

Micah 3:9 - 4:5

As a balance to the previous haftarah readings for **Deuteronomy 2**, this does not target enemies like Edom or Moab, but Israel itself, when they rebel against God's laws.

It gives the reason for Jerusalem's destruction and provides a vision of future Jerusalem where all will dwell in perfect peace.

Micah 3:9-10 - "Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity. They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity."

Any building projects - whether it was to repair the Temple, add to the king's palace, construct stately homes for the rich or widen the streets - all were paid for by blood - oppression, ribery, corruption and iniquity.

The Targum is, "who build their houses in Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with deceits."

Micah 3:11 - "The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, 'Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.'"

Or as in the NET: "priests proclaim rulings for profit, and her prophets read omens for pay."

As he traveled as an apostle, Paul worked to keep himself free from "patrons" who might try to influence him to water down or change his preaching. Elsewhere though Paul says ministers of the Gospel are "worthy of their hire," but this relates to receiving from their own congregation.

It is a dangerous things for God's ministers to seek to gain from heir ministry - to "teach for hire" or prophecy "for money." Worse to practice this and then teach it to others as with the Prosperity Gospel.

Paul warns Timothy against "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." (**1 Timothy 6:5-8**)

Micah 3:12 - "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest."

Jerusalem was reduced to a heap of rubbish after the invasion of the Babylonians, but was not plowed under.

Jesus added to this prophecy:

- **Matthew 24:1-2** - "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.""

Jewish writers as well as Jerome affirm that the Temple Mount and all Jerusalem was plowed up by Titus. According to Seneca, this practice was to signify the utter destruction of a city, and that the city was no more to be rebuilt and inhabited.

Then in **chapter 4:1-5**, Micah describes a new Temple (and the New Jerusalem) where all people will worship in a time of complete peace, in complete contentment.

In **Isaiah 2:2** it is said, "and all nations shall flow unto it"

Micah 4:3 - "...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

The rabbis put this in the age of Messiah, when He personally will teach us his ways and judge among the peoples, and it will be seen fully when history is finally over and there is a new heaven and new earth. But we glimpse it in the kingdom of God now, in the teachings and the presence of Jesus.

The Talmud (Babylonian Talmud, Sabbath, fol. 63. 1.) puts all this in the days of the Messiah.

Micah 4:4 - "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it."

A proverbial phrase, expressive of the greatest tranquillity, security, and enjoyment, with no need for protection from walled cities or towns.