

Dr. Perry Phillips, Micah, Prophet Outside the Beltway, Session 6, Micah 5

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This is Dr. Perry Phillips and his teaching on the book of the prophet Micah, Prophet Outside the Beltway. This is session 6, Micah 5.

We are continuing now with our study of Micah and we are going to be doing chapter five.

First of all, a very brief review from Elaine's present presentation of chapter four, what we find is the historical and the geographical milieu. Chapter one, we lay out the covenant dispute that the Lord has with the people of Israel and the Lord is acting as a prosecutor, as a judge, and as a witness. Then chapter two, the sins of the leaders are mentioned, oppression basically, falsehood on the part of the prophets.

In chapter three, which I did previously, we compare Mishpat, justice, to Gazal, which is anything but, it's injustice. Then we talked about the measure-for-measure that the Lord is going to bring upon the nation. Then, in chapter four, we had oracles of restoration, but some pain is still ahead until that day or the latter days that are coming.

Then we pick up now with chapter five and the flow of the chapter is going to be thus. The first four verses deal with the feet coming from the feet going to the Messianic ruler, the Messianic king, who is called the ruler in this particular chapter, who is going to eventually set things straight. Then verses five to six, we see the ministry of the ruler, how he will protect his people.

Moving on to the next three verses, seven through nine, the remnant of Israel is going to be among the nations, which again brings up the image of exile. Then finally, verses ten to fifteen, is a commentary on Israel or Jacob's victory over the nations, at least that might be what it is, or maybe looking ahead to God's ultimate dealings with the nation of Israel. We will discuss that when we get to it.

Let me mention that Micah chapter five, verse one in English is chapter four, verse fourteen in Hebrew. So, in order to get the Hebrew versification of any English version of chapter five, just subtract one and you'll have the Hebrew versification. I am going to be using, however, the English enumeration because I figure most who are listening to this particular lecture are probably looking at their English Bible.

So, without further ado, let's get to the exposition of the chapter. First of all, verses five one to five four, from defeat to the coming of the Messianic king or the ruler.

Verse one, Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops! Siege is laid against us, with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek.

Let's parse this. This picks up from chapter four, verse eleven, where we talk about the nations that are coming up against Israel. And that verse says, as Elaine explicated, now many nations are assembled against you, saying, Let her be defiled, and let our eyes gaze upon Zion.

And being defiled, we are going to trample her, gaze upon her, as one would gaze upon an unseemly scene. This is what the nations are going to do with Zion. And this is where the verse picks up.

So, it appears that there is some sort of attack on Jerusalem. And the call is to be ready for defense. As it started out, muster your troops, O daughter of Zion! Get your armies together! Get ready! The word troop is a military term which emphasizes the invasion and invasion of Jerusalem.

We see that back in Micah chapter one, verse nine as well. Now, this is no doubt relating to the Assyrian advance for Judah in 701 B.C. We know that it is Assyria because Assyria is mentioned below by name in verse five.

But then there's an interesting mention of Assyria that's slightly different, and we'll see what that could be when we get there. So, this is a call to arms for the troop. Although small, they are to prepare themselves for battle against the mighty Assyrian juggernaut.

Daughter means city. So, daughter of Zion is the city of Zion. It's used a lot for Jerusalem, as was mentioned by Elaine.

When we look at that, we can see it in Micah, and it's used a lot in the prophet Isaiah, as we find from what Elaine said. It personifies Jerusalem, Zion, but it implies a tender and vulnerable relationship between God and Zion. It's daughter.

A father's relationship with his daughter is one of love. But on the other hand, when the daughter goes wayward, it's one of rebuke and discipline. And we find that image in Scripture as well.

The daughter of Zion appears in conjunction with God's disappointment, sorrow, and punishment. We see that in Isaiah and in Jeremiah, as well as the promise of deliverance that we find in Isaiah. But, the battle will be lost.

Gather your troops, and get ready for battle. But what's going to happen? Strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. And this implies humiliation.

This implies that the battle is going to be lost. Interestingly enough, this is another play on words. Strike is shavat, judge is shaphat.

Now, those of you who are looking at your Hebrew text, pardon your humble servant for just writing out the Hebrew words as they sound, and not as one would do in a scholarly journal. But, you get the idea of the play on words. Strike, shavat, the judge, shafat.

First Kings 22:24 brings out the idea of humiliation that takes place if one is struck on the cheek. This is First Kings 22, verse 24 that Elaine had mentioned when the prophet Zedekiah, son of Hananah, who put on the horns, saying to Ahab he was going to gouge the Arameans, the people from Syria, and Micaiah came and said, no, you're not going to do this. And, Zedekiah then goes up to Micaiah and slaps him on the cheek and said, how did the spirit go from me to you? And Micaiah then responds and says, you'll see when you're hiding out when the Arameans come and attack.

Job 16:10, the same thing. They have struck me insolently on the cheek. I am totally humiliated as Job was.

Isaiah 50, verse 6, the servant of the Lord in clear reference to Jesus is going to be struck on the cheek. And then we find that literally fulfilled with Jesus in Matthew 26 and in Luke. In this context, the reference to the judge, the king, may be Hezekiah, who was mocked by Sennacherib.

Not literally struck on the cheek, but mocked, humiliated by the letter that he had sent the people of Jerusalem, mocking Hezekiah and, by the way, mocking their God, Yahweh, or Jehovah as well. Muster yourself, oh troops, muster yourself. This is how it's translated in these particular versions of the Bible.

New English Bible, English Standard Version, NASB, etc. You can see them listed. But there is another translation as well that one could have.

Instead of muster yourself, gash or cut yourself. This is what you find in the Holman Christian Standard Bible in the New English Translation. In other words, the troops of Judah are not getting ready for the war.

They're lamenting defeat, and they're cutting themselves in humiliation, perhaps the way the prophets did in their fight against Elijah on Mount Carmel. In that particular context, lamenting defeat actually fits better with chapter 4, verse 11, which we read earlier. Which is, now many nations are assembled against you, saying, let her be defiled and let our eyes gaze upon Zion.

That is 4:11 that I have been referring to. But how was this verse understood back then? Is it gash yourself? Is it assemble yourselves? Many times, we look to the Greek translation of the Old Testament to see what they thought and how they might translate it. They punted.

They just said to wall yourselves in. But again, wall yourselves in would give the idea that there is going to be defeat. There's not going to be victory on the part of the troops.

Whatever this is, it's a losing proposition. But here's the hope. Verse 2, familiar to all, But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

And I am using the New American Standard Bible [NASB] here, and I'm going to make a point. First of all, Micah now reverts to promise in his general condemnation promise cycles that we find throughout the book. In spite of Israel's present low estate, God has not forgotten them.

A ruler, a Mishal in Hebrew, will come forth who is David's descendant. For God has already promised David's kingship into perpetuity, as we find in Psalm 89. So, a leader will come from the same city as David to rule over the nation.

Joseph's David came from the area of Bethlehem Ephrathah to rule over the nation. Bethlehem was in the clan of Ephrathah, that is David's father, was an Ephrathite, not to be confused by the way with an Ephraimite, which is the tribe up north. He is from Bethlehem, and we have plenty of verses to substantiate that.

This clan, which is an extended family or a group of families that are part of the same historical bloodlines, etc. Too little amongst the clan of Judah. This is the one that's going to give rise to the ruler and this of course brings us to David, because he too was the least of his family, the least of the clan, and yet he became the king.

So, we see something promising happening here, even though the troop is really very weak and going up against Assyria. Nevertheless, perhaps, like David, we're going to have a David and Goliath situation that is going to take place here. And note on the word clan, I've already mentioned that it is an extended family of the same bloodline.

And we are reminded when we look at this, we look at David or we look what the ruler is going to do or what the troop is going to do against the mighty attacker. God uses the weak to accomplish his purpose. This comes out in 1 Corinthians 1, verse 27.

But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

The future ruler, Moshel. This is the only time Micah uses the word for a ruler. And his goings forth are from old, from everlasting.

Now, what is interesting is some of the translations use the word going forth, which the ESV does. Others say his origin is from old. The word that is used here, going forth, is the same word that is used for kings going out to battle, kings going out to conquer.

We have mentioned this before and we see the way the term is used in a number of other passages. So, in my humble opinion, the origin to me is unsatisfactory as a translation of this word, yet it appears in the NIV, TNIV, RSV, Holman Christian Standard Bible, etc. I like the way the ESV has done it.

And when you look at the Septuagint, the Greek translation, they use the word Exodus says or exo-the in Greek, and it's goings forth, goings out. And so, it brings along the idea that what you're talking about is a ruler who is going out to war. Not that he existed from forever, from the past, but that he has been active through all this time.

And this is the one who is going to come to rule Israel. So, you can see why this is a messianic passage and implies victories over the enemies of Israel. His free existence is mentioned.

He is of old, from ancient times. Miqqedem or Mimei Olam. Elaine had mentioned the word Olam previously, meaning from a long time ago.

And generally, it's translated eternal or everlasting. Probably best is most ancient days or most distant time. This is what is applied to this ruler.

The fact that he's not only been around for a long time, but active for a long time as well. And both of these words, by the way, that I mentioned above are used interchangeably. In Deuteronomy 33, we read the following, with the best of the ancient mountains and the harvest produced by age-old hills.

Notice how Kedem and Olam are used together. Then, we find in Deuteronomy 33 that the everlasting God is a refuge, and underneath you are his eternal arms. Again, the play of both of those two words and that is what is applied to the Moshel, the king who is to come.

And again, I repeat, he is from everlasting, and he has been active, and yet he is going to be coming from Bethlehem. Messianic import of the verse. This was seen as messianic by the chief priests and the experts of the law, the scribes, in the time of Jesus.

As we find in Matthew chapter 2, this is well known. And note that interestingly enough, though, the Jewish study Bible simply states this is a reference to David. Totally eliminated the idea of the future descendant of David, Jesus Christ himself.

And we don't need to wax long talking about Herod the Great, who was king of Judea when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Remember the magi came and asked, where is he that is born king of the Jews? And I emphasize "born king of the Jews" because the kingdom is rightly Jesus. He was born king of the Jews.

Herod was king of the Jews, but he did it hook and crook, murdering people, murdering his son, and murdering his wife in order to maintain his kingship. But here's the one who comes, who was born the king of the Jews. And the priests and the scribes, the teachers of the law, pointed to Bethlehem as prophesied by Micah.

And we all know the rest of the story. Let's move on to verse 3. Well, various questions we can ask. Who is the one who has given them up? Who is she who is in labor? And who are the rest of the brothers that are going to be returned? He will give them up.

He will give them up. He is most likely the Lord that we are talking about here. He will give them up until the coming of the ruler, as we discussed in the previous verse.

In other words, the Lord will abandon Judah because of the sins discussed earlier until the ruler will come who will rule over Israel and draw Israel back to the Lord. And we find a very interesting parallel here with Hosea, chapter 3, who brings his wife back. In this case, the Lord is bringing his daughter back.

She who is in labor and has given birth. Most likely, people will say, well, this obviously refers to the virgin Mary giving birth to Jesus. No, but let's look at the context in Micah.

How would Micah and his people have understood this in context? She probably, in this context, refers to Bethlehem, Ephrathah, or maybe the nation that is giving birth to this ruler from whom this ruler is going to come. And it's interesting too, as Elaine had mentioned, in Micah chapter 4, verses 9 and 10, we have the phrase, woman in labor. And at that particular time, it refers to lamenting the birth of being expelled from Jerusalem because of the exile.

But in this context, in this particular verse, in this context, it will be cries of joy when the ruler is born. Many times, in Scripture, Scripture discusses the pain that a woman goes through with childbirth, but then afterward, just the absolute joy of having seen her child. The remnant of his brothers, who is he that's brought distress, who now is

given birth, she who was given birth, the ruler now is going to look at the remnant of his brothers and bring them back.

Are these the northern tribes that have already been taken captive by the Assyrians? Is it all the people who have been dispersed by exile, a general bringing back those who have been exiled? His brothers, the antecedent is either the Lord or the ruler that we see here. Now, it makes more sense that it is the ruler and his ties. This ties in with Micah chapter 2, where the king breaks out the people from their captivity and becomes their shepherd. This goes back to something Elaine has mentioned in chapter 2. The breaking out in that particular sense is breaking out of captivity, being brought together under a shepherd.

And this is the same idea that we have here in this particular verse. Not only that, the ruler is going to unify all of Israel. And note how Jesus brings peace and unity, the ruler.

Ephesians chapter 2, Jews and Greeks are brought together. In Galatians 3, Jews, Gentiles, slave, free, men, women are brought together. Workers, employers, all of them are brought together.

So he is the one who not only brings together his brothers and the Israelites but also brings together all of those who believe in the ruler in the present day. Verse 4 continues with the ruler. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord, his God.

And they shall dwell secure, for now, he shall be great to the ends of the earth. So, it's not just with Israel that the ruler is concerned. Now it's the whole earth that the ruler is concerned, to the ends of the earth.

So, we have the continuation of the ruler, the shepherd, the king who will unite Israel. But unlike the rulers that have been oppressing the Israelites, the ruler, the ruler will be compassionate. And not like the ruthless leaders in the time of Micah, he'll be a shepherd like David.

The strength of the Lord equals the majesty of the Lord, the name of the Lord. Remember, he's doing this in the strength of the Lord and in the majesty of the name of the Lord. And these are comparable ideas that we have here.

They will remain. Unlike now, Israel and Judah will not be exiled again. Remember, he brings his brothers in, and they remain where they are.

They will not be exiled again. So, this looks forward to a more eschatological time because the ruler's name and power will be known throughout the earth. So it does look like a future time for a gathering.

The one who is gathering them is one whose name is known throughout the entire earth. This idea comes up in Isaiah as well. It really completes the message of chapter 4, verses 1 to 5, that the word will go out from Zion to the ends of the earth.

The actions of the ruler are going to go out from Zion to the ends of the earth as well. So, in summary, the ruler represents a new beginning, just as David did, a dynasty. Although a warrior, he will be lowly and humble.

This we get from Zechariah chapter 9. He is acting on behalf of the Lord, not for himself. Unlike the wicked rulers in Micah's time, he will rule over all Israel and eventually over all the earth, and we look forward to that.

Let's go to the second part, verses 5 and 6. So he's going to be their peace, and when the Assyrians come, he is going to act against that. Now, here's what's interesting. Verse 5a, and he shall be their peace, really fits better with chapter 4. It really fits better at the end of that particular chapter.

And here is the way it goes. I'm going to quote verse 4, and then I'm going to go to 5a, and we'll see how 5a really fits in better with verse 4. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and they shall dwell securely. For now, he shall be great to the ends of the earth, and he shall be their peace.

See how that ties together better? Now, in 5b, when the Assyrians came into the land, that begins something else. So, really, the versification here could use a little tweaking, as I said, because 5a really fits better with verse 4. Moving on, however, to the Assyrians, we already know that they are the ones who are afflicting Israel, Judah, at this particular time. They're the ones that had exiled the people up north, Israel, in 722 BC, and they're the ones now that are attacking Jerusalem in 701, and Sennacherib the king, who claims that he already had conquered 46 fortified cities of Judah.

So, this is the invading power at the time of Micah, and he has wreaked havoc on Judah. But, as we've mentioned before, he did not enter Jerusalem because of the intervention of the angel of the Lord through the prayer of Hezekiah. And after losing 185,000 Assyrians, he beats an ignominious retreat back to his homeland.

But Assyria, interestingly enough, many times is used as a metonymy for other enemies of Israel, a metonymy, that is to say, a substitute for other enemies of Israel. And here's how that works. In Lamentations 5, verse 5, Jeremiah talks about the Assyrians that have destroyed Jerusalem, but it's really the Babylonians that have done this.

Ezra 6, verse 22, talks about the Assyrians and yet is under Persian rule. Zechariah, chapters 10, and 11, talks about Egypt in lands of the northern exile, and it uses the term Assyria. So, eventually, Israel will be victorious against all of its enemies, but what is interesting is that the name Assyria, even though at the time of Micah it was really the nation that was attacking Jerusalem, the term Assyria then begins to be used as a general term for enemies that come against Israel.

Now, how is that attack going to be thwarted? We read he shall raise seven shepherds and eight princes. This comes from the International Critical Commentary, and it bears on what we're saying here, the seven and the eight. How is this used in Scripture? And I read that this collocation of two numbers, the second being greater than the first, by a unit, here we have seven and eight, is employed to express the idea of indefiniteness.

In this case, the supply of leaders will be equal to all the demands that may be made. So, the idea is there is a sufficiency here, and this is a poetic way of saying that. In other words, an abundance of manpower to defeat Israel's enemies will be available.

We shall raise seven shepherds and eight princes. This is a sequence, seven to eight. You find the same thing in Ecclesiastics, for example.

Cast your bread on the water, a portion to seven or even eight. In other words, make it abundant. The same structure is used in Amos, but there it's the three-four structure.

For three sins of Damascus, yet for four. That will really fulfill all the sins of Damascus. So, you get the way that goes.

So, there's going to be a sufficiency of people to thwart the enemies that come against Israel. They shall shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword and the land of Nimrod at its entrances. And he shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he comes into our land and treads within our border.

Is he talking locally now, or is the term Assyria now being used for all enemies? Shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword. He will shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword. This is not peaceful shepherding.

The land of Nimrod, this is another reference to Assyria. This was a mighty city in Assyria. But, from what we said before, this may be looking ahead.

It may be Babylon because there is that correlation between Nimrod and Babylon in Genesis chapter 10. As Elaine had mentioned, Micah, like Isaiah, looks forward to the Babylonian invasion that will come in the future and getting the people ready for

that. It talks about shepherding the land of Assyria, and the sword is going to be at Nimrod at its entrances.

And interestingly enough, instead of saying Nimrod at its entrances, with slight variation, it becomes Nimrod with a sword. And that keeps the parallelism. The sword is on Assyria, the sword is on Nimrod, and you have a nice parallelism there.

But let's go on to verses 7 and 9. The remnant of Israel among the nations. Then the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples, like dew from the Lord, like showers on the grass, which delay not for a man, nor wait for the children of man. Well, immediately, the idea of dew is spread all over.

The idea of showers falling all over, you get the idea that there is a scattering of the Israelites here, and sure enough. Then the remnant of Jacob. When is the then? When is that going to occur? Then, the remnant of Jacob.

Well, first comes a scattering of the Israelites in the midst of many people, dew, and showers on the grass, as a spreading out of the Israelites. It waits for no man, implies God is directing this, whatever the this is. It reminds me of a U.S. president who once said, it depends what is, is.

So now, then, it depends on what then is. So, let's try to unpack that. Are dew and showers a good thing or a bad thing? Is it a good sign that the Israelites are going to be scattered among the nations, or is it a bad thing that they will be scattered among the nations? Well, let's look at it as a good sign.

Why would it be a good sign? Because dew showers were necessary for crops in Israel. Without showers, without rain, without dew, there's no agriculture. It's called a blessing in Genesis, in Deuteronomy.

Therefore, Israel in exile will be a blessing to the nations as dew and rain are a blessing to the crops. And one may see the sense to this because even today, nations that have a large Jewish population generally are faring well because of the input of the Jewish people in terms of all of society. So, it has been a blessing, and it has certainly been a blessing here in America.

But could this be a bad sign? Well, how can dew and showers be a bad sign? Well, let's see how it's used in Hosea, chapter 6. Dew is a sign of unfaithfulness and fickleness, a fickle faith. Why? Because the Lord says, your faith, Israel, is like the dew on the ground that just evaporates in the morning. So this is not a good sign.

The disappearance of dew and morning mist is an analogy to how the Lord will sweep away the northern kingdom. I will sweep you away like the dew disappears in the morning. So, this is not a good sign if we look at it from that standpoint.

Continuing is a bad sign. When David was fleeing Absalom, the advice that was given to Absalom by Hithophel was, no, go attack David now that he's fleeing Jerusalem and get rid of him and get rid of his people. But then Hushai comes along, who's trying to thwart that advice, and he says, no, no, no, wait.

Let's put an army together, and then we will fall upon David as dew falls on the ground. So, we see the falling dew can be used as a military sense as well. Note that the parallelism between dew, showers, and a lion tearing to pieces in verse 8, which we will get to.

And it's interesting that on the one hand, Israel in exile is called dew, showers, but also as a lion, lion tearing to pieces. And we will get to that. Well, what can we conclude? In my humble opinion, if this is a blessing, it's temporary because Israel is being attacked.

Israel may be scattered among the nations, but eventually, however, they will rise up against their foes. Now we get to verse 8, which gives us another image of those who have been exiled. Remember, we're still talking about the brothers that the rulers bring together.

And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of the sheep. In other words, this is something that is rapacious, which, when it goes through, treads down and tears in pieces, and there is none to deliver. Well, all of a sudden, the Israelites have power.

And again, notice the parallelism with verse 7, which I already mentioned. Then the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples. And then verse 8 here, and the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations in the midst of many people.

So now we have a little better definition of maybe how to understand the idea of the Israelites, the remnant of Jacob, being among the people. These two verses are really meant to be taken together. And verse 8 emphasizes the conclusion of verse 7, that dew and showers, I think, represent a sudden and widespread uprising of Israel among the nations.

But wait a minute. How is that going to work out? Let's make another suggestion. The phrase, in the midst, in Hebrew, bekereb, can mean amongst.

The idea is that Israel being amongst the nations may mean not that you have individual Jewish people spread among the nations individually, but that the nation itself is in the midst, in that sense, of nations around them, nations in the Middle

East. And this is, of course, what we find today. Israel is bekereb, the nations of the Middle East, bekereb, the nations of the world.

In that sense, they are in the midst of many nations. So, it doesn't mean that the Israelis are scattered throughout the nations, but that you have one nation that is within bekereb, the Middle East. Notice what it says in verse 9: Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries, and all your enemies shall be cut off.

And lifting up the hand over the adversaries is, in this case, not to bless them. What could it be? Your hand will be lifted up. Whose hand? To whom does your hand refer? Well, the expression, first of all, lifted hand, is applied to God.

Look at verse 26, chapter 26 of Isaiah, O Lord, your hand is lifted up. Psalm 89, again, your hand is high, your right hand is high, lifted up. Deuteronomy, I lift up my hand to the heavens, I will take vengeance on my adversaries.

This is the idea of the Lord lifting his hand to swat his enemies, to slap them down. In this sense, it's the lifted hand. But again, whose hand is lifted? From the context.

On the other hand, it may be the Lord, but on the other hand, the nearest antecedent to your hand is the remnant of Jacob. That's the immediate antecedent rather than the Lord. So again, it appears to be the Israelites who are like a lion, raising their hand.

So, in my humble opinion, this refers to the remnant, but with the help of the ruler of chapter 5. Eventually, they will overcome their enemies. And in verse 9, in sum, despite Israel and Jacob's subjugation to Assyria, eventually, through the work of the ruler, Israel will ultimately overcome all Assyrians, using that in the plural. And it's interesting that Scripture points to Israel's destruction of its enemies in the quote, end times, as discussed earlier, what that means, with peace to follow.

But only when the servant comes to trample his enemies, that we find not only in chapter 5 of Micah, but also chapter 63 of Isaiah, Revelation chapter 19, God will destroy the nations at that time. Well, here's a question. Tying verses 7 and 9 together, does this include the church that has been grafted in to Israel? After all, we are scattered among the nations in the first sense, individuals here and there in the nation.

Isn't the church scattered like dew and rain amongst the nations? Isn't the church eventually going to be victorious over the enemies when the ruler comes, Jesus, that we find discussed not only in Micah and Zechariah and Daniel but also in Revelation? Well, by saying this, I'm not implying that the church has superseded national Israel, nor that God does not have a future plan for national Israel, but that's a topic for another day. What I'm implying is that the ruler, Jesus, whom we trust as our ruler

and as our savior, eventually is going to bring us out of the nations and bring us together with all of his brothers. Let's move on now to the last part of Micah chapter 5, verses 10 to 15.

This comes as a commentary on Israel or Jacob's victory over the nations, or so we think, or is it God's dealings with Israel? Again, are we talking locally or universally? And in that day, declares the Lord, I will cut off your horses from among you and will destroy your chariots. Now, it sounds like maybe he's still coming back to tell the Israelites they are not going to succeed no matter what they do against the coming invasion of not just the Assyrians; at least Jerusalem was spared, but maybe even that day when the Babylonians come. So, does this refer back to Micah chapter 4, the latter days, and all that that implies? Is this a continuation of the Lord's dealings with Israel's enemies? Verse 9, is the one or the other? Or is this a return to the theme of God's destruction against Israel? Note how cut off enemies in verse 9 ties in with cut off in verses 10 to 13.

And here's what I mean by that. In verse 9, cut off the enemies. In verse 10, he's going to cut off the horses.

In verse 11, cut off the cities. The idea of cut off means bring to an end. In verse 12, cut off the sorceries.

Verse 13, cut off carved images. Sounds like idolatry. It sounds like what Israel has been doing with their idolatry.

In verse 14, he uses the term root out. But this sustains the same idea of elimination. Cut off, cut off, cut off, cut off, root out.

What is he referring to? Is he finally talking about the total uprooting of Israel? Well, in my humble opinion, this pericope refers to God's destruction of nations that refuse to honor him. In other words, it's the cutting off of the nations eventually that have come up to gaze upon the destruction of Israel. But this is in anticipation of Hezekiah's defense, which is condemned.

For true strength is in the Lord. And we've discussed this before. And I will cut off the cities of your land and throw down all your strongholds.

And I will cut off sorceries from your hand. And you shall have no more tellers of fortune. The import of these verses has been covered in previous discussions.

Verse 13, I will cut off your carved images and your pillars from among you. And you shall bow down no more to the work of your hands. Here are carved images that have been found by archaeologists that represent gods that people worshipped.

These on the left are in Hazor, a city up north. And then there are pillars, we don't quite know what they were used for, that were found in Gezer. And you can see that they are very large as some of our students there use them to test out their mountain climbing skills.

And I will root out your Asherah, images from among you, and destroy your cities. We've already discussed Baal and Asherah, Baal the storm god, and Asherah, the goddess of fertility, we have already discussed before. And then verse 15, in an anger and wrath, I will execute vengeance on the nations that did not obey.

And that sort of answers the question, doesn't it? That the idolatrous nations eventually will be destroyed by the Lord, just as he destroyed Israel. But the difference is that he brought back Israel. And there are indications that a number of the nations, the goyim, are going to be brought back if we read Zechariah.

Let's just make a few notes on this. Note the emphasis on the nations, which is why, in my humble opinion, the pericope from verses 10 to 14 deals with the nations and not strictly with Israel. The time is coming.

The sins of the nations that bring judgment. Why does God judge the nations? Because it doesn't matter whether it's Israel or Jacob or nations. Pride is a sin.

Pride in one's army, one's wealth, one's cultural pride. Brutality is a sin that we see in Amos. Oppression of refugees is a sin that we see in Obadiah.

These are things that the nations do and are going to be judged eventually, and especially because of violations of God's holiness. And this comes through in Psalm chapter 2, verse 12. So, what can we learn with our brief run-through, Micah chapter 5? Well, first of all, God will take care of Israel's sin, but not before the coming of the ruler.

Eventually, God will judge all nations, not just Israel, that refuse to honor the Lord. The day is coming, end that day. And with that, we will end chapter 5. Thank you.

This is Dr. Perry Phillips and his teaching on the book of the prophet Micah, Prophet Outside the Beltway. This is session 6, Micah 5.