

Micah Chapter 5 – John Karmelich

1. We now get into a chapter that Christians often quote in Christmas cards. That is because Micah mentions the birthplace of Jesus in this chapter, over 700 years before that event occurred. Yes I'd love to have taught this chapter right before that holiday but it didn't work out. Anyway, realize Chapter 5 is a lot more than that one famous prediction. It reads as if Micah lays out Jesus whole redemptive plan for mankind in a few thoughts. If you've ever wanted a good chapter to explain "Christian prophecy in a nutshell", this is a pretty good one to use.
2. Let me open this chapter another way: We left Micah in a good mood at the end of Chapter 4. He was explaining to the Israelites that despite the fact that they're all being kicked out of the land of Israel, God's not through with them as a nation. It's as if Micah was thinking, "While I'm on a roll explaining His redemptive plans for Israel, let me go "all the way" to explain how God's going to appear on earth to bring peace to the world and then rule over the world from Israel."
3. One of the most amazing things to consider is that the religious leaders of Jesus' day believed this prediction that Micah made that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. I would think that the religious leaders would be monitoring the births there. I'd think they'd be sending their pregnant wives there to give birth, so they could possibly be the Messiah's parents. In spite of the fact that the religious leaders knew that Micah wrote the Messiah was to born in this "nowhere of a town" (Bethlehem) and despite the fact, they believed it to be true, the religious leaders did not do much about it. It also meant the religious leaders were so comfortable with the situation they had with Rome, the issue of where the Messiah was to be born, was essentially a non-issue to them.
4. Anyway, as I said, Micah Chapter 5 is a lot more than the prediction of where Jesus will be born. Yes, I will discuss that issue later in the chapter. What I want you to realize is that Chapter 5 lays out God's entire redemptive plan for Israel including aspects of His Second Coming and His rule over the world from Israel. My last lesson was, "The really bad news and the really good news". Given the fact that Chapter 5 teaches us how God expects us to live under His redemptive plan, I call it, "We might as well get used to it now". The key point is essentially, "This is what's going to occur in the future, expect it, deal with it, and live now as God wants to live, as that's how we are going to live for eternity."
5. Let me open this lesson one more way: I'm pretty positive that most of you who read my lessons already believe that Jesus is God, He did come to earth about 2,000 years ago, and yes He'll return one day to "set up shop" in Israel to rule the world from there. As I stated in the last lesson, that's "Christian Theology 101". My question is why should I study Micah Chapter 5 if I know all of this to be true? In other words, what's in it for me? Why should I care? I love those questions.
 - a) For starters, this chapter tells us a few things about our future. If you're interested in what we do when Jesus returns, we get hints of that question in this chapter. Chapter 5 gives us facts about what'll occur in both His First and Second coming. It's not a one-chapter mini-bible on theology, but it's a pretty good summary of Jesus' purpose in history. The point is the question, "If life is going to happen "this way", let's deal with it now, as it will occur!"
 - b) Speaking of this chapter, it's more than just implying that the Messiah is coming deal with it, it explains His purpose for coming: The short version is to judge people for their sins. I need to emphasize what I said the last lesson that "Judgment begins with believers". This is the principal that God holds people accountable for what we know and what we should know about Him. It's the idea that the bad news about knowing our bible is God holds us accountable for what we know. It doesn't mean those of us who trust in Jesus as God and believe He died for our sins can ever be sent to hell. It does mean He expects us to be His witnesses to the world as that is why He separated us in the first place. That is why Israel was separated as a nation and that's why they suffered so much, as they were disobedient to what they were called to do, "Live by His laws and be a witness to others."
 - c) But John, aren't we Christians saved by grace? Of course. What have we done with it?

- d) I'm a big believer that those of us who've given our lives to Jesus will be held accountable for what we know about Him. Those who are saved at the end of their lives will still be in heaven, but I'm convinced heavenly rewards based on what we did with that information once we realize Jesus is God and in charge of our lives. Yes, I'm convinced babies who did not get a chance to understand the Gospel will be saved. I believe in a God who judges all fairly. However, I can only control what I can control, which is how I use the time I've got and the greatest use of that time is to find ways to use it for His glory.
6. OK John, why are giving us another "use our time" well lecture here? Because half the chapter is a condemnation of how the Israelites were living back then. It is a reminder to use our time well as God will judge believers (that's you and me) based on how we've used the time He's given us.
- a) It is also a big part of Chapter 5. The last half the chapter essentially says we'll be living as God expects us to live. I figure that we might as well get used to living as He expects us to live as that's what we'll be doing for eternity. To state an old proverb, "If you can't live for God now, what makes you think we'll be able to do it for all of eternity?" The key point is God expects us to use our time for His glory. That's an underlying theme running through this book and through the bible while I'm at it.
7. Before I begin, I should warn everyone that I'm going to tie this chapter to a lot of events that will occur at either Jesus First or Second Coming. We'll get into specifics as we go through the text on a verse-by-verse basis. My point being that even though there are only 15 verses in this chapter, I would say there's going to be a lot of historical discussion about details of His First Coming and a significant portion of the text will get into details about Jesus Second Coming. It also tells us how God expects us to live as He rules over the earth. That is Chapter 15 in a nutshell! With that said, I invite you to join me as I'm going to do my best to explain what our future holds as Christians:
8. Chapter 5, Verse 1: Now muster your troops, O daughter^l of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek.
- a) The best way to start is to remember where we left off. In fact, in the Jewish version of the bible, they include the last verse of Chapter 4 with this chapter. It's a non-significant issue, but the point is it's good to look back, see where we left off and go from there.
- b) The short version is Micah left off saying that "Israel will win in the end" despite the fact they'll be kicked out of the land, hated around the world, be conquered by many empires and even when they are back in that land, they'll still be hated more than loved. Micah is telling is, "Don't worry about all of that, God said He'll rule the world from Israel one day, so therefore, Israel has to win in the end for His sake, not for theirs."
- c) Given that "rally the troop" speech of the last few verses, in effect Micah continues telling the descendants of the Israelites that "whenever this happens", "muster your troops" as in organize your army, you're going to win, deal with it, accept and plan accordingly.
- d) OK John, so Israel wins in the end. How does any of that affect my life here and now? It's a reminder to us that no matter what we face in life, no matter what we have to deal with, we need to keep in mind, God's still on the throne, and the world is still moving to a point where it will end the way He desires it to end. The point is to keep the big picture in mind as we deal with whatever we have to deal with. It is about having a proper perspective of life. Studying the big-picture helps us deal with whatever we're dealing with in life. OK, now I got that speech out of my system, we can get back to Micah.
- e) When you read the term "Daughter of my troops", all you have to realize is it's a reference to the descendants of the current army in Israel at the time of Micah. The reason it doesn't say the "son of troops" is a reference to weakness. To paraphrase Verse 1, "Although you in the future won't be much of anything (Israel is small compared to the great number of people who want that country destroyed), your enemies will strike you on the cheek (the point is it's an insult) and your enemies will strike Israel that way.
- f) As most of you know by now, "prophecy is patterns". If you get that, you'll understand a lot about how prophecy works. I'll use Verse 1 as an example:

- i) The first fulfillment of this verse, is it describes the fall of Jerusalem when that city was conquered by the Babylonians. History records how that foreign king struck down the Israelite king, who was the last descendant of David who reigned as the king in that land. In other words, the "striking of the king" is describing the fall of the Davidic dynasty that ruled the Southern Kingdom for about 400 years.
- ii) I should explain that a little better. God promised David roughly 1,000 BC that his descendants would be kings until "The" King comes who will rule the world from there. What wasn't told is a big time gap exists from the last of his descendants as king to the present day and counting. Descendants of David ruled as king in Israel until about 600 BC when the Babylonians destroyed Israel and relocated survivors of that attack all over their empire. About a hundred years later, Israelites could go back there if they desired. Only a small percentage chose that option. My point is Israel hasn't had a king there since 600BC and won't have a king until "THE" King is going to rule from the world there.
- g) With all that said, let's return to Verse 1 and look at the last part again. It says, "with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek". On one hand I'm sure it refers the last king of Israel before it was conquered. I'm also equally positive it refers to "The" King. If you are familiar with the Gospel accounts, one of the details told is that Jesus Himself was struck on the cheek, prior to being sentenced to death. I'm convinced that every detail about the life and death of Jesus is hinted at or literally described somewhere in the Old Testament. Even a little detail about being struck on the cheek is implied here in Verse 1.
 - i) Let me put it this way, the "judge of Israel" is whoever will judge them. That could refer to any king or leader or it could refer to "THE" judge over Israel as well as the entire world. Personally, I'd hate to be in the shoes of the person who struck Jesus on the cheek, as they had no idea who he's messing with! Now consider that every time we sin, whether we realize it or not we're also effectively striking Jesus on the cheek as any sinful act is implying we don't want to live as He desires. This verse should make us all the more grateful for His grace when we realize that fact!
 - ii) Anyway, we're just on Verse 1 and you can already see how much prophecy is tied to this section of the book. Let's keep rolling, as we've got a long ways to go.
- 9. Verse 2: 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 coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.
 - a) OK, here's the Christmas card verse! This verse has been quoted in most churches around the Christmas holidays around the world for millenniums. As I said, I'm convinced every aspect of Jesus life was predicted somewhere in the Old Testament and here we're told of where Jesus is to be born over 700 years before it happened.
 - b) Let me get some technical notes out of the way: In Israel back then, there were two places called "Bethlehem" (means "house of bread"). One was up near the Sea of Galilee, and the other is about 6 miles from Jerusalem. This Bethlehem is the one near Jerusalem. It's not a very significant town. Today it is under Palestinian control and again, there's not much to it other than a tourist stop to visit a church building built on the spot that is the best guess as to where is Jesus birthplace.
 - c) Imagine announcing to the world that the king who would rule over the world will not be born say, in Rome or Jerusalem or any other major city, but in this "hole in the wall" place inside of Israel. Notice the verse implies that even though the Messiah is to be born there, He "always existed" as the text says he came "from of old, from ancient days". That alone is a good verse to argue that Jesus is eternal and not just some a man born in Bethlehem.
 - d) Before I move on, let me take a few moments to consider another fact. By the time of His birth, it's been about 1,000 years since King David. There would be lots of people who can say they were David's descendants. They were scattered, and didn't all live in Jerusalem.

- e) Both Joseph and Mary were among those descendants and didn't live in Bethlehem at that time. Let's pause to consider the trouble God went through to get them there. Israel was a part of the Roman Empire at that time. On occasion Rome would require a census of their entire population mainly to see how many people are there for tax purposes and maybe to be soldiers. The reason Rome required everybody to travel to their home town was so they could see for example, "how many Israelites there were", versus Edomites and others who lived in that region. It's amazing to me that God organized a worldwide census in effect to get one couple to travel to their family's home town to make this prophecy happen.
- i) If you don't know, this was the same place as David's birthplace. His parents were shepherds there and his family was a mixture of Israelites and others. By the way, it wasn't just Joseph and Mary who had to travel there. All their relatives had to do the same trip as they were required to be registered as well! By the time all of them got there, the town was already full as all David's living descendants were making that same trip! That is why there was no room for Mary when she arrived.
 - ii) I also read a little history about this census. There was a lot of resistance to it with the Israel leaders and they went back and forth with Rome over this requirement. I will just say it ended up happening on God's timing.
 - iii) By the way, Jesus was not born on December 25, year 0. By the 4th century AD, a Roman Emperor was a Christian and he wanted public acceptance of Christianity. There was a winter festival to a false god held around that time of the year, and in order to get public acceptance of Christianity, that pagan holiday was changed to be the Christmas holiday. That's how all of that got started. The best estimate that I've read is Jesus was born around 2 BC. I've read theories on different dates, none of which are strongly convincing.
 - iv) Anyway, we don't know the exact date of Jesus' birth. We know Joseph and Mary did make a trip to go there as part of that census. There is also a separate story to be told why the virgin birth was necessary. The short version is one of the kings of Israel was so wicked, God placed a curse on him through Jeremiah. The fact of the virgin birth gets around that curse. Joseph was the legal father through adoption. In both Jewish and Roman law, if a man marries a woman, all she owns belongs to him after that marriage. Anyway, that's how that couple got around that curse.
- f) I went off on some tangents here mainly because I want you to grasp how much trouble it was for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem and how "God worked" to get around that curse on the Davidic line of kings (See Jeremiah 22:30 for that curse). It also teaches us the "trouble" it was to get Joseph and Mary to be in Bethlehem when it occurred. It goes to show that if the bible making a prediction 700 years in advance, it's amazing to ponder the accuracy of that prediction and how much trouble God went through as to make it happen. The point is if we can trust that prediction came true exactly as it did, we should also trust our bible on the topic of our salvation as God's eternal plans for the world will happen in the future just as the bible says it will occur.
- g) Speaking of eternal plans, time to get back to Micah!
10. Verse 3: Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.
- a) I'll be the first to admit, Verse 3 is a tough one to digest. Does it mean God will forsake the nation of Israel from the time Micah wrote this until the time Jesus was born? This is both a yes and no answer. It is "No" in that God allowed the Israelites to return to that land in about 100 years after they were conquered. It is "no" in terms of the fact that He'll always listen to prayers out to Him. It is no, simply by the proof that a handful of prophets were sent to Israel even after Micah wrote it. Just as I'm convinced God's not through with the nation of Israel forever, I'm also equally convinced He still worked through them leading up to the time of Jesus' birth.

- b) OK, time for the rebuttal. I think the point of this verse is simply that God's saying a time is coming where God will not work primarily through the nation of Israel. The reason He set up that nation in effect was to be God's witness to the world of His existence. I believe it was always His plan to have the Christian church replace Israel in that just as Israel was supposed to be His witnesses to that Middle East world back then, the main purpose that the church exists is to be His witness to the world and lead people to Him and go closer to Him. The point looking back at a long-term perspective, God did forsake Israel because in those centuries from Micah to Jesus, they were in captivity or parts of other empires, so it was a "dark time" in terms of them being a witness to the world around them. Obviously, there were other prophets in that time period and the temple was rebuilt, so I'd definitely say God didn't forsake them completely, but we can look back at history and realize this is talking about Jesus and God working to "change His plans" for eternity.
- c) That speech leads me back to this verse. Obviously religious Jewish people disagree with the interpretation of this verse. They do see this verse as being Messianic. The argument is that Israel will never be "fully reunited" until the Messiah comes to rule from Jerusalem over the world. That's why they read this verse and saying in effect, "God's forsaking the nation of Israel in the sense that they won't be full reunited again until the Messiah comes. You might find it interesting that some religious Jewish people were against Israel being a country again because the Messiah didn't lead that effort. To state the obvious, I don't see it that way, but that's one of many Jewish interpretations of this verse.
- d) Notice the "she" in this verse. It is "she" who gives birth to the Messiah. Christians argue it refers to the virgin birth and obviously religious Jews will say it refers to Israel bringing the Messiah into the world. The funny thing is it may be both. The fact that God allowed the Israelites to return to that land so the Messiah can be born there, works both ways.
- e) The final thing to catch from this verse is it says, "then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel". This is saying, "When the Messiah comes the Israelites who are not living in Israel will flock there, because well, "He's here"!
- i) The logical question then becomes if the reference to labor is about giving birth to the Messiah, why hasn't He "set up shop" yet? The verse appears to be mixing its metaphor's about the First and Second Coming? Isn't that an argument that Jesus isn't the Messiah because the "other stuff" didn't happen? No. For starters, no one else rose from the dead. No one else did all those miracles. As for references to the two comings, let me talk about that while I'm in the neighborhood.
- ii) One of the things religious Jewish people will argue is if the Messiah comes twice, why isn't a fact that important blatantly stated somewhere in the Old Testament? I would respond that the only way to reconcile God paying the price for our sins as well as the idea of the Messiah (same entity) ruling on earth is for Him to show up twice. Since the bible doesn't deny He comes twice, it's for us to figure out!
- iii) By the way I use that same type of argument for the view that the Christian church will be raptured prior to Jesus coming to "set up shop". There are no references to Jesus coming twice. It's one of those things one has to infer, the same way one has to infer the "double-coming" of the Messiah. Many Christians believe the rapture is at the end of the tribulation, but I hold the view it is at the beginning. We'll find out one day who's right on that issue.
- f) In the meantime, I'm spending some time on a complicated verse. It appears to be mixing a bunch of metaphors describing events tied to Jesus First and Second Coming. Because it is difficult to see the "two comings" in this one verse, that is why religious Israelites argue it only refers to the Messiah's "one coming" whenever that happens. Even if I did hold that view, it doesn't explain God "abandoning Israel" until that day. The way to reconcile all of this is to see Verse 3 as a summary of God's big plan. Then we will get more details in the remainder of the chapter and the book. Speaking of which.

11. 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 secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. Verse 5a: And he shall be their peace.
- a) Obviously, this verse is dealing in metaphors, as this long promised king who'll be ruling the world from Israel, won't literally be tending a bunch of sheep.
 - b) The reason the bible loves to use a shepherd and sheep as a metaphor is because sheep are not known as smart animals. It's the idea that just as a shepherd must protect the flock as they constantly face danger from predators and wandering aimlessly, so God protects the people who choose to live under His rule from danger and from us wandering away from His protection. My point is this metaphor works well for us as well as the Israelites.
 - c) Of all things, let me present the case why I'm positive Jesus has to be (and still is) man and God in order to fulfill this verse. If Jesus was just a man, how can one man know what all people in Israel were doing let alone the world? Some religious Israelites argue this verse only refers to good Israelites being resurrected to dwell as "God's flock". My point is how can one man shepherd them as this verse implies? A reason we must accept Jesus as fully human is so we know for sure He can relate to our sins and our issues. A reason we must accept also Him as fully God is so we know for sure He has the power to watch over us.
 - d) With that theological thought in mind, notice the second sentence not only describes this coming Messiah (the people the shepherd are protecting) as being great to the ends of the world. All I'm saying is this entity is pretty powerful, which is why I'd argue it can't be a human alone as He must have power that reaches to the end of the world.
 - e) So how do we know Jesus just isn't some "super person" that God just gives a lot of power to, to watch over the world. How do we know He is God Himself? For starters, Jesus said He was God. He never denied that fact, nor did the apostles. Let's put it this way, if He's powerful enough that He will be known throughout the world and He can communicate with people in order to shepherd them, that's pretty powerful and I don't have the guts to ask Him if there are any limits of His power!
 - f) I'm getting into all this theology here, essentially because this verse gets into all of that. It is saying that whenever this Messiah shows up on the scene, He'll protect His own. He'll be famous to the ends of the earth. Stop and consider how famous Jesus is now. He was in effect a "nobody", who grew up in an obscure part of the world and died a martyr as a young man. Yet today, He's known around the world and billions believe He is God. I'm just saying it appears this verse has come true over the last two thousand years.
 - g) Believe it or not, this thought ties well into the first part of Verse 5. It says that whenever this "He" comes, "He" will be their peace. The one-thing nonbelievers can't relate to is the peace one gets of having a relationship with Jesus. I'm positive that only comes when we trust in Jesus to guide our lives. That is why being a Christian is more than just believing that Jesus is God and He paid for our sins. It's also the idea that we desire that He is now to be in charge of our life. That's where the peace comes in. But doesn't this verse imply a literal future time where this Messiah will rule the world from Israel? Yes. Again, realize that God working in patterns. He gives us His peace to realize He's in charge of our lives and guides us. It's also a prediction that He'll literally return to rule the world one day.
 - i) Does that mean to believe in Jesus means we'll never have problems? Of course it doesn't. It simply means that God is with us as we go through whatever we have to deal with and He promises to guide us for His glory through that situation.
 - ii) I know I'm preaching to the choir here, but I want everyone to grasp the idea that the idea of God's peace is predicted in the Old Testament hundreds of years before Jesus came on the scene. Realize in the Old Testament the Spirit of God "came and went" on people. God used prophets, as people didn't have God's Spirit with them to guide their lives. The point here is to realize the promise of having God's peace was predicted a long time before it ever started to occur.

12. Verse 5b: When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men; ⁶ 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.
- a) Speaking of having peace in a tough situation, Micah returns to "present day". Remember that Micah preached to the Israelites in the Southern Kingdom well over 100 years before the Babylonians destroyed that kingdom. His message was also to the North Kingdom as their kingdom was coming to an end, within Micah's lifetime or soon after it.
 - b) Remember that the Assyrians and the Babylonians were separate empires. Each had their headquarters in what is today Iraq, out of separate large cities. What Micah is doing is he is using the upcoming Assyrian invasion as an example that God's still on the throne and He's still going through with His plans for our world in spite of that destruction.
 - c) I admit, these are two strange verses. What's this whole bit about we (Israelites) raising up "seven shepherds and eight princes who will shepherd the land of Assyria with a sword?" Realize Nimrod was a large city that was the capital of that empire. If all this isn't strange enough, the verse then says "He" will deliver us from the Assyrian Empire.
 - d) Let me give the big picture idea first, and then I'll focus on the metaphors. The big idea is the fact that God allowed the Israelites to go into captivity because they turned to idols. It is as if God was saying to them, "Hey, you want to worship idols? I'll give you that, as the land of Assyria (and Babylon too), was full of false gods one can worship. It's said, it took that captivity to finally rid the Israelites of idols once and for all. The message for us is the idea that God says, "You want to make something other than Me the center of your life? I will fill your life with those false gods so you'll see what a waste of time it is".
 - i) The other point of these verses is God won't leave us in this state. Just as He made it possible for the Israelites to return to their land, just as He made empire come to an end, so God has the power and the desire to lead us to victory over any and all forces that want to rule over our lives.
 - e) All of that leads me back to the strange reference in Verse 5 to "seven shepherds and eight prices of men". We're there literally "seven and eight" such people at that time in ancient history? Don't know and truthfully I don't care. The number seven in the bible is always associated with the completeness of God, as in the fact He rested on the seventh day. The number eight is always associated with a "new beginning". If you take any of the titles of Jesus associated with Him and add up the numerical value of the letters of each of a title for Jesus in the original Greek, they are all divisible by eight. My point is the word Jesus (in the Greek) as well as other titles associated with Him all tie to the number "eight" as to imply He gives us a new beginning in life when we trust in Him.
 - f) OK John, you're really jumping off the deep end here, what's going on? All I'm saying is the numbers "seven and eight" represent in the bible the idea of God's complete care over our lives (seven shepherds) and the idea of eight princes is the "new beginning" we have when we trust in Jesus to guide our lives. The point is this is a very Jewish way of saying to us that no matter what trouble we face, God's fully watching over us and wants to give us a "new beginning" despite however we messed up.
 - i) That's why we get the Assyrian references in these verses. That is what was next on the horizon as far as Israel's "troubles" and Micah uses this strange Jewish idea of "seven and eight" to communicate that God's still there guiding us despite what we have to face in our lives.
 - ii) Finally, keep in mind this is "group redemption" not individuals. It's the idea that God is going to rescue His people from whatever predicament they are in. It does not mean we get to all live through it individually. It does mean God will allow a remnant to survive through those situations so God's ultimate plans for them and us can be carried out. Speaking of remnant's, Verse 7 makes that point.

13. Verse 7: 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.
⁸And 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 sheep, which, when it goes through, treads down and tears in pieces, and there is none to deliver.
- a) Hey, I never promised you that Micah 5 would be easy. I just said it covers much of what Jesus will do in both His First and Second Coming as well as a brief description of God's ultimate plans for those who trust in Him to guide our lives.
 - b) If I had to sum up this whole lesson in one thought it'd be, "Don't worry about whatever it is we're worried about. God's still on the throne and He still has wonderful plans for those of us who trust in Him and His redemptive plan for our lives".
 - i) The shorter version is "Don't worry, be happy". Couldn't resist throwing that in.
 - c) In order to understand these verses, all we have to do is think about the fact that there are Jewish people all over the world at this point. That's essentially what these verse say. Yes, a day will come where God will gather Israelites to that land, but until it happens there is still a lot more Jewish people around the world then there are in Israel.
 - d) I'd like you to notice the word "dew" in Verse 7. One has to remember that Israel as a land is mostly a dry climate. Most of the year there is no rain. The morning dew was necessary to provide moisture for plant life there. The essential point is God wants His people to be witnesses for Him in the world. That's how we're "refreshing to others" living in a world without any belief in Him. I'm well aware these are strange metaphors for us, but Micah's trying to communicate to us that God "scatters us" for His purpose, which is for us is to be His witnesses in the world. That's why we're compared to the morning dew.
 - e) If you think that reference was tough, now we have to talk about lions. It doesn't mean we will literally tear people apart, it applies to the power of the Gospel message. Just as lions have the strength to kill their prey, so God gives us the power to lead others to Him. Yes, I believe only God can covert people's hearts, but He chooses to work through people as to draw others to Him. The point is missionary work "works" and that's the method that we are to use to draw people to the Gospel message.
 - f) But John, aren't you mixing metaphors of Christians and Israelites here? These verses are about the fact the Israelites were scattered throughout the world when they did not have a homeland for all of those thousands of years. Are they the "dew and lions" or are we? I'd say both. In the sense that they exist as a people, it reminds us that God still exists and He is still ruling over the world by the proof of their existence. Christians are called to go into the world and spread the word about Jesus. My point is Jewish people make a difference for God by the fact they exist. Christians make a difference, by when we tell nonbelievers of His existence and the fact this Jewish God rules over the world!
 - g) Reading the verses again, it is speaking of the Israelites and the fact they exist is the proof to the world of God's existence. I'm also explaining how we Christians can apply all these verses to our lives as God calls us to use our lives to be a witness for Him. The main thing to get out of all the lion references is the fact that the bible correctly predicted the fact that the Israelites would be scattered throughout the world, yet remain a distinct people until they're gathered again one day in Israel under a single ruler. The idea of Israelites being like lions is essentially saying, "they'll always be a force to be reckoned with."
 - h) Let me make this simple: The idea of Israelites existing reminds the world that God exists and what He requires of us, to be a living witness for Him. That is why there's always the effort throughout history to wipe out their existence! However, God promised they will continue to exist as a unique entity (despite their rejection of being that witness) because of the unconditional promises He made to them. Bottom line, there is coming a day when God will once again work through Israel as a nation due to that unconditional promise. It is a part of Jesus ruling the world from Israel so that nation must exist then.

14. Verse 9: Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries, and all your enemies shall be cut off.
- a) First question here, who is the "your" here? It obviously hints of the Messiah as it states of how he shall be above his foes and all his enemies will be wiped out.
 - b) Let me put it this way: it's tough to argue this verse is describing Israel as there has never been a time since this verse where all their enemies have been wiped out. Yes, of course it can refer to a time when the Messiah rules and He wipes out all of Israel's enemies! Think of it as a literal future time when people say "I don't want the God of the bible to rule over my life". Yes, it affects people from all generations as many are sent to hell for that reason alone! It's like saying, "You don't want God to be in charge of your life? Great, you'll live that way for eternity!" That's why I see verses like this as being both eternal and literal as I see it describing a future day where God says, "The world without Me ruling over it will not go on forever. I (God) owe it to the people who trust in Me to literally come and rule over the world and require people to live as I desire." All I am saying is the bible says that such a day will come, deal with it and prepare for it!
 - i) If you're not willing to live for God now, what makes you think you'll want to live for Him when He rules forever! A long time ago, it occurred to me that I better be singing praises to God in church as I'll be doing that forever, so I might as well get used to it now! I might as well get used to using the time He's given me to make a difference for Him now as that's how life will work forever! All I'm saying is that we should get used to being a devout Christian now, because that's the way life is going to work for eternity, so get used to it!
 - c) That little lecture leads me back to Verse 9. This verse predicts how God's long promised Messiah (who we Christians call Jesus) will literally rule over the world one day from the city of Jerusalem with Israel existing as a nation! Therefore, we might as well live our life that way now, as that's how the world will work forever, deal with it!
15. Verse 10: And in that day, declares the LORD, I will cut off your horses from among you and will destroy your chariots;
- a) Warning, from Verses 10 through the end of the chapter is one long sentence. At least that is the way it reads in this English translation. The key point of these last six verses is that same idea that God's people will be required to live as He desires, so we might as well get used to it now, which is why I picked that phrase as my lesson title.
 - b) What I find interesting is the last six verses don't list for example the 10 Commandments as examples of how God wants us to live. They don't say, "love God, love others and go enjoy your life". They give practical examples of what many of us might consider trivial laws in the Old Testament that don't apply to us today! These verses are essentially here to remind us, "God's in charge, we must live as He desires and here's some of the laws we rarely think about as if to imply, we must obey all His laws when He rules one day!"
 - c) Before I get into the specific's of these laws, what about the "Saved by Grace" stuff versus all of these rules? Great question. The issue is not our salvation, but how we're to act as a witness for Him. We are only saved by our trust that Jesus is God, He paid the complete price for every sin we'll ever commit (past, present and future) and accept the fact He's in charge of our lives. That's Christian salvation in a nutshell. The big question of course is, "Now what"? The answer is God expects us to live as a witness for Him and use our time to make a difference for Him. The reason I gave the "get used to living this way, it will be that way for eternity" earlier isn't just for the Israelites, but for anyone who trusts in Jesus in God. The point is that's the way God expects us to live now, as that's how life is going to be for eternity, so "get used to it" and start now!
 - d) All of that leads me back to this verse. Again, from Verse 10 to the rest of the chapters is a bunch of "trivial" Old Testament laws as if to say, "God expect us to obey all of them, and not just say the big ones ("10 Commandments" and such). The first example given is a law that states that the Israelites were not to trust in horses and chariots for their survival.

- i) Does that mean the Israelites should abandon their army today? Of course not. It means that first and foremost, their and our trust is in God to lead us to whatever victories He wants to lead us to. The idea essentially is, "If God wants victory, He will make it possible, not because our army is better than others."
 - ii) Let me put this another way: Until Jesus does return, God expects us to use those resources He has provided for us to make a difference for Him. We should not be depending upon our "horses" as if God doesn't exist. We should not depend upon our savings as if God doesn't exist. We are still to pray to God as if all our options other than Him are gone, and then do the best we can with what we have.
 - iii) Bottom line, "Don't throw away the chariots and horses" we have, but trust in God to guide our lives as if we have no other options. Then use whatever resources we have at our disposal to make the best decision possible.
 - iv) Meanwhile, there is a lot more to this six verse run-on sentence to study:
16. Verse 11: and I will cut off the cities of your land and throw down all your strongholds; ¹² and I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and you shall have no more tellers of fortunes; ¹³ and 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; ¹⁴ and I will root out your Asherah images from among you and destroy your cities.
- a) Now that you've got the flavor of this last section of the chapter (the fact that we're only to depend upon God to guide our lives), I can combine the "naughty list" in one section.
 - b) I can summarize this whole section under the heading, "Don't trust in anything but God". The rest of the verses list things God plans on destroying as those were the things that the Israelites were trusting in when Micah was living. The specific's include trusting in their city walls as protection, trusting in sorcery, and statutes that they made to false gods (like a good luck charm). This is God saying, "You're to trust in Me and Me alone to guide our lives and when I return to "set up shop" I'm going to destroy everything and anything My people are trusting in for their lives."
 - c) Let me back up and put this in perspective of the big picture. The key point of this section is that Jesus will return to earth one day and rule from it. All the people who do not want to live by God's rules will be wiped out. We're reading "post-judgment" time here. What that means is if we want to live "post-judgment" time, we have to accept the fact we have to live by God's rules. That means all of them, not just avoiding say theft and murder. It is also about full dependence upon God for every aspect of our lives. The reason why we get this "naughty list" in these verses, is because these were the things the Israelites did at the time Micah was alive. Our own naughty list might be different, but I guarantee it will also be eliminated when Jesus returns.
 - d) OK then, why can't I "have fun" now and live for Jesus when He returns? Why can't I do all the things that I want to do now and change whenever this occurs? The answer is for us to realize, if we can't live for Jesus now, what makes us think we can when He comes? I lectured us earlier that I sing in church now as I figure I'm going to be doing that a lot in heaven, so I might as well get used to it now. I try to use my life to make a difference for Him now, as again, I need to get used to living as God wants me to live. That's why God created us in the first place, to use our lives to glorify Him. If we can't do that now, what makes us think we're going to be able to do that for eternity? If we're not depending upon Him now, what makes us think we can "change on a dime" to be that way forever? That's why I'm lecturing all of us to use our lives now to make that difference for Him now!
 - e) Now that I've scared everyone half to death, let me put you at ease! First remember we're saved by His grace alone, not based on how hard we work. The issue is not salvation, it is only about using our lives as a witness for Him because we're saved! Now what? What is it one enjoys doing? What are we good at? The issue is how can we combine those as to make a difference for God? That's what living for Jesus is truly all about?

- f) OK John, what if you're wrong? Let's put it this way: I'm positive Micah was written long before Jesus was born as the Jewish religious leaders quoted it as "the bible" at the time of His birth. Yet, Micah correctly stated where Jesus was to be born and the religious leaders of that time accepted it as fact! Micah correctly stated the Messiah (Jesus) would be born in a "hole of a wall" of a town and not the big city! Yes, there are hundreds of other proofs like that, and I'm only giving you one example. My point being that if we can trust Micah and the other Old Testament prophets as being 100% correct in things they predicted about the First Coming of Jesus, why should we doubt them about what they predict about His Second Coming? The bible as a whole has much more to say about Jesus Second Coming than it does about His First, and we know it's full of information about the First!
 - g) Finally, let me return to the "what should we do" part? What does God specifically desire of me? I can't answer that question. All I can do is ask you to pray something like, "I put my life in Your hands. What is it You specifically want me to do to make a difference for You?" I'm positive God can't resist a surrender prayer. Don't expect a grand-scale answer to that prayer. The response can be as simple as being a good parent or praying for others. If nothing else I always encourage prayer for myself and others. The biggest waste of a life is not using it to glorify God. We can't change our past, but we also should not waste any more time either. Often I'm not sure what to do next. Hopefully, that's when we step back to pray for guidance, and then do what is logical. That's what He asks of us.
 - h) In the meantime, I left Micah warning us to avoid alternatives to God for guidance as such things will be wiped out. We might as well avoid them to begin with as God Himself will destroy them one day.
 - i) With that said, I believe we're ready to take on the last verse of the chapter:
17. Verse 15: And in anger and wrath I will execute vengeance on the nations that did not obey.
- a) Want a good summary verse of what happens to anyone who refuse to trust in God to be in charge of their lives? Verse 15 gives that answer. Keep in mind we're reading end-time stuff here. If you asked me to sum up the book of Revelation in one thought, it is "God will win in the end, so join the winning team and use your life to make a difference for Him". I would say the rest of Revelation is the details of how the world gets destroyed as well as a few chapters on how those who trust in God will win in the end. I state that here, because Micah is ending this section with a similar reminder that God's going to literally rule over this world one day, so get on His side or suffer the consequences.
 - b) Let me discuss this verse another way. It's been over 2,500 years since Micah wrote this. If I was a nonbeliever, I might say, "He was just saying that to give the Israelites hope as the destruction of that land was possible given the rise of the Assyrian Empire that existed at that time." My response is to consider all the nations and empires that rose, fell and do not exist anymore while Israel still stands today. My point is while many Israelites did suffer over the millenniums, God's word is true as He has made nations and empires suffer that refused to acknowledge His rule over this world.
 - c) Bottom line, God's going to win, so we might as well get used to it now and live to make a difference for Him in this world while we can. That's why I call this lesson, ""We might as well get used to it now" as this promise of eternity living under God's rule will come true, just as eternal punishment is also a reality. As I like to say, I didn't make the rules, but I do believe I understand them, and that's why I'm trying to use my life for His glory.
18. Let's pray: Heavenly Father, we thank You that You not only sent Jesus to die for our sins, but He will also return again to rule over the world one day. None of us know when that day will occur. All we know is that You've called us to use our lives for Your glory. May we not waste the most valuable asset You've give us, our time and our resources, so we'll use them to make a difference for You. Guide us as to how You want us to live and use our time, so together we can live the life You desire we live. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.