

THE HOPE FOR THE MESSIAH'S KINGDOM

MICAH 04:01–08

Introduction

What is needed in the world today as much as anything is *hope*. Untold numbers of people in every nation live in quiet desperation, some in outright despair. Many live in war-torn countries. Others live with poverty and disease. Even people in wealthy nations are not immune to desperation. Too often, they live without purpose or expectations. Their lives are weighed down by personal tragedies such as divorce, the death of a loved one, a debilitating disease, mental illness, and a host of other hardships.

In the world at large, there are always wars or rumours of wars, fear of economic collapse, violence, injustice and oppression. Ironically, even in the best of times people are plagued by uncertainty, anxiety and fear. A sound and justifiable hope is almost always what is lacking in these situations.

But *hope* is exactly what God offers to His people — to those who truly trust in the LORD. In the former message, Micah predicted the future destruction of Jerusalem, the judgment of God that was coming upon Israel (3:1-12). The people would soon be in desperate need of hope. In less than two hundred years, the invading armies of King Neouchadnezzar of Babylon would totally destroy their nation.

God, however, in His infinite love and mercy, never leaves His people without hope. Through the prophet Micah, God announced a great hope to the nation of Israel and to all people of the earth. In the last days of human history a new King will come and a new kingdom will be established. Jerusalem will be exalted as the capital of all cities and nations. The Israelites — God's chosen people who had been scattered for so many centuries throughout the world — will be gathered back to the promised land by the LORD Himself. All the world will stream to the holy city seeking to learn God's law. And God's Word will flow freely to the ends of the earth. The former glory of David's kingdom will be restored. The earth and all mankind will then live in perfect peace and prosperity. This is, *The Hope for the Messiah's Kingdom*, Micah 4:1-13.

- I. The hope for an exalted nation: a picture of the believer's exaltation (vv. 1-8).
- II. The hope for deliverance from enemies (vv. 9-13).

Micah 04:01–08 The Hope for an Exalted Nation: A Picture of the Believer's Exaltation

The LORD offers a great hope to Israel: He will one day exalt the nation above all other nations. This prophecy pictures not only the complete restoration of Israel to the promised land, but also the believer's exaltation in Christ.

1. Jerusalem will be exalted over all nations (mountains) and become the capital of the entire world (v. 1). The new capital will be the most important place on earth and the temple will become the most prominent feature on earth. Passages in other prophetic
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books (such as Zec 14:4-5, 10) suggest that the temple mount will become physically (geologically and topographically) prominent. Catastrophic upheavals, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, in the earth's surface are predicted to occur in the last days. Hence the mountain on which the temple is built (Mount Zion/Moriah) might very well be elevated to become the highest peak in the nation.

When will this occur? *In the last days*, which is a reference to the millennial reign of Christ. It is in the last days, also called the *Messianic Age*, that Christ will return to establish God's throne on earth. Christ will then rule the earth from the holy city (See notes, Isa 2:1-5).

- a. Jerusalem will be the *religious* capital of the world (v. 2a). All nations of the earth will stream to Jerusalem to learn the ways of God. Down through the centuries, generation after generation of people have forsaken the LORD and refused to acknowledge Him as their Creator. They have rejected His way of righteousness. But in the last days, this will totally change. A glorious time is coming! At long last, all the people of the earth will seek to know God. They will yearn to accept and to follow the righteous ways of their loving Creator. They will flow like a river into the holy city of Jerusalem where their Saviour and Redeemer, Christ Jesus Himself, rules.

In addition to people's discovering God's laws and ways, they will also obey Him. They will "walk in His paths." What a stark contrast to Israel's (and the world's) long history of idolatry and to reality today. People of all generations have known that a Supreme Being (God) exists and they have some sense of righteousness in their hearts, a sense of right and wrong. Since the beginning of time these truths have been made clear. They are written in the stars and embedded in the conscience of man (see Rom 1:19-20; 2:14-15). Yet people of every generation have refused to heed the message of creation and their own consciences. This, too, will totally change. When Christ establishes God's Kingdom on earth, people will finally obey the laws and ways of the Lord. They will *know* the truth; they will live and walk in it.

- b. Jerusalem will be the *legislative* capital of the world (v. 2b). Thus God's law and Word will go out from there to govern the ends of the earth, all nations and people. The rulers and legislative bodies of the earth will look to Christ as the Supreme Ruler. They will establish God's law as the law of their nations, and they will seek the counsel and guidance of Christ as they govern day by day.
- c. Jerusalem will be the *judicial* capital of the world (v. 3a). From Jerusalem, the Lord will execute true justice and settle disputes between all nations of the world. In that glorious day, the human race — every individual of every nation — will finally submit to Christ's rule.

Thought 1. Imagine this radical turnaround in world events! The Jewish people and nation — hated, despised, scattered and persecuted throughout their long history — will in the end be honoured among all people (Deut 26:19; 28:1). And Jerusalem,

the site of endless warring, strife and political unrest, will be the *centre* of the world, the most important place on earth.

Long ago, God made a wonderful promise to Abraham and to all the descendants of faith (Gen 12:2-3). In the last days, God will wholly fulfil His promise:

- => that He would create a people to be His very own, that all nations would be blessed through them
- => that His people would worship and glorify Him forever
- => that His Son would rule over God's people in perfect peace, justice and righteousness for all eternity

Listen to the wonderful promises of God's Word:

Luke 1:17 *And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous — to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

Acts 3:25 *And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.'*

Rom 15:12 *And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope."*

Eph 1:22 *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.*

1 Pet 2:9 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

Gen 12:2-3 *"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

Deut 4:20 *But as for you, the LORD took you and brought you out of the iron-smelting furnace, out of Egypt, to be the people of his inheritance, as you now are.*

Deut 7:6 *For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.*

Deut 26:19 *He has declared that he will set you in praise, fame and honour high above all the nations he has made and that you will be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he promised.*

Isa 65:18 *But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy.*

Jer 23:5 *"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land."*

Jer 30:22 *"So you will be my people, and I will be your God."*

Jer 31:33 *"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."*

Dan 7:14 *He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.*

Joel 3:20 *Judah will be inhabited forever and Jerusalem through all generations.*

Micah 5:2 *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrata, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."*

Zec 9:9-10 *Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will take away the chariots from Ephraim, and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.*

Thought 2. Jerusalem's exaltation is also a beautiful picture of the believer's exaltation in Christ. Consider the privileges believers will receive in God's kingdom:

- => Believers will be glorified and honoured with Christ.
- => Believers will have the privilege of serving God and worshipping Him forever.
- => Believers will rule with Christ once His kingdom has been established on earth.
- => Believers will be joint-heirs with Christ, sharing in His wonderful inheritance.

Listen to what Scripture says about the believer's exaltation (see *Inheritance*, Rom 8:17 for a complete list of the believer's exaltation and inheritance with Christ):

Mat 19:28 *Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

Mat 24:47 *"Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions."*

Mat 25:21 *"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"*

Luke 12:42 *The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?"*

Luke 18:14 *“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

Luke 22:30 *“That you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”*

John 12:26 *“Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.”*

Rom 8:16-17 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit, that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

1 Cor 6:2 *Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases?*

Gal 4:7 *So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.*

Eph 2:6 *And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.*

1 John 3:1 *How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.*

Rev 2:26 *To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations.*

Rev 3:21 *To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

Rev 5:10 *You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.*

Rev 20:4 *I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

2. The nations will disarm and disband their military forces (v. 3b, c). “They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.” It is hard to imagine this scene after centuries and centuries of a war-filled world. Nevertheless, the day will come when all men will lay down their weapons of war. The weapons and factories of war will be turned from instruments of death and destruction into instruments of life and construction. Businesses that once produced weapons will turn to the production of consumer goods, that is, products useful for living instead

of killing. Nations will no longer war against one another, nor will they train for war. Thus there will be no need to maintain an army.

3. The people of earth will live in perfect peace and security; fearing no one (v. 4). Both the fig tree and the grapevine form natural gardens — places of shade, comfort and serenity. The picture is of total tranquility and well being as well as protection. The tree and vine will provide a shelter for sitting and resting quietly at the end of a long day's work.

Thought 1. In the Messiah's kingdom, the world will be in a perfect state of peace. There will be no danger, no war, and no fear of war. Therefore, there will be no need for the weapons of war. What a promise! Think what a great hope this is to all who suffer the ravages of war. Men, women and children have been devastated throughout the ages — even in our own day and time — by the horrors of war: brutality, torture, rape, destruction of home and property, loss of loved ones and other cruelties. But all this will end. People will live without fear. Christ will establish perfect peace on earth...forever.

Because of the rock-solid promises of God's Word, because of His unchanging character and love, because of His absolute rule over our world and its destiny, every believer can rest assured and have utter confidence in the LORD's promise of perfect peace.

4. True believers will walk —live in — perfect fellowship with the LORD (v. 5). Note the affirmative statement in verse 5, "we will. " This is a statement of firm purpose. It is a statement of certainty. Speaking for himself and the generations of his people to come (especially during the millennial reign), Micah declared, "we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever." This was a rallying cry to his generation as well as a prophecy of what is to come.

In the past, Israel's neighbours had worshipped false gods and dragged Israel into their idolatry. But beginning with the millennial reign of Christ, Israel will worship the LORD for ever and ever regardless of what other nations do. The people will no longer be unfaithful. They will no longer be dragged into idolatry by the nations surrounding them. They will no longer chase after false gods. Rather, they will worship the true and living God for all eternity.

Note that heathen nations will be allowed to continue to worship or follow their false gods, but they are offered nothing — no hope for the future, no guarantees of eternal peace and security. This should have driven the people to repentance, but, alas, they had made their choice.

Thought 1. Consider the power of the words, "we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever," especially the words, *we will*. They declare a forceful and determined choice. Recall Joshua's unwavering words, his uncompromising response to the people of his generation:

Josh 24:14 *“Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshipped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.”*

The words of Joshua and Micah should be the battle cry of every believer and every church. We all need to be as firm in our choices and our direction as these two men of God were. We, the church, must continually and boldly stand up to the opposing, ungodly voices of the world. We must determine once and for all *whom* we will serve. Listen to what Scripture says:

Luke 4:8 *Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”*

Josh 22:5 *“But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to keep his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.”*

Josh 24:15 *“But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”*

Josh 24:21 *But the people said to Joshua, “No! We will serve the LORD.”*

Ruth 1:16 *But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.”*

1 Sam 7:3 *So Samuel said to all the Israelites, “If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.”*

1 Sam 12:20 *“Do not be afraid,” Samuel replied. “You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart.”*

1 Kng 9:4 *“As for you, if you walk before me faithfully with integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws.”*

2 Kng 20:3 *“Remember, LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.*

2 Chr 15:15 *All Judah rejoiced about the oath because they had sworn it wholeheartedly. They sought God eagerly, and he was found by them. So the LORD gave them rest on every side.*

Psa 119:30 *I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I have set my heart on your laws.*

2 Chr 34:31 *The king stood by his pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the LORD — to follow the LORD and keep his commands, statutes and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, and to obey the words of the covenant written in this book.*

Mica 4:5 *All the nations may walk in the name of their gods, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.*

5. Israel's lame, outcast and afflicted will return from exile, be regathered by the LORD (vv. 6-7). *On that day* refers again to the last days of human history. Micah emphasized that this promise was from the LORD Himself. His declarations of judgment in chapter three made it clear that Israel would be conquered and suffer greatly. The nation would be broken (made lame) and "brought to grief" by the judgment of the LORD. The people would be exiled from their own land and scattered to foreign lands, becoming outcasts with no home. This would happen during the Babylonian exile after Jerusalem's fall in 586 B.C. A second, even longer exile would occur after the Roman destruction in 70 A.D. (the Diaspora or Dispersion of the Jews). But the LORD does not leave Israel without hope. Instead, He promises complete restoration. The exiles will be re-gathered and brought back to their homeland by the God Himself. Once they are gathered and returned, they will be made into a strong nation (v. 7a). And they will be ruled over by the LORD forever (v. 7b). These two verses (vv. 6, 7) offer the same great hope and promises found in other prophetic passages (see 2:12; Isa 40:10-11; 54:7; Jer 23:3-4; 31:7-14; Eze 11:16-17; 20:34-44; 34:11-16, 23-24; Zep 3:19-20; Zec 10:8-12).
6. Under the rule of the Messiah, Jerusalem will have her former dominion (authority and territory) restored, the dominion and kingship of David (v. 8). Similar to verse one, we learn that Jerusalem will be exalted and become the seat of government ("tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion"). Israel had been ruled primarily by false, ungodly shepherds ever since King David's godly reign. But in the *last days*, the coming Messiah, the Son of David, will rule His people as the faithful Shepherd-King (see Mat 18:11-15; John 10:14-16; Psa 80:1; Isa 40:10-11; Jer 31:10; Eze 34:23-24; 37:24; Mica 5:4). ■