seed, which God will never finally cast off; though now carried captive, they shall be restored, rebuilt, and re-established, shall flourish, as **#Mic 7:10-12**, and this as they are a type of a more gloriously redeemed people.

**The mercy:** it was mere grace in God to promise Abraham and his seed such excellent privileges, which Abraham's natural seed did inherit; but both this seed and this mercy looked beyond the natural descendants of Abraham, and beyond their return to the land of Canaan whence they were carried. The mercy to Abraham was, that in his seed all nations should be blessed and holpen, **#Lu 1:51,55,68.**

**To Abraham;** not only as father to Israel after the flesh, but to him as father of the faithful.

**Which thou hast sworn;** not that there was on God's part any need of such confirmation, but that on our part all doubt might be removed, and we by the immutable things of God might have strong consolation, as **#Heb 6:18.**

**Unto our fathers;** because this mercy was frequently repeated in the promises to the fathers after Abraham's time, by which promises a mercy to be perpetuated in Abraham's seed, till the redemption of the Israel of God by the Messiah, (of which all temporal deliverances of Israel were figures,) should be effected. *From the days of old;* ever since Abraham's days, and God's gracious adopting his seed to be the peculiar people of God: into this we do, as Israel did, resolve our assurance of final deliverance. Amen.