

A glorious scenario Micah 4:1-13

Introduction

Here in chapter 4 we are given a picture of what God intends for Jerusalem. "It is out of harmony with the reality of our world, yet fully in harmony with what we would like the world to be." Craigie in BST p148

The background to Micah is in the writings of Moses. Moses had warned Israel about the tribulation that would come upon them, including exile if they disobeyed God's commands. But he also promised restoration following repentance. (Deut 4:30)

After so much doom and gloom of chapters 1 to 3 what did Micah and his contemporaries have to look forward to ?

The answer.

God was encouraging his people with a hope for the future - albeit a distant future none of them would see.

In the last days

The mountain of the Lords temple will be established. The one that previously has been spoken of becoming a heap of rubble and all overgrown. It will gain supremacy, because the Lord's house is there. People will flock to it in order to worship.

The disciples of the nations will be humble and teachable. Prior in BST p 150 "Not chasing the latest trends or the newest experiences of spiritual power."

They want to know what God has to say, pilgrims intent on receiving his instruction, "not for intellectual titillation or idle curiosity, but in order to do what he says and walk in his paths." Prior in BST p 150

Many years ago I began a study on the law of God, considered very OT and negative by many, and regretfully it has remained an unfinished project.

Prior in BST p 150 "Unless worship involves teachability and issues of practical obedience, it is not worship at all." This is worship in spirit and truth, it is not superficial or temporary.

Micah has already condemned the spiritual leaders, political leaders, the judiciary and the King for not seeking and obeying God's will. Those in authority patronised the temple, but ignored the Word of God. The priests handled the word deceitfully and the prophets peddled lies for money.

The contrast between the Jerusalem of Micah's day and the Jerusalem of the latter days is total.

Sadly today Jerusalem is more like the one Micah knew than the one he prophesied was to come.

When God and His word are central. He is at work in powerful and life changing ways. His word infiltrates the Blinds 'of those who would come to Jerusalem. These visitors go home with God's word to their homes and communities.

Leaders who will look to God for wisdom and instruction. Nations laws will be based on God's laws, as British law once was. In the last 50 years we have legalised the breaking of every one of the ten commandments. Instead of corruption in the judiciary, the nations will become centred on God and His word. God himself will become their judge with justice and mercy.

This will not just effect odd communities, but nations.

International disarmament will be the order of the day!

The earth will enjoy God's peace only after it has learned to walk in the ways of His righteousness.

War will be swallowed up by peace. Agriculture will flourish, and every family will enjoy the fruits of its labour in security and contentment all because they obey God's truth and submit to Messiah's rule. Roll on the latter days.

There will not only be an absence of war, as Britain has experienced since the second world war, but a deep pervasive peace.

Peace available to all, especially the humble peasant and ordinary citizen. "Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree and no one will make them afraid" v 4 The earth will produce its crops and fruit will be abundant, and people will be content with

enough. There will be time for figs and vines to grow, and men will sit, not strive for bigger and better. There will be contentment not consumerism. There will be no more rat race, because there will be no more rats! It will be, as the 80's sit com called it, "The good life".

What party is offering us anything like this as a manifesto for Europe ? Military peace, economic stability and the blessing of knowing and obeying God?

Just a dream of Micah - and me. NO a reality. One that has not yet happened but will, because God has said it will "for the Lord almighty has spoken" v 4

"After Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Roman armies under Titus in AD 70, the entire temple area was demolished, and briars and weeds grew where the great edifice had once stood. Two rabbis, it is said, met one day on this scene of desolation. One walked about with head bowed, weeping, lamenting that there was no longer anything to which Israel could look forward.

The second rabbi, however quoted Micah 4:1-4. 'Let us rejoice', he said ' The God who has brought this judgement on us promises that blessing. The very desolation of this place assures me that Jerusalem and the temple will one day be rebuilt'". S Press p 57

The remnant

There will always be a remnant - not so much a highly trained motivated band of prayer warriors - but weak, lame, defeated survivors hanging on - just about. Micah was speaking of the exiles who would return to Jerusalem after the exile, more than a hundred years away. But history repeats itself - as with Hitler and the Jews. With whom do we identify?

Micah was confident, but only for a remnant who will eventually survive God's judgement. Those who will walk (v 5) in God's narrow path.

Walking is a common theme for discipleship (footnote BST p 152). Some will walk with their gods, but as for Micah and his household, he will walk with God, now and for ever. That is the commitment of an individual. Remnant revival begins with individuals.

Those who will not worship other gods, or even pay them any attention, whether it is in the guise of multi faith services or a too anxious study of the bank statement, share prices or the like. Worship in the New Jerusalem will be international, multi national worship, not mixing and matching the worship of different gods. Single minded dedication to the one true God. Permanently non negotiable, ever. Verse 5 says these promises are for those who "walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." Individuals matter. Thanks be to god that one individual has walked with the Lord forever - and he

has said that anyone who comes to him, he will not turn away (John 6:37)

Many who will walk with God will do so with a limp. They will have to lean heavily on God because of it. How much in contrast to the proud self satisfied leadership of Jerusalem in Micah's day. Of Britain in our day.

Part 2

Four times in six verses Micah says. Now, now, now now It is a return to the realities of the present situation. Micah is not blind to the realities of the present. The future is rooted in the past and present. The people will eventually cry out like a woman in childbirth, the agony of being compelled to live so many years under the cities many levels of corrupt leadership.

Yet even this is a message of hope - these sufferings will not be endless or meaningless. Something better, something new is coming. However endless or meaningless life's trails seem to be we need to remember King Jesus is with us, God the Holy Spirit dwells within us as comforter, counsellor guide and encourager.

Now, when Assyria and Babylon sweep over the nation and city, they will gloat; as godless people always do, taking a perverse delight in the downfall of those who have been held up as God fearing and distinctive. But they always forget God has a plan, and God always keeps a faithful remnant for himself, like a seed, a mighty people will arise from the ashes.

Prior in BST p 157 "The four now's in this passage give a timeless accurate description of the consequences of sin and disobedience. There are personal consequences for the individual ... there is all the isolation and deprivation to which persistent sin inevitably leads -being cut off from fellowship with the Lord and his people. Circumstances and events often begin to pile up and everything seems to be set against us."

The darkness that was to befall Jerusalem would bring such despair. But Micah speaks also of a hope and reassurance for renewal in the future.

What Jerusalem needed is a new king, a new priesthood, a saviour. But that's next week !

Read Micah 4:1-5

Unless otherwise identified scripture references are from the New International Version © Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

Note: I use many sources in preparation. If unacknowledged material has been used, I apologise. Please let me know (via contact tab) and I will add the acknowledgment when updating this material.