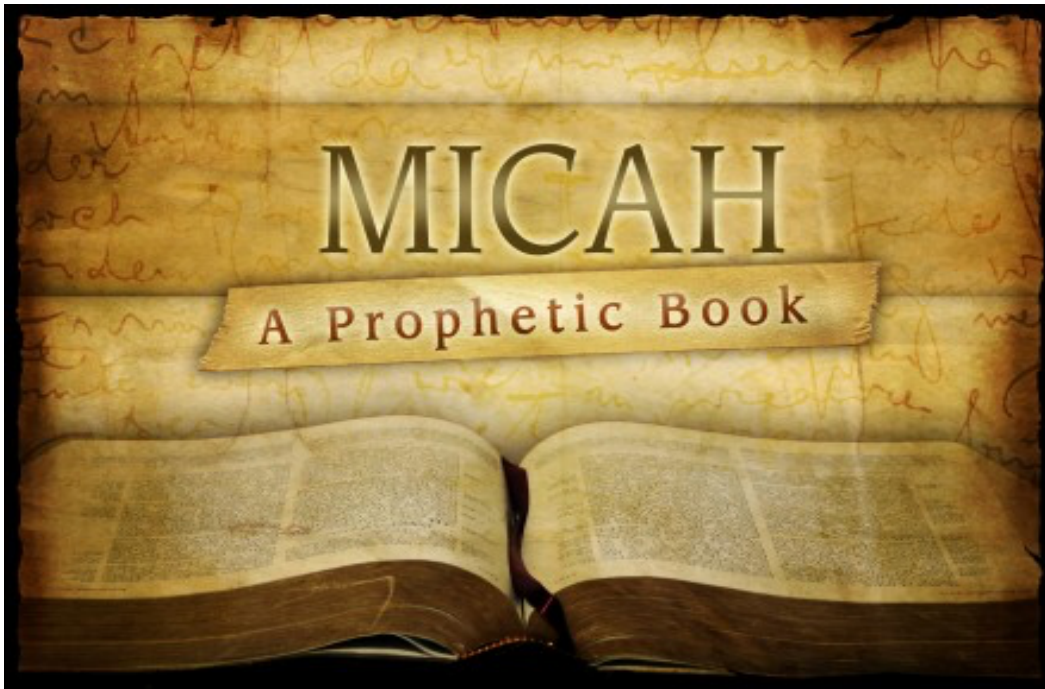


ON THEIR BACKS,  
AT THEIR HEAD  
MICAH 2



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

*A Scriptorium Study from*  
**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

On Their Backs, At Their Head: Micah 2  
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## Micah 2: Introduction

Hard times were coming for the people of God. Having rejected God and His Law, they forfeited the promises of His covenant, including the promise of dwelling in the land. God was moving to see to it that His people realized all the consequences of their foolish choices.

But He would not leave them scattered and in despair. In due course, God promised, He would gather and assemble them once again, and send a King to lead them as His people once again. King Cyrus would return the Jews to Israel, and he may have been in view here. But King Jesus is the King Who would break out God's flock from their captivity to sin and disperse Him and His Good News to all the earth.

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We hope you find this study of Ecclesiastes a challenging and stretching experience of journeying more deeply into the Word of God. Thank you for joining us.

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## 1 Sin's Gate

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 46.1-3*

God is our refuge and strength,  
A very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear,  
Even though the earth be removed,  
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;  
*Though* its waters roar *and* be troubled,  
*Though* the mountains shake with its swelling.

*Sing Psalm 46.1-3*

(St. Chrysostom: [\*We Have Not Known Thee As We Ought\*](#))

God is our refuge and our strength; He is our help in times of need.  
Thus though the earth beneath us should change, the sea consume the mountain range;  
waters may roar with raging speed; yet God will rescue us at length.

*Read Micah 2.1, 2*

*Preparation*

1. Who is the object of God's woe?
2. What have they done?

*Meditation*

Micah 2 expands on Micah 1 a bit, providing more clarity concerning the specific sins of Israel and Judah and more detail concerning what lies ahead. Chapter 2 begins with a general condemnation of all who do evil (1-5). He does not single out either Israel or Judah. Rather, his words seem to be pointed toward the rulers of God's people, who show themselves to be enemies of God by seizing lands and repudiating the Lord's apportionment for His people. He further singles out those entrusted with Word of the Lord and condemns them for their unfaithfulness (6-11). Finally, another promise of restoration, this time with Israel being led like a flock by her King and Lord (12, 13).

Today's verses show us the root of Israel's (and Judah's) rebellion: covetousness. Covetousness poisons the heart and skews the mind to make sinful plans (v. 1). It sets us thinking only about gain and not about giving, self rather than service. We look at the things and conditions of this world, and the people around us, and all sense of contentment or gratitude evaporates. All we want is more (v. 2).

Covetousness is the gate to all sin, for when the door of the heart is flung open to wrong affections, desire turns inward, lust rushes in, and all thought of obedience to God gives way to selfish ambition and gain. Covetousness compromises the heart before anything we do or speak, thus ensuring that our words and deeds will be sinful. Through the prophet, God will be on His people's backs about giving in to covetousness.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

"Covetousness poisons the heart and skews the mind to make sinful plans." Indeed, it does.

Early on in the history of humankind, (we had only made it to chapter 6 in Genesis), the LORD saw that "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart

was only evil continually” (Gen. 6.5) This is what precipitated the Flood.

Then we got another chance. God gave us strict guidelines by which to conduct our lives to be in harmony with Him and others. These were summed up by: “You shall not covet...anything that *is* your neighbor’s” (Ex. 20.17).

He then gave us many words of wisdom to lead us in following His commands:

“Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn away from it and pass on. For they do not sleep unless they have done evil...” (Prov. 4.14-16).

“To do evil *is* like sport to a fool, but a man of understanding has wisdom” (Prov. 10.23).

“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil...” (Is. 5.20).

“Seek good and not evil, that you may live...” (Amos 5.14).

“And [Jesus] said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses” (Lk. 12.15).

“For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed” (Jn. 3.20).

But most of all, we do not want to enter sin’s gate because “the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again” (2 Cor. 5.14,15). And because He has said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” And “you are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (Jn. 14.15; 15.14).

By this love we are compelled, constrained, controlled, and urged on to repent of covetousness, and live for Christ alone.

#### *Reflection*

1. How would you explain covetousness to a new believer?
2. Why do we say that covetousness is the gate for all other sin?
3. How can keeping our eyes focused on the Lord and His Word help us to avoid falling into covetousness?

*Here the Prophet describes to the life the character and manners of those who were given to gain, and were intent only on raising themselves. He says, that in their beds they were meditating on iniquity, and devising wickedness. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Micah 2.1*

#### *Closing Prayer: Psalm 46.4-11*

Give thanks to God for His constant care and provision. Cultivate contentedness in prayer, and rest in the sovereign power of God to meet all your needs.

#### *Psalm 46.4-11*

(St. Chrysostom: [\*We Have Not Known Thee As We Ought\*](#))

God’s everlasting, joyous grace gladdens the city where He dwells.

Safely in Him, we will not be moved; when morning dawns, His love will be proved.

Fears and distresses Jesus dispels for His beloved, chosen race.

Kingdoms arise and rage and roar, threat’ning the earth with sore distress;

nations may fall, earth melt away, His Word is yet our hope and stay.  
God is among us, ever to bless; He is our stronghold evermore.

Come see the works of God's Right Hand! He breaks the nations of the earth,  
shatters their foolish weapons and pride, sets all their sinful strength aside;  
Them He will show His infinite worth as they before His judgment stand.

Rest in the Lord and be at peace, all who are mired in sore travail:  
Lift up our God, praise Jesus our Lord; proclaim to all the earth His Word!  
God is our stronghold, never to fail: thus may our hope and joy increase!

## 2 The Promise Forfeited

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 68.1-4*

Let God arise,  
Let His enemies be scattered;  
Let those also who hate Him flee before Him.  
As smoke is driven away,  
So drive them away;  
As wax melts before the fire,  
So let the wicked perish at the presence of God.  
But let the righteous be glad;  
Let them rejoice before God;  
Yes, let them rejoice exceedingly.  
Sing to God, sing praises to His name;  
Extol Him who rides on the clouds,  
By His name YAH,  
And rejoice before Him.

*Sing Psalm 68.1-3, 32, 33*

(O Store Gud: [\*How Great Thou Art\*](#))

Let God arise, let all Your foes be scattered! Let those who hate You flee before Your face!  
As smoke dissolves, as wax in flame is shattered, let all the wicked perish in disgrace!

*Refrain v. 32, 33*

Sing to the Lord, O kingdoms of the earth! Ancient of Days – praise Him on high!  
Behold He speaks; His Word is going forth; Ancient of Days – praise Him on high!

Lord, let Your righteous ones exult in glory, let us rejoice and praise Your holy Name!  
Now let us sing the Savior's old, old story – Who life to deserts brings, we now proclaim!

*Refrain*

*Read Micah 2.3-5*

*Preparation*

1. What was God preparing against His “family”?
2. How would the people respond?

*Meditation*

The mention of “boundaries” in verse 5 suggests the time of the original settlement of the land of Canaan in the book of Judges. Then, lots were cast, and boundaries were determined where each tribe would live and work to realize the promises of God.

But now God was preparing a “disaster” against His people (“family”, v. 3). There would be no escaping the yoke of captivity He was about to fix on them (v. 5), bowing their heads in shame. The people would take up a lamentation for their plight (v. 4). They would bemoan the fact that they had been “destroyed”; their “heritage” was changed and “removed” (v. 4). Their fields would be turned over to foreigners (v. 4), and no one would set boundaries for them in the land of promise (v. 5). Had God revoked His promises?

Typically, the people blame God for their troubles (“He has...”, twice in v. 4). And indeed He had.

But His bringing this judgment against them was no change in His thinking. God had threatened such consequences if His people turned away from Him (cf. Deut. 28.15ff.).

God had not revoked His promises. The people of God had forfeited them.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

“God had not revoked His promises. The people of God had forfeited them.”

The people forfeited them, God kept His promise, and they blamed Him for it

As Proverbs 19.3 tells us, “The foolishness of a man twists his way, and his heart frets against the LORD.”

How true that is. It was true then, and it is true now.

But we have a choice. It is too late for the Israelites of Micah’s day, but it is not too late for us.

We can decide differently. Instead of taking on ourselves the yoke of disaster, we have been invited to bear the yoke with Jesus, in obedience to Him. As He said, “Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light” (Matt. 11 28-30).

The promises of God are too precious to forfeit.

#### *Reflection*

1. How would you explain God’s promises to a new believer?
2. What are we supposed to do with the promises of God?
3. If we ignore His promises, or turn away from them, what can we expect?

*They then who refuse to obey God, when he requires from them a voluntary service, will at length be drawn by force, not to undergo the yoke, but the burden which will altogether overwhelm them. Whosoever then will not willingly submit to God's yoke, must at length undergo the great and dreadful burden prepared for the unnamable.* John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Micah 2.3*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 68.19, 20, 26-35*

Thank God for His salvation, and for all His precious and very great promises. Commit this day to living in the promises of God and for His glory.

*Sing Psalm 68.19, 20, 26-35*

(O Store Gud: [\*How Great Thou Art\*](#))

Blessed be the Lord, our burden daily bearing, O God, our God, our Savior and our King!  
With us salvation and deliv’rance sharing, He life from death His people daily brings.

*Refrain v. 32, 33*

Sing to the Lord, O kingdoms of the earth! Ancient of Days – praise Him on high!  
Behold He speaks; His Word is going forth; Ancient of Days – praise Him on high!

Bless God in all His holy congregations, even the Lord, the Fountainhead of grace!  
He calls His people forth from all the nations and gathers them before His glorious face.

*Refrain v. 32, 33*

To You, O God, are strength and exaltation; You fill the skies and dwell in holy awe!  
To us You give strength, pow'r and full salvation, blessed be Your Name, our strong, majestic God!

*Refrain*

### 3 Good Words

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 74.8, 9*

They said in their hearts,  
“Let us destroy them altogether.”  
They have burned up all the meeting places of God in the land.  
We do not see our signs;  
*There is no longer any prophet;*  
Nor *is there* any among us who knows how long.

*Sing Psalm 74.8, 9*

(Rockingham: [\*O Lord Most High, with All My Heart\*](#))

Within their hearts they plot and scheme: “Now let us finally bring them down!”  
Our signs and prophets all are gone; they burn our churches to the ground.

*Read Micah 2.6, 7*

*Preparation*

1. What were the people saying to God’s prophets?
2. What effect did this have on God’s words?

*Meditation*

A famous “Pogo” cartoon strip once had the main character saying, “We have met the enemy, and he is us.”

God is about to describe the people of Israel and Judah as His enemy, but before He does that (v. 8), He wants them to know why: They have turned away from the Word of God (v. 6). They have let their preachers know that they don’t want to hear hard words, convicting sermons, or messages from the Lord insisting they should change. If they must be preached to, let it be in agreeable words, easily understood and received.

In so doing, God’s people were trying to restrict His Spirit, Who comes to convict and to edify His people. But the Spirit of God cannot be restricted (v. 7); and the words God speaks through His prophets, if they will not be received for the good He intends, will bend and break all who resist them (v. 7).

God’s words are always good, but only if we receive them for uprightness. The word “upright” (Hebrew, יָשָׁר *yashar*) points back to the day when God made men and women in His image, in perfect communion with Him, ready to bring His goodness to light in the world (cf. Eccl. 7.29). In forfeiting the promises of God, Israel and Judah forfeited the goodness they could know from His Word. And they did this because they no longer desired to be upright before Him.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

People often make God out to be something that He clearly is not (Ps. 50.21). They create a God in their own weak image and allow Him to condone all their sins. They are to be pitied because their God is “Too Small”, as J. B. Philips wrote. Who wants to serve someone so fallible as we?

This is what the people of Micah’s day were dealing with too. They said to their prophets, “Don’t prattle on about our sins! We don’t really want to hear about it. If you can’t say something pleasing to

us, don't say anything at all." (Thumper Theology)

Then God answered them (Mic. 2.7):

"Is the Spirit of the LORD restricted?

*Are* these His doings?

Do not My words do good to him who walks uprightly?"

God is infinite and perfect. His perfection is exhibited through blessings and judgments; and these for the purpose of leading us in a way that pleases Him. As this same verse is rendered in The Living Bible:

"Is that the right reply for you to make, O House of Jacob?

Do you think the Spirit of the Lord likes to talk to you so roughly?

No! His threats are for your good, to get you on the path again."

"You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forever more" (Ps. 16.11). Good words. Words to follow and embrace.

#### *Reflection*

1. God's Word aims to make us upright. What does that mean?
2. How can you tell when you're being sucked into "Thumper Theology"? What should you do?
3. What does the Holy Spirit want to do in your life (2 Cor. 3.12-18)? What will that require of you?

*Since they say, "Prophecy not," God will take them at their word, and their sin shall be their punishment. Let the physician no longer attend the patient that will not be healed. Those are enemies, not only to God, but to their country, who silence good ministers, and stop the means of grace. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Micah 2.6*

#### *Closing Prayer: Psalm 74.10-23*

Pray that God will free us from our stubbornness and sin, remember His covenant, shed new light into our darkness, drive back our foes, and revive us for His glory.

#### *Sing Psalm 74.10-23*

(Rockingham: [O Lord Most High, with All My Heart](#))

How long, O Lord, must they prevail and mock and spurn Your holy Name?

Why stay Your hand? Deploy it now, and bring Your foes to lasting shame!

Our God is King from long ago, Who works deliv'rance in the land;  
He split the sea, He crushed His foes; against Him none can ever stand.

You opened the springs, fresh water flowed; to You belong both day and night.  
You bound the seasons and the earth, and gave the sun its glorious light.

Remember this, O Lord, our God: a foolish people spurns Your Name.  
Deliver not Your flock to them, nor leave Your holy ones to shame.

Your covenant recall, renew, for violence spreads throughout the earth;  
The poor and needy rescue, Lord, and we shall sing Your matchless worth!

Arise O God, and plead Your cause! See how the fools reproach Your Name.  
Their voices quell, their uproar still, who Your majestic grace defame.

## 4 Enemies of God

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 77.1-3*

I cried out to God with my voice—  
To God with my voice;  
And He gave ear to me.  
In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;  
My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing;  
My soul refused to be comforted.  
I remembered God, and was troubled;  
I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.

*Psalm 77.1-3*

(Leoni: [\*The God of Abraham Praise\*](#))

My voice to God shall rise; I seek Him on His throne.  
In days and nights of trouble I seek God alone!  
When I remember Him, then am I sore distressed!  
My spirit faints and longs to find in Him its rest.

*Read Micah 2.8-11*

*Preparation*

1. How does God refer to His people in these verses?
2. What made them so?

*Meditation*

By turning away from His Word (vv. 6, 7) God's people had forfeited His promises, rejected the call to uprightness, and become His enemies.

Not a good place to be.

We were all at one time enemies of God (Rom. 5.10). What does that mean? They are enemies of God who take advantage of others, rather than love them as God commands (Mic. 2.8). The enemies of God have little compassion for the neediest people in their society (v. 9). They want what they want, and they don't care who suffers in the process of getting their way (vv. 8, 9). They are God's enemies who prefer to listen to lies and false-speaking spirits rather than the truth of His Word (v. 11). And they pursue worldly pleasures rather than God and His promises (v. 11).

All who make themselves enemies of God are on a path of defilement and destruction (v. 10). In this life they will know no permanent rest, for the rest our souls require can only be found in the Lord.

Pray for the enemies of God, that He might use us to make them His friends.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

One that is antagonistic to another; one seeking to injure, overthrow, or confound an opponent:  
That is how Merriam-Webster defines the word enemy.

God said, "Lately My people have risen up as an enemy..." (Mic. 2.8). So, God's people were antagonistic toward Him, seeking to injure, overthrow, and confound Him. That is NOT a good

look!

And how foolish. Who wants to be antagonistic to the Creator of the whole world? And really, who would like to step up and inflict injury upon the One Who loves you most? The One Who invented and created Power. This truly is NOT a good idea.

Instead of choosing to be an enemy of God, we can choose to be His friends. But we are only given this opportunity because God is full of mercy, grace, and love. “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. 5.8, 10).

We have been saved to live, so we will want to continue in our friendship with God. We will never again want to be His enemies. Jesus teaches us how to live in harmony with God. He said: “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (jn. 15.9-14).

#### *Reflection*

1. What does it say about God and His grace that He saved us when we were His *enemies*?
2. What can you do to keep from becoming an enemy of God again?
3. What does it require of us to cultivate friendship with the Lord?

*I regard the meaning to be, that they had risen up as against an enemy; that is that they had made God, their best father, their enemy, inasmuch as they had by their crimes provoked his displeasure. He then confirms this truth by saying, that they practiced robberies among themselves. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Micah 2.8*

#### *Closing Prayer: Psalm 77.7-20*

Pray that God’s people might repent of sin and seek the Lord daily for revival, renewal, and awakening.

#### *Psalm 77.7-20*

(Leoni: [\*The God of Abraham Praise\*](#))

O Lord, will You reject Your people without end?  
Has favor ceased, are You no more our heav’nly Friend?  
Your promise and Your love in anger are obscured;  
my sin has turned Your hand away, Your beauty blurred.

Now let us call to mind Your deeds and wonders, Lord,  
and meditate on all Your works and praise Your Word.  
Full holy is Your way, great God of earth and heav’n.  
To You, O God of strength and pow’r all praise be giv’n!

The waters and the deeps all tremble ‘neath Your hand.  
The clouds give forth, the sky resounds across the land.

Your lightning flashes forth and lights the earth around;  
we feel beneath our feet the trembling of the ground.

Your way leads through the sea; Your path the water parts.  
Your footprints are to us deep mysteries in our hearts.  
As then by Moses' hand and Aaron's law-filled voice,  
You led Your sheep, lead us that we may all rejoice!

## 5 “I Will...”

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 28.8, 9*

The LORD *is* their strength,  
And He *is* the saving refuge of His anointed.  
Save Your people,  
And bless Your inheritance;  
Shepherd them also,  
And bear them up forever.

*Sing Psalm 28.8, 9*

(Angel's Story: [\*O Jesus, I Have Promised\*](#))

Our strength are You, O Savior, our strong defense and sure.  
Anointed with Your favor, we rest in You secure.  
Save us, and bless us, Jesus, upon us turn Your face.  
With shepherd's care, Lord, keep us forever in Your grace.

*Read Micah 2.12*

*Preparation*

1. What did God promise do for His people?
2. To what did He compare them?

*Meditation*

The first two verbs in this verse are in a Hebrew form called an infinitive absolute. Translated literally, they would be “assembling I will assemble you” and “gathering I will gather you.” This is one way the Hebrew language expresses emphasis or certainty. Israel and Judah had become enemies of God; but God would not deny His good words to them. He will fulfill His covenant.

This verse looks ahead to two points in time. First is the restoration from captivity, when God would bring His people back to their land from their captivity in Babylon. He promises to gather them once again and to make them a large and boisterous flock, thriving in good pasture.

Beyond this, the prophecy looks forward to the days when God would gather Jews and Gentiles alike into the one flock of His Church (cf. Is. 54; Jn. 10.16). And even beyond this, a third assembling and gathering of God's flock may be in view, when He gathers them around His table for the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19).

Hard to believe? Perhaps. But God will surely do it.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

“I will surely assemble all of you...”

“I will surely gather the remnant...”

“I will put them together...” (Mic. 2.12)

God is promising to assemble and gather us, like sheep without a shepherd. “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd” (Matt. 9. 36).

God will surely do what needs to be done to gather us. And God's will is for us to be gathered and sanctified (1 Thess. 4.3). God wants His will to be done on earth as it is done in heaven (Matt. 6.10).

God will put us together and make us complete "in every good work to do His will, working in [us] what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ..." (Heb. 12.21).

God will keep His promises to His people because "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3.9).

God will surely do all that He has said He will do.

Will we?

We can live within God's will for us, we only need say, "I will". And we can prove it by doing His will for us: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12.2).

"Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!" (Rev. 19.9).

"I will." "I will."

#### *Reflection*

1. God's promises will not fail. Which of those promises most guides your daily life?
2. What is our role in helping to assemble and gather God's people?
3. How does your local church fulfill God's promise to assemble and gather His people?

*The verbs are emphatic, demonstrating the certainty of God's determination to bring to pass His good pleasure on His people (see Deut. 30:1-6). Earl Radmacher (1931-2014), NKJV Study Bible Note on Micah 2.12*

*Thank You, Lord, that Your promises are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness! Help me today to...*

#### *Closing Prayer: Psalm 28.1-7*

Thank and praise God that He hears your prayers and that He will bless, strengthen, and keep you through the coming day.

#### *Sing Psalm 28.1-7*

(Angel's Story: [\*O Jesus, I Have Promised\*](#))

I cry to You, our Savior, O, be not deaf to me!  
Lord, speak to me with favor, lest I should dying be.  
Hear now my supplications when for Your help I cry.  
Receive these, my oblations, before Your throne on high.

Lord, count me not among those who walk in sinful ways.  
With words of peace their tongue glows while evil fills their days.  
Your works they disregard, Lord, while evil fills their hands.  
Destroy them by Your Word, Lord, and let them no more stand.

Blessed be the Name of Jesus, for He will hear our prayer.  
His strength protects and shields us with mercy and with care.  
In You our heart rejoices; You help us by Your Word.  
To You we raise our voices to praise and thank You, Lord.

## 6 “...They Will”

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 110.1-3*

The LORD said to my Lord,  
“Sit at My right hand,  
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”  
The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.  
Rule in the midst of Your enemies!  
Your people *shall be* volunteers  
In the day of Your power;  
In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning,  
You have the dew of Your youth.

*Sing Psalm 110.1-3*

*(Aurelia: The Church’s One Foundation)*

“Sit by Me at My right hand,” the Lord says to my Lord,  
“until I make Your foot stand on all who hate Your Word.”  
From in His Church the Savior rules all His enemies;  
while those who know His favor go forth the Lord to please.

*Read Micah 2.13*

*Preparation*

1. What did Micah say the Lord’s flock would do?
2. Who would lead them in doing this?

*Meditation*

As God comes to assemble and gather His sheep into a boisterous flock (v. 12), they seem fairly bristling with energy. All they need is someone to set them loose and lead them out. And God has just the Man for that.

“The one who breaks open” is a clear reference to our Lord Jesus Christ. By His death He rent the veil separating us from the Presence of God and broke us free from the chains of sin that bound us for death. From His seat at the right hand of God, Jesus, with the Father, sent the Spirit into His people, energizing them to break out in all directions, just as we see in the book of Acts. Following their King, Who is also the LORD, the people of God will be contained and captive no more. Their breaking out into the world signals the coming of the Kingdom of God and the rule of Christ as depicted in Psalm 110.

First, of course, the people must go into exile, then, under the decree of Cyrus, be assembled again in the land. But no king will be established among them, and this is why we believe this passage looks beyond that first time of assembling and gathering to the assembling and gathering and breaking-out accomplished by Jesus and His Spirit in the last days (cf. Mic. 4.1, 2).

These are the times in which we live (cf. Acts 2.16, 17). Each day our King and Lord leads us to break out of our old lives into the new life in Christ He has given us by grace through faith. “They will,” says the Lord. Will we?

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

We will! And indeed, we must. How can we resist this invitation to action?

Jesus “breaks open” the gate so that we can “break out” from the imprisonment of sin; and thus we “pass through” the displeasure of God and “go out” to be free, as we are led by our King Jesus who “passes before” us and leads us out – “the LORD at their head” (Mic. 2.13).

And He leads us to freedom, true liberation to follow Him.

“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8.32).

“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (Jn. 8.36).

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8.2).

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage” (Gal. 5.1).

When we say, “I will”, God confirms His Presence with us. And our departure from sin is well-planned by the LORD of peace and order. “For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for the LORD will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard” (Is. 52.12).

“He has done all things well” (Mk. 7.37). Let’s go!

#### *Reflection*

1. How does Jesus “break us out” of our sin?
2. What’s the nature of the freedom that we have in Jesus? What threatens that freedom?
3. What does it mean for you to “break out” for Jesus, following our King today?

*... inasmuch as Christ says that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, (Matthew 11:12) they then mean that the people will have courageous leaders, whom nothing will stop from breaking through, and that they will also lead the whole people with them. They shall therefore go forth through the gate, and their king shall pass through. This also well agrees with the kingdom of Christ. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Micah 2.13*

#### *Closing Prayer: Psalm 110.4-7*

Pray that, as you go forth for the Lord this day, He will lead you and strengthen you for the work of the day.

#### *Sing Psalm 110.4-7*

*(Aurelia: The Church’s One Foundation)*

Filled with the Spirit’s power, in holy robes of love,  
from early morning’s hour they serve their Lord above.  
Christ reigns a priest forever, the King of Righteousness  
and King of Peace who ever His chosen ones will bless.

The Lord at Your right hand, Lord, in wrath shall shatter kings,  
when judgment by His strong Word He to the nations brings.  
Then, all His foes defeated, He takes His hard-won rest,  
in glorious triumph seated with us, redeemed and blessed!

## 7 Scattered, Gathered, Breaking Out

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 46.1-3*

God is our refuge and strength,  
A very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear,  
Even though the earth be removed,  
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;  
*Though* its waters roar *and* be troubled,  
*Though* the mountains shake with its swelling.

*Sing Psalm 46.1-3*

(St. Chrysostom: [\*We Have Not Known Thee As We Ought\*](#))

God is our refuge and our strength; He is our help in times of need.  
Thus though the earth beneath us should change, the sea consume the mountain range;  
waters may roar with raging speed, yet God will rescue us at length.

*Read Micah 2, meditate on verses 12, 13*

*Preparation*

1. How would you describe the mood at the beginning of Micah 2? At the end?
2. What does God threaten in the first part of the chapter? What does He promise at the end?

*Meditation*

The minor prophets, like Micah, are important for many reasons, not the least of which is that they condense the overall message of the prophets and thus help us in following the argument of some of the longer prophetic books, like Isaiah, Micah's contemporary.

Chapter 2 is a good example of this. In the first part of Micah 2 (vv. 1-11) God is on His people's backs, exposing their sin, reminding them of His sovereign power and goodness, and threatening them with judgment. He hasn't changed, but they have; and now they must suffer the consequences of having forfeited His promises and chosen their own way.

We see this same theme in all the prophets. God condemns the ingratitude, disobedience, and hardness of heart which characterize His people. But He doesn't just sit by and wring His hands, as it were. He acts to punish their transgressions, thus clearing the way for Him to restore them to their proper path (cf. Heb. 12.3-11).

So in the last two verses of Micah 2, God promises to assemble and gather His people again, making them a large and boisterous flock, ready to break out of captivity and bless the world. This, too, is a consistent message of all the other prophets. But the people need a Leader – a King Who can break them out of their sinfulness and set them free in His Presence. God was on their backs in verses 1-11; but He is at their head by the end of the chapter, promising deliverance, restoration, and breaking out to the world with the Good News of His mercy and grace.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

God never sends us out into strange places unknown to Him. He always goes before His people so that we know how to get there.

From the very beginning it has been thus:

“And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night” (Ex. 13.21).

“The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you...” (Deut. 1.30).

“And the LORD, He *is* the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed” (Deut. 31.8).

“I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron” (Is. 45.2).

“But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee” (Matt. 26.32; Mk. 14.28)).

“...go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him” (Matt. 28.7; Mk. 16.7)).

“I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also” (Jn. 14.2,3).

The people of Israel said to Joshua, their leader, “All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go” (Josh. 1.16).

Jesus is our leader. He has gone this way before. He is at the Head. He will never leave us nor forsake us.

Let us “break out” and “pass through” and “go out” and follow Him!

#### *Reflection*

1. Where is Jesus going before you today? Are you prepared for where He will lead you?
2. How should it encourage us to know that Jesus goes before us, paving the way in our walk with and work for Him?
3. Does God still get on the backs of His people? How?

*The Lord would not only bring them from captivity, and multiply them, but the Lord Jesus would open their way to God, by taking upon him the nature of man, and by the work of his Spirit in their hearts, breaking the fetters of Satan. Thus he has gone before, and the people follow, breaking, in his strength, through the enemies that would stop their way to heaven. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Micah 2.12, 13*

#### *Closing Prayer: Psalm 46.4-11*

Rejoice in the Lord's Presence! Call on Him to be at work within you today, to will and do according to His good pleasure – that He might lead and rule over you, and empower you to “break out” for Him.

#### *Sing Psalm 46.4-11*

(St. Chrysostom: [\*We Have No Known Thee As We Ought\*](#))

God's everlasting, joyous grace gladdens the city where He dwells.

Safely in Him, we will not be moved; when morning dawns, His love will be proved.

Fears and distresses Jesus dispels for His beloved, chosen race.

Kingdoms arise and rage and roar, threat'ning the earth with sore distress.

Nations may fall, earth melt away, His Word is yet our hope and stay.

God is among us, ever to bless; He is our stronghold evermore.

Come see the works of God's Right Hand! He breaks the nations of the earth,  
shatters their foolish weapons and pride, sets all their sinful strength aside.  
Then He will show His infinite worth as they before His judgment stand.

Rest in the Lord and be at peace, all who are mired in sore travail:  
Lift up our God, praise Jesus our Lord; proclaim to all the earth His Word!  
God is our stronghold, never to fail: thus may our hope and joy increase!

*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. Does God still get on His people's backs in our day? Explain.
2. What can cause us to forfeit the precious and very great promises of God (2 Pet. 1.4)?
3. *From* what does Jesus break us out? *For* what?
4. What does it mean to go into your life each day with King Jesus at your head?
5. What's the most important lesson you have learned from Micah 2? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

*For Prayer:*

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