

Micah 7:8-13      Our God of Grace      Falls Ch.      PM 2/2/2025

Finally! After Micah had preached to the big city of Jerusalem, the city had taken to heart both parts of the message of God through Micah.

The first part of God's message was God's judgment against sin.

The second part of God's message was God's restoration after the judgment.

Because the city of Jerusalem had finally embraced from God's hands both His judgment and His restoration, the city was looking to the future with bright hope, and predicted coming triumph. Why? Because the city was the community of The LORD God. God was restoring that community.

This passage is about God's promise, God's covenant, God's grace.

It was God who retained the role of senior partner in the covenant.

The people of Jerusalem only had the role of junior partner in the covenant.

So, when the junior partner of the covenant messed up and broke contract, it is significant what God would decide to do then! God who sent His prophet Micah to ask His people to turn back to Him. God's message is that He would receive His people back with the grace of full pardon. The people were in darkness, and it was God who would bring them back to the light.

**The personified Lady Jerusalem knew that her fall was due to her sin, so she accepted from God's gracious hand her darkness-to-light pathway.**

**1. Jerusalem expressed her faith to her enemies, while she sat in darkness. (v.8)**

In verse 8, our passage began with a person speaking. It was not an individual person who was speaking, but rather a group of people. We know this for sure when we get to verse 10, because the enemy asked "Where is the LORD YOUR God." The word YOUR in the Hebrew indicated that it was a singular of the group, like team. Okay, team, okay family, where is the God of y'all?

The person speaking and saying "Me" in the phrase rejoice not over me and the person saying I when I fall, I shall rise...is actually the community of the people of Jerusalem. Imagine that they gathered at the temple, and they are now responding as a community to Micah's messages. Back in verse 7, Micah asked them to look to the Lord, and now in verse 8, the city was looking to the LORD!

Verse 8 began a statement of confidence, spoken by sinful Lady Jerusalem – she is the big city, she is sin city. Yet, despite having a holy God, she remained boldly confident that after she fell to the enemy, she would also rise. She testified her expectation that after she sat in darkness, her Lord will be a light to her again.

This was Jerusalem expressing confidence that God was coming to save them. So, the city of Jerusalem had a message to those rejoicing over their downfall. The message of verse 8 is basically, "Mockers, stop mocking!" Over in Lamentations 3:14, the same dynamic was present, the community had become "*the laughingstock of all peoples, the object of their taunts all day long.*" Why

should the mockers stop mocking? Because God is a God of reversal. He has sent Micah to say TWO messages. 1) judgment and 2) restoration. God was planning to restore Jerusalem. So, the enemy rejoicing would find that whatever situation in Jerusalem that they were mocking would end up became their own situation. The enemy will experience a flip-flop. God will place the taunters into the very situation about which they were taunting others. When all of that happens, they will wish that they had not added rejoicing over the downfall of Jerusalem. So, Lady Jerusalem was giving out a wise advice when she said in verse 8, “*Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise...*” The opposite was also implied – those enemies of God, when they rise, in God’s reversal they shall fall.

## **2. Jerusalem clung to the promise that God would bring her to light. (v.9)**

Verse 9 was a continuation of the statement of confidence found in verse 8.

Micah is building quite a case here, so we look at each aspect of verse 9 in sequence, taking it in four parts, which we can call verse 9a, 9b, 9c, 9d.

In verse 9a, we read, “*I will bear the indignation of The LORD...*” Lady Jerusalem understood that despite her sins, she would not be destroyed by the indignation of God. Instead she would be able to bear the wrath of God! How is that? That is only because - building on what she testified in verse 8 now in verse 9a - that in her case God’s wrath was temporary and in her case God’s wrath was designed in order to restore her! For her, the LORD will be a light to her!

Now building to verse 9b, we read what Lady Jerusalem says about the reason why the wrath of God came against her, namely, “*...because I have sinned against Him...*” She understood clearly that she had sinned against The LORD God Himself, and so she was able to properly interpret the downfall of her city!

Building to the next concept in verse 9c, we read, “*until He pleads my cause and executes judgment for me.*” The people of God living in Jerusalem as the faithful remnant understood God’s actions in her case to be remedial or disciplinary, not final judgment, not penal judgment and not destructive judgment. God was understood and pictured here as the advocate for Lady Jerusalem! It is the LORD God who was pleading her cause for her! However, as for the enemies attacking Jerusalem, God would execute judgment for her, and against the enemies! Jerusalem had heard Micah’s sermons and Jerusalem was turning to God, and God was hearing Micah, and God was hearing Jerusalem. Let the enemies beware - a reversal was coming!

Then in verse 9d, we read what Lady Jerusalem said in conclusion, “*He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon His vindication.*”

This is a repeat of the use of the darkness-to-light movement already expressed in verse 8. Now it is couched in terms of vindication. Here Lady Jerusalem described her salvation by God with the concepts of darkness to light. Lady Jerusalem was in a dark dungeon, but the Lord would come and bring her out

from darkness to light. As a result, she will gaze upon God's salvation, experience God's vindication, enjoy the undeserved gift of God's freedom.

### **3. Micah looked to the future, and saw more judgment, more restoration. (v.10-13)**

Verse 10, envisions more judgment from God on the enemies of Jerusalem. There were two classic enemies in those days – Babylon and Assyria. Since verse 12 mentioned Assyria, it is more fitting to say Assyria, whose capital city was Nineveh. So, in order to better understand verse 10, we could read it by filling in the pronouns with personal pronouns, so that “her” becomes the personified “Lady Nineveh!” Let me supply those as I read verse 10, “*Then my enemy will see, and shame will cover her (Lady Nineveh) who said to me (Lady Jerusalem), ‘Where is the LORD your God? My eyes (Lady Jerusalem’s eyes) will look upon her (Lady Nineveh); now she (Lady Nineveh) will be trampled down like the mire of the streets.’*” Now verse 10 makes more sense!

One cannot be brought down any lower than that mud of the streets. The ones who rejoiced over the fall of Jerusalem will themselves be covered with shame; shame was poetically pictured as the trampled mud of the ancient streets.

Verse 11, “*A day for the building of your walls! In that day the boundary shall be far extended.*” The walls of Jerusalem would be re-built, and in victory, the area would be enlarged. In addition, the remnant people that were formerly scattered all over the earth, would return to inhabit the re-built Jerusalem.

Verse 12, “*In that day they will come to you, from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt to the River from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain.*” To explain verse 12, let's consider some parallels. The first parallel was in Zechariah 9:9-10, “*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (v.10) I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.*” The second parallel is in the royal Psalm 72, verse 8, “*May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth!*” The third parallel in God's promise, going all the way back to Abraham when God promised him land in Genesis 15:18, it was land “*from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.*” So, these 3 parallels line up to show that the returning exiles were coming back to Jerusalem to get ready for the arrival of God's good king at Jerusalem. For Micah, of course, it would be the king who would be born in Bethlehem, and would “*...be ruler in Israel,*” and also “*whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*” The point of verse 12 was that the vision of Micah here included the picture of

Jerusalem once again becoming the capital city of a vast domain, and getting ready for the arrival of God's chosen king to lead them in righteousness and holiness.

Verse 13, while Jerusalem was being re-built, the rest of the earth would be reduced to rubble! Verse 13, "*But the earth will be desolate because of its inhabitants, for the fruit of their deeds.*" The same God who would discipline His capital city Jerusalem for their sins, would also destroy all nations for their sins.

The point of our study is the salvation of God's people from any enemy, whether it is their own sins, or the enslavement of Egypt or the attack of Assyria. That hope of God's salvation from all enemies rests on God's faithfulness to His covenant, which He fulfilled in Jesus.

### **Conclude:**

The New Testament church echoes Lady Jerusalem.

Our enemy is our own sin, which leads to death. We were filled with sin, and yet the judgment of God fell upon Christ, cleansing us from our sins. So we are forgiven, and we actively being restored by our God of grace.

We the church can say to the enemies of Christ – rejoice not, for when we fall, we will be picked up. When we enter darkness, God will again give us light.

The New Testament picked up the teachings of Micah, in places such as Colossians 1:13-14, when Paul wrote how God the Father, "*...has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*" That is the source of our salvation, not the absence of our sins, but rather the forgiveness of our sins.

Another place that echoes Micah, this time echoing the concept of being brought from darkness to light is what Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5, starting in verse 4, "*But you are not in darkness, brothers, ... (v.5) For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. (v.9) For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ...*"

Furthermore, when we gather as the church, much as the people of Jerusalem gathered at the temple, in order to worship God, we are symbolically coming to the heavenly Jerusalem, and we the people of God have become the temple of God! This time, Jerusalem is filled with holiness! We never forget that God is holy, and God insists on holiness. Hebrews 12:22, describing our approaching God in worship says this: "*...you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering...(v.28) Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.*"

Whenever we the church faces a setback or even are struck down, our future recovery and renewal to a place stability is fully anticipated by us. In the promise

of God's gracious restoration, we find our resilience. We already possess our resilience, because we already possess God's promise of grace, God's promise of restoration, God's promise of pardon and rebuilding.

No darker calamity can strike the New Testament church than was already struck when Jesus was bled to death on the cross.

No brighter prosperity can be claimed by the New Testament church than was already made true when Jesus rose again from the dead, to secure our salvation.

We echo the words of King David in Psalm 27, applied to Jesus, "*He is my light and my salvation.*"

We echo the words of Lady Jerusalem, "*He will bring me out to the light.*"

We echo the words of Paul that God the Father "*...has delivered us from the domain of darkness...and that He has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.*" (Col. 1:12-14)

Listen to the words of our closing hymn, "Sometimes a light surprises The Christian while he sings; It is the Lord, who rises With healing in his wings: When comforts are declining, He grants the soul again A season of clear shining, To cheer it after rain."

The New Testament church is not those who claim to be innocent. We know our sins. We have reached the point of being able to accept whatever God has for us in discipline, whatever God has for us in suffering, whatever God has for us in mercy and rescue. It is God's nature to punish sin. We saw that at the cross. It is God's nature to be gracious to sinners. We saw that at the cross.

You won't find the New Testament church asking, 'What have we done to deserve this?' No. We know full well we each have sinned enough to deserve this. Rather, it is when God pours out His grace again upon the New Testament church, it is then that we ask, "What have we done to deserve this?"

Yet, before we close, we address those who rejoice at the failings of the church. The New Testament church is conscious of being sinners, and also conscious of being sinned against. The malicious laughter against the disaster of Jerusalem is still present in the world today. We call it kicking a man when he is down. What do we do with the mockers? We do the same as ancient Jerusalem. We do the same as Lady Jerusalem. We depend upon, knowing that we can indeed depend upon God to repay the mockers by God vindicating His people. When God saves, God is doing right. When God rescues, God is making things right.

The church is called to let God, in His good time, deal with those who are rejoicing over the failings and falling of His church. It is God who calls upon Lady Jerusalem and upon the Bride of Christ-His church to do what is in the last phrase from the famous verse of Micah 6:8 to "*...walk humbly with your God.*"