



Handout for week of 12/17/18 Luke 1: 39-55 & Micah 5: 1-4

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Micah 5: 1 But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from ancient days. 2 Therefore will He give them up, until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth; then the residue of his brethren shall return with the children of Israel. 3 And he shall stand, and shall feed his flock in the strength of HaShem, in the majesty of the name of HaShem his G-d; and they shall abide, for then shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. 4 And this shall be peace: when the Assyrian shall come into our land,

COMMENTARY:

<a href="#">c. 732-540</a>	621 Hilkiyah finds Deuteronomy text Editing of OT material  Prophecies of Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk	587 Babylonians conquer Judah, destroy Temple, deport people to Babylon	* Persia: Zoroaster * Greece: Aesop's <i>Fables</i> ; Sappho; laws of Solon
<a href="#">c. 536-480</a>	Building of Second Temple Prophecy of Zechariah, Haggai	538 Cyrus allows Israelites to return to Jerusalem; Judah a Persian province	* India: Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha (c. 563-483) * China: Confucius (c. 551-479) * Greece: Archaic period

Micah was thus a contemporary of the Prophet Isaias Ephrathah\_ as a personal name it means "fruitful".

In the second part (4-5), we have a discourse announcing the future conversion of the nations to the Law of Yahweh and describing the Messianic peace, an era to be inaugurated by the triumph of Israel over all its enemies, symbolized by the Assyrians. In 5:1 sq. (Hebr., 2 sq.), the prophet introduces the Messianic king whose place of origin is to be Bethlehem-Ephrata; Yahweh will only give up his people "till the time wherein she that travailed shall bring forth", an allusion to the well-known passage of Isaiah 7:14. Several recent critics have maintained that chapters 4-5, either wholly or in part, are of post-exilic origin. But their arguments, principally based on considerations inspired by certain theories on the history of the Messianic doctrine, are not convincing. Neither is it necessary to suppose that in 4:8, the comparison of the citadel of Sion with the "tower of the flock" alludes to the ruinous condition of Judea and Jerusalem at the time of the composition of the address; this comparison merely refers to the moral situation held towards the rest of the country by the capital, whence Yahweh is presumed to keep watch. The connection of ideas, it is true, is interrupted in 4:10, and in 5:4-5 (Vulg. 5-6), both of which may be later additions. A characteristic trait of Micah's style in chapter 1 is found in the puns on the names of localities, and it is noticeable that an entirely similar pun can be seen in 5:1 (Heb., 4:14), particularly when the LXX version is taken into account. The reading supposed by the LXX suggests a very satisfactory interpretation of this difficult passage: "And now, surround thyself with a wall (gadher), Beth-Gader." The difference of tone and contents clearly show that 4-5 must have been composed in other circumstances than 1-3. They probably date from shortly after the fall of Samaria in 722 B. C. In 1-3 Micah had expressed the fear that after the conquest of Samaria the Assyrian army would invade Judea; but ?Yahweh withdrew His threat (Jeremiah 16:19), and the enemy left Palestine without attacking Jerusalem. Chapters 4-5 have preserved us an echo of the joy caused in Jerusalem by the removal of the danger.