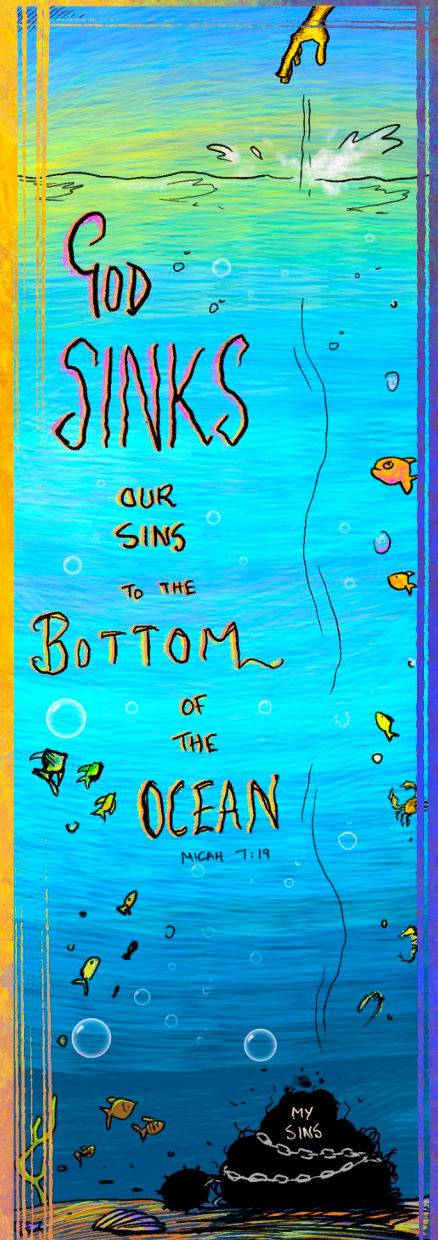
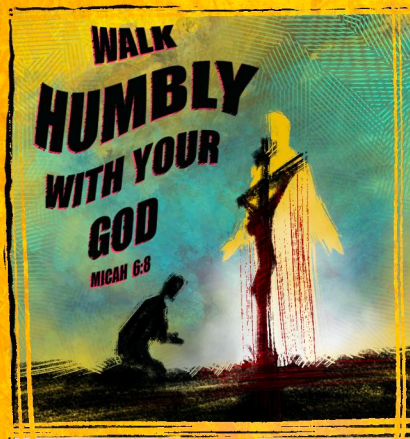


Through the Bible

MICAH

Zac Poonen



Illustrations by Vinay Kuruvilla

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CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

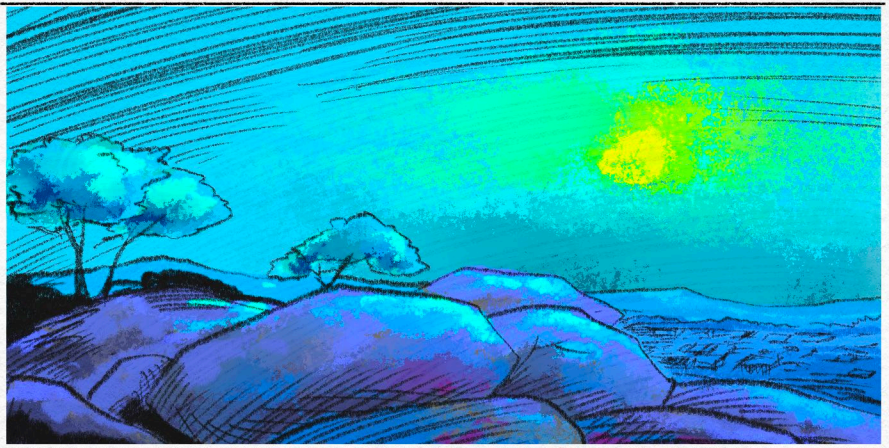
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MICAH

MICAH LIVED AT THE SAME TIME AS ISAIAH. HE PROPHESED TO BOTH ISRAEL AND JUDAH. HE PREACHED PRIMARILY TO THE **RELIGIOUS** LEADERS IN ISRAEL AND JUDAH WHO HAD **MISUSED** THEIR **PRIVILEGES** IN SERVING GOD AND **EXPLOITED** THE **POOR** PEOPLE IN THEIR CONGREGATIONS EXACTLY LIKE MANY **CHRISTIAN** LEADERS EXPLOIT POOR PEOPLE **TODAY**.



IT IS AMAZING TO SEE HOW MANY OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS HAD A CONCERN FOR THESE **POOR** PEOPLE IN ISRAEL AND JUDAH WHO WERE BEING **DECEIVED** AND LED ASTRAY BY **COVETOUS, SELFISH, PROUD** LEADERS. IT IS TRUE THAT THE LORD HAS PERMITTED THOSE WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO GET THEIR LIVING FROM THE GOSPEL (1 CORINTHIANS 9:14). BUT IT IS TOTALLY WRONG FOR A PREACHER TO GET HIS LIVING FROM PEOPLE WHO EARN **LESS** THAN HIM... TO TAKE TITHES FROM PEOPLE WHO EARN SO LITTLE AND LIVE AT A STANDARD MANY TIMES **HIGHER** THAN THOSE WHO GAVE THEM THE MONEY.



A CHRISTIAN WORKER MUST NEVER RECEIVE MONEY FOR HIS **PERSONAL** NEEDS, FROM ANYONE WHO EARN **LESS** THAN HIM. **POOR** PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO GIVE MONEY FOR THE **LORD'S** WORK. BUT IF THEY GIVE **YOU** MONEY, YOU MUST PUT IT INTO THE **OFFERING** BOX FOR THE **LORD'S** WORK

JESUS RECEIVED MONEY FROM SOME WHO **SUPPORTED** HIS MINISTRY (LUKE 8:1-3). BUT HE NEVER USED THAT MONEY TO LIVE IN **GRAND** STYLE. THERE WAS PLENTY OF MONEY IN **JUDAS** ISCARIOT'S BAG AND **JESUS** COULD HAVE **USED** IT AS HE LIKED. BUT HE WOULD **NOT** USE A **POOR** MAN'S MONEY TO LIVE IN A **HOTEL (INN)** THAT THAT **POOR** PERSON HIMSELF COULD **NOT AFFORD**. SO HE SLEPT UNDER THE **TREES** IN THE MOUNT OF OLIVES AT TIMES (JOHN 7:53 TO 8:2). THERE IS SOMETHING WE CAN LEARN FROM HIS EXAMPLE.



THE LORD SAYS, "I WILL REWARD YOUR **EVIL** WITH **EVIL**. YOU WON'T BE **ABLE** TO **ESCAPE**" (2:3). BUT THE PEOPLE SAID, "**DON'T** SAY SUCH THINGS. MOST OF GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE **NEVER** CARED TO LISTEN TO GOD'S **TRUE** PROPHETS WHO TELL THEM THE **TRUTH**. **TRUE** PROPHETS WILL NEVER BE **POPULAR**. THEY WON'T BE **ABLE** TO MAKE **MONEY**. THEY WILL BE **DESPISED** AND **REJECTED** LIKE THESE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS WERE.



IN SPITE OF ALL THIS, THE LORD STILL TOLD ISRAEL, "I WILL GATHER A **FEW** OF YOU WHO ARE LEFT AND I WILL BRING YOU **TOGETHER**" (2:12). MOST OF THE PROPHETS PROPHESIED THAT THERE WOULD BE A **REMNANT** OF PEOPLE WHOM GOD WOULD BRING **BACK TO JERUSALEM** FROM BABYLON. THIS IS TRUE EVEN TODAY. EVEN THOUGH **MOST** OF CHRISTENDOM IS IN A **BACK-SLIPPEN** CONDITION, THERE IS A **REMNANT** OF **GOD-FEARING** PEOPLE ON EARTH WHO ARE **WITNESSES** TO THE **TRUTH**.



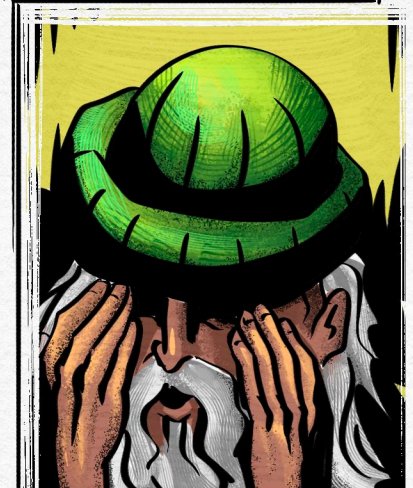
IF YOU ARE A GOD-FEARING PERSON, YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR THAT **REMNANT** WHEREVER YOU GO. LOOK FOR THOSE WHO ARE **SINCERELY** SEEKING AFTER GOD AND WHO ARE **LEAVING BABYLONIAN** SYSTEMS. THEY **WON'T** BE FOUND IN ANY **ONE** DENOMINATION. IN **ONE** TOWN THEY MAY BE FOUND IN **ONE** CHURCH. AND IN **ANOTHER** TOWN, THEY MAY **NOT** BE FOUND IN THE **BRANCH** OF THAT **FIRST CHURCH**. THERE IS NO "REMNANT DENOMINATION" ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD TODAY -- ONLY **LOCAL** "REMNANT CHURCHES". SO IN EVERY PLACE, YOU MUST **ASK**, "LORD, WHERE ARE **YOUR** PEOPLE GATHERING IN THIS PLACE?" AND **HE** WILL **LEAD** YOU TO THEM.



HE THEN SAYS "LISTEN, YOU LEADERS OF ISRAEL -- YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO KNOW RIGHT FROM WRONG. YET YOU ARE THE VERY ONES WHO **HATE** GOOD AND LOVE EVIL; YOU **SKIN** MY PEOPLE AND STRIP THEM TO THE BONE... AND **THEN** YOU **PLEAD** WITH THE LORD FOR HIS HELP IN TIMES OF **TROUBLE**! DO YOU REALLY EXPECT HIM TO LISTEN? HE WILL LOOK THE **OTHER WAY**!"



YOU WHO CRY "**PEACE**" TO THOSE WHO GIVE YOU FOOD AND **THREATEN** THOSE WHO WILL **NOT PAY**! THIS IS GOD'S MESSAGE TO YOU: 'THE **NIGHT** WILL CLOSE ABOUT YOU AND CUT OFF ALL YOUR VISIONS; **DARKNESS** WILL COVER YOU WITH NEVER A WORD FROM GOD. HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF. 2600 YEARS AGO, PREACHERS LOVED THOSE WHO GAVE THEM LARGE **GIFTS**, AND PROPHESIED **COMFORTING** MESSAGES TO THEM. THE SAME THING IS HAPPENING TODAY!! THEY PROPHESIED **FALSELY**, CLAIMING TO HAVE SEEN **VISIONS** FROM GOD, JUST LIKE MANY **DECEIVERS** DO TODAY. AT LAST THEY WILL **COVER YOUR FACES** IN **SHAME** AND ADMIT THAT THEIR MESSAGES WERE **NOT** FROM GOD.





MICAH WAS FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT AND **FEARLESS** IN REBUKING SUCH FALSE PROPHETS: "I AM **FILLED** WITH POWER, WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD, FEARLESSLY ANNOUNCING GOD'S PUNISHMENT ON ISRAEL FOR HER SINS." (3:8).

THAT MAY **SOUND** LIKE **BOASTING**, BUT IT WAS **NOT**. MICAH WAS DRAWING A **CONTRAST** BETWEEN HIM AND THE OTHER PREACHERS OF HIS TIME.



CENTURIES LATER, THE APOSTLE **PAUL** ALSO DREW SUCH A **CONTRAST** BETWEEN HIM AND OTHERS. PAUL SAID, "I PREACHED GOD'S **GOOD NEWS** TO YOU **WITHOUT** CHARGING YOU **ANYTHING**. WHY? I DO IT TO CUT OUT THE **GROUND** FROM UNDER THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BOAST THAT THEY ARE DOING GOD'S WORK IN JUST THE SAME WAY WE ARE. GOD NEVER SENT THOSE MEN AT ALL; THEY ARE "**PHONIES**" WHO HAVE **FOOLED** YOU INTO THINKING THEY ARE CHRIST'S APOSTLES." (2 CORINTHIANS 11:7--13). PAUL DID NOT SERVE GOD FOR **MONEY** LIKE THE **FALSE** APOSTLES OF HIS TIME AND LIKE MOST PREACHERS TODAY.



MICAH HAD A LOT TO SAY TO THOSE WHO PREACHED FOR MONEY. "LISTEN TO ME, YOU LEADERS OF ISRAEL WHO **HATE** JUSTICE AND **LOVE** UNFAIRNESS, AND FILL JERUSALEM WITH **MURDER** AND SIN OF EVERY KIND -- YOU LEADERS WHO TAKE **BRIBES**; YOU PRIESTS AND PROPHETS WHO WON'T PREACH AND PROPHECY UNTIL YOU'RE **PAID**. (AND YET YOU FAWN UPON THE LORD AND SAY, "**ALL** IS WELL -- THE LORD IS **HERE** AMONG US. **NO** HARM CAN COME TO US.") IT IS BECAUSE OF **YOU** THAT JERUSALEM WILL BE **PLOWED** LIKE A FIELD AND BECOME A **HEAP OF RUBBLE**" (3:9--12).



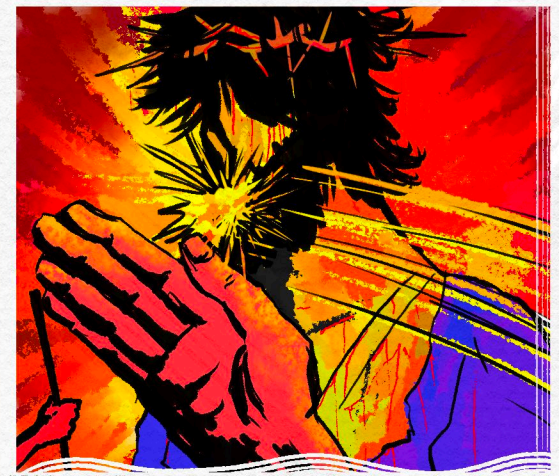
A SERVANT OF THE LORD IS ENTITLED TO RECEIVE **VOLUNTARY** GIFTS GIVEN TO HIM. BUT THERE IS A VAST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THAT AND BEING PAID A **SALARY** FOR "SERVING GOD" YOU CAN EXPECT A SALARY BUT YOU CAN'T EXPECT A GIFT.



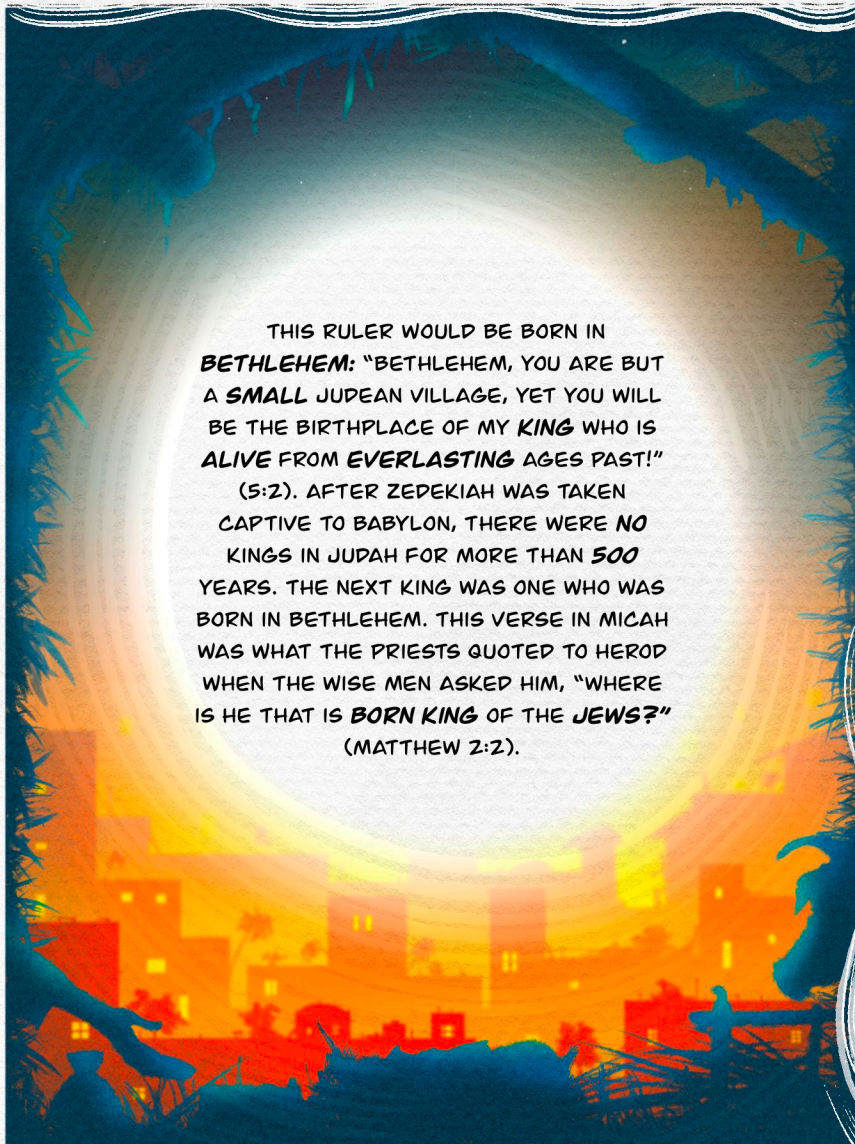
IN THE FIRST SEVEN VERSES OF CHAPTER 4, MICAH SPEAKS OF THE **MILLENNIAL REIGN** OF **CHRIST**. FOR THE FIRST TIME, MICAH **PROPHESIES** HERE ABOUT THE **FUTURE**.



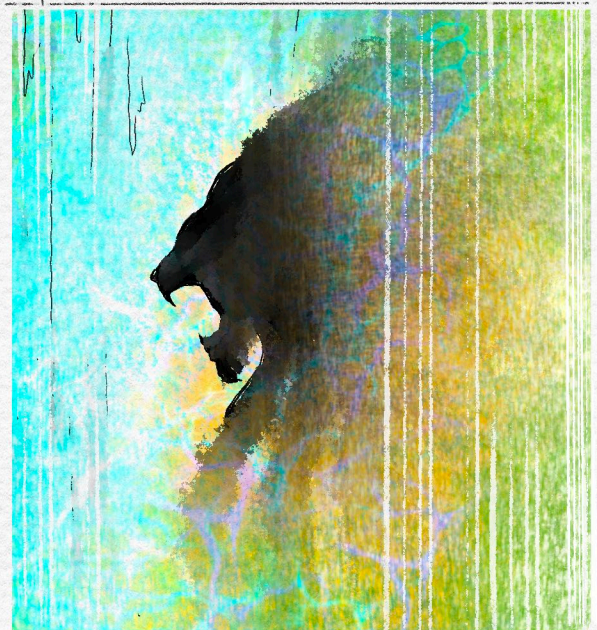
BUT BEFORE THAT HAPPENS, MICAH PROPHESES THE **BABYLONIAN** CAPTIVITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE: "O PEOPLE OF ZION, YOU MUST **LEAVE** THIS CITY AND LIVE IN THE FIELDS; YOU WILL BE SENT **FAR AWAY** INTO **EXILE** IN **BABYLON**. (4:10). MICAH PROPHESED THIS **100 YEARS BEFORE** IT ACTUALLY HAPPENED -- THAT BABYLON WHICH WAS THEN A **SMALL**, UNKNOWN COUNTRY WOULD **BECOME** A **SUPER-POWER** AND TAKE JUDAH CAPTIVE.



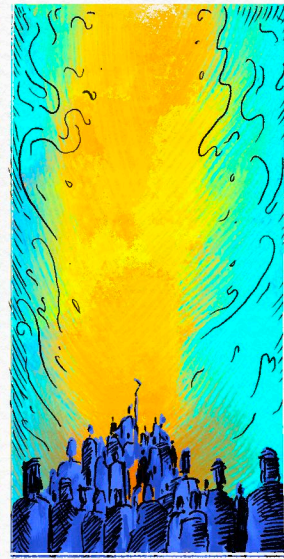
CHAPTER 5:1, IS A **DUAL PROPHECY** -- FIRST ABOUT **ZEDEKIAH**, THE **LAST** KING OF JUDAH, WHO WOULD BE TAKEN CAPTIVE INTO BABYLON: "WITH A ROD THEY WILL **SMITE** THE JUDGE (RULER) OF ISRAEL ON THE CHEEK." SECONDLY, ABOUT THE **TRUE KING** OF ISRAEL -- **JESUS** -- WHO WOULD BE **SMITTEN** ON HIS **CHEEK**.



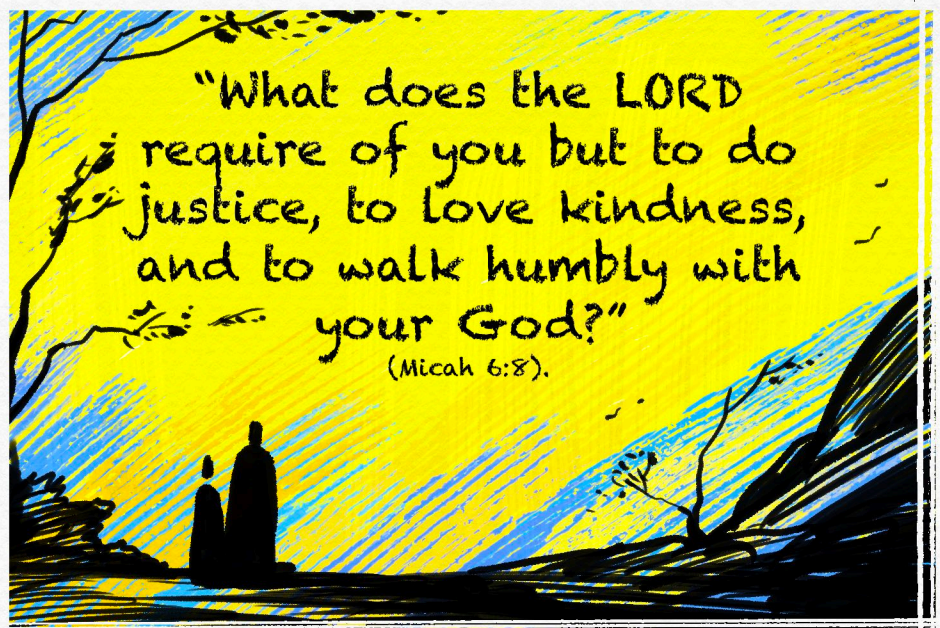
THIS RULER WOULD BE BORN IN **BETHLEHEM**: "BETHLEHEM, YOU ARE BUT A **SMALL** JUDEAN VILLAGE, YET YOU WILL BE THE BIRTHPLACE OF MY **KING** WHO IS **ALIVE FROM EVERLASTING AGES PAST!**" (5:2). AFTER ZEDEKIAH WAS TAKEN CAPTIVE TO BABYLON, THERE WERE **NO** KINGS IN JUDAH FOR MORE THAN **500** YEARS. THE NEXT KING WAS ONE WHO WAS BORN IN BETHLEHEM. THIS VERSE IN MICAH WAS WHAT THE PRIESTS QUOTED TO HEROD WHEN THE WISE MEN ASKED HIM, "WHERE IS HE THAT IS **BORN KING OF THE JEWS?**" (MATTHEW 2:2).



THEN MICAH SPEAKS ABOUT THE REMNANT. "THE REMNANT OF JACOB WILL BE AMONG MANY PEOPLES LIKE **DEW** FROM THE LORD, LIKE **SHOWERS**.... THEY WILL BE AMONG THE NATIONS, LIKE A **LION** AMONG THE BEASTS OF THE FOREST.... YOUR HAND WILL BE LIFTED UP AGAINST YOUR ADVERSARIES AND ALL YOUR ENEMIES WILL BE CUT OFF." (5:7--9). THAT'S HOW THE **REMNANT-CHURCH** SHOULD BE TODAY -- **REFRESHING** OTHERS AS DEW AND SHOWERS DO, **DIGNIFIED** IN **CONDUCT** AS A **LION**, AND OVERCOMING **SATAN** AND FLESHLY **LUSTS** (THE **REAL ENEMIES**).



IN CHAPTER 6, WE READ ABOUT GOD'S **CONTROVERSY** WITH HIS PEOPLE. THIS IS LIKE A **COURT** SCENE WHERE GOD SAYS AS IT WERE TO ISRAEL, "STAND UP AND **STATE YOUR CASE AGAINST ME**. LET THE **MOUNTAINS** AND HILLS BE **WITNESSES** TO YOUR COMPLAINTS. AND I WILL ALSO STATE MY CASE AGAINST YOU. WHAT HAVE I DONE TO YOU THAT YOU TURN AWAY FROM ME? I BROUGHT YOU OUT OF **EGYPT** AND **REDEEMED** YOU FROM YOUR SLAVERY. I SENT MOSES, AARON AND MIRIAM TO **LEAD** YOU. WHEN **BALAAM** TRIED TO CURSE, I **BLESSED** YOU INSTEAD? **WHAT** HAVE YOU GOT **AGAINST** ME THEN, THAT YOU **TURN AWAY FROM ME?**" (6:1--5).



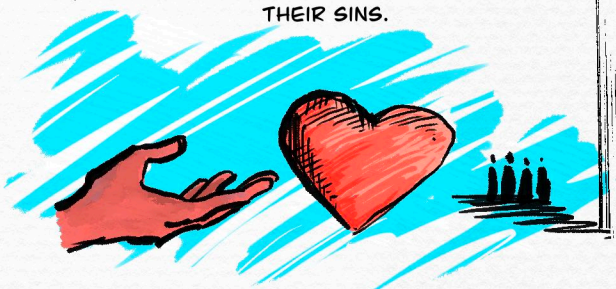
AND THEN MICAH ASKS THE PEOPLE WHAT THEIR **RESPONSE** SHOULD BE TO GOD. DO THEY IMAGINE THAT GOD IS LOOKING FOR **MORE OFFERINGS** FROM THEM? **NO**. HE DOESN'T WANT THEIR TITHES OR OFFERINGS. EVEN THE OFFERING OF A FIRSTBORN CHILD (THE MOST **PRECIOUS** EARTHLY OFFERING POSSIBLE) WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO **ATONE** FOR EVEN **ONE** OF THEIR SINS.

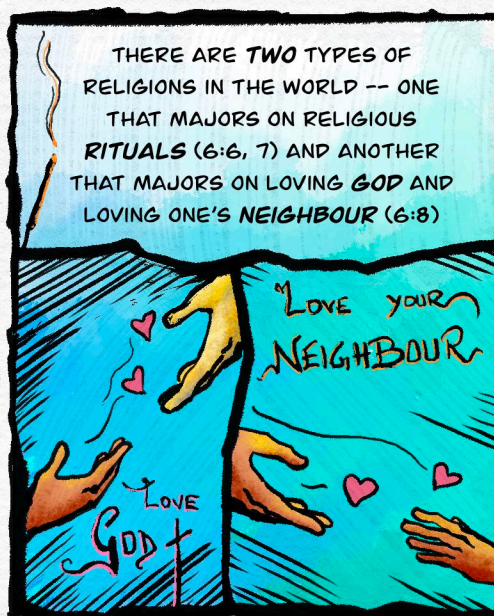
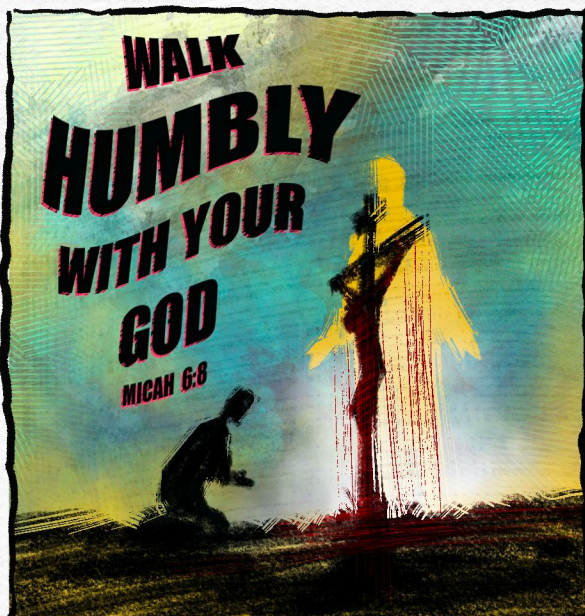
AND THEN WE READ ONE OF THE MOST **BEAUTIFUL** VERSES IN THE BOOK OF MICAH WHICH TELLS US WHAT GOD HAS REQUIRED FROM MAN AT ALL TIMES -- IN MICAH 6:8.

1. DO **JUSTICE**. BE FREE FROM ALL **PARTIALITY** AND DO WHAT IS RIGHT IN EVERY SITUATION, AND NEVER DO ANY **WRONG** TO OTHERS.



2. **LOVE MERCY**. **REJOICE** IN FORGIVING OTHERS THEIR **WRONGS** AND IN DOING **GOOD** TO THEM. TREAT EVERYONE **MERCIFULLY**. DON'T BE HARD ON ANYONE WHO MAKES A MISTAKE. WE HAVE MADE MISTAKES TOO AND GOD HAS FORGIVEN US. SO LET'S **FORGIVE EVERYONE** AND DO **ALL THE GOOD** WE CAN, TO **ALL THE PEOPLE** YOU CAN, AT **ALL THE TIMES** YOU CAN. MAKE ALLOWANCE FOR THE FACT THAT THEY MAY NOT HAVE ALL THE **LIGHT** YOU HAVE IN MANY AREAS AND SO BE WILLING TO **ACCEPT** THEIR DOING THINGS **DIFFERENTLY** FROM YOU, **WITHOUT JUDGING** THEM. THOSE WHO **JUDGE OTHERS** WILL BE DEALT WITH **UNMERCIFULLY** BY GOD IN THE **FINAL DAY** (JAMES 2:13).





ALL FALSE RELIGIONS AND **MOST CHRISTIANS** PREFER THE **FORMER**. TRUE **DISCIPLES** CHOOSE THE **LATTER**. **EXTERNAL RITUALS** CAN OFTEN BECOME A **SUBSTITUTE** FOR WALKING HUMBLY WITH GOD AND WALKING IN LOVE AND MERCY WITH OUR NEIGHBOURS. IF THE **LEADERS OF ISRAEL** HAD CONCENTRATED ON THESE THREE MATTERS, ISRAEL WOULD **NEVER** HAVE GONE AS CAPTIVES TO **BABYLON**.

3. WALK HUMBLY WITH GOD. THIS IS THE **SECRET** OF IT ALL. A **HUMBLE** ATTITUDE WILL BRING THE **GRACE** OF GOD UPON YOU AND WILL **ENABLE** YOU TO LIVE THE KIND OF **LIFE** THAT GOD **REQUIRES**. OTHERWISE YOU WILL FIND IT **IMPOSSIBLE**. TO WALK HUMBLY WITH GOD IS TO RECOGNISE THAT WITHOUT CHRIST YOU CAN DO

NOTHING. IT MEANS SEEING YOURSELF AS A **NOBODY** IN YOUR **OWN** EYES -- EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE A VERY **VALUABLE** SOMEBODY IN **GOD'S** EYES.



MICAH THEN PROPHESES AGAINST THE **BUSINESSMEN** WHO WERE **CHEATING** POOR PEOPLE: "IS THERE TO BE NO END OF YOUR GETTING RICH BY **CHEATING**? YOUR HOMES ARE FULL OF **UNGODLY** TREASURES AND LYING SCALES. YOU HAVE BECOME WEALTHY THROUGH **EXTORTION** AND **VIOLENCE**; YOU ARE SO USED TO **LYING** THAT YOUR TONGUES CAN'T TELL THE **TRUTH**! THEREFORE YOU WILL EAT BUT **NEVER** HAVE ENOUGH. AND THOUGH YOU TRY AND TRY TO **SAVE** YOUR MONEY, IT WILL COME TO **NOTHING** AT THE END, AND WHAT LITTLE YOU SUCCEED IN **STORING** UP I'LL GIVE TO THOSE WHO **CONQUER** YOU" (6:10--14).

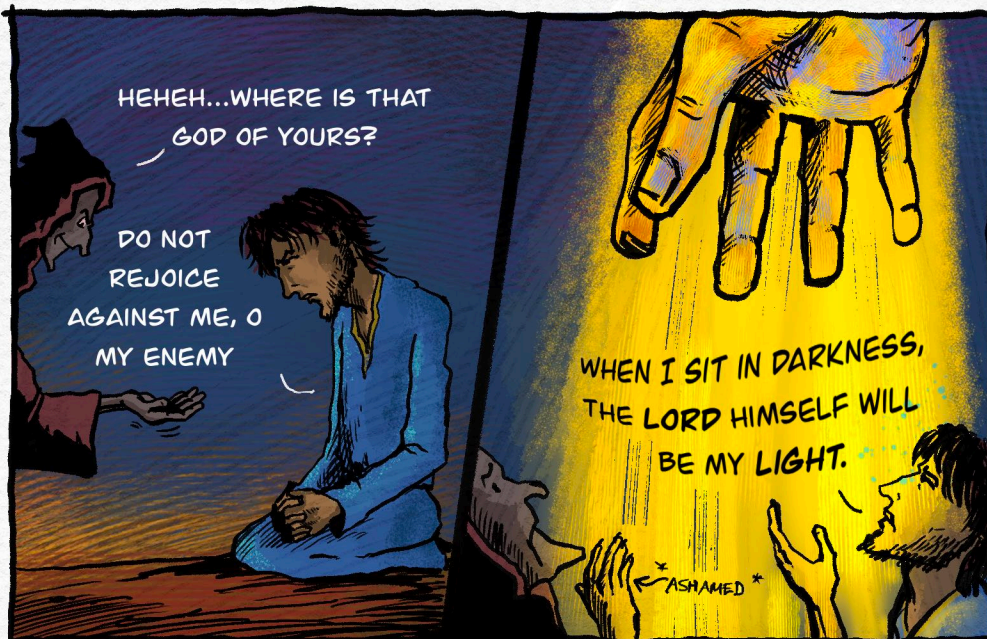
IF WE ARE **RICH**, GOD WANTS TO KNOW **HOW** WE MADE OUR MONEY. **DISHONESTLY** EARNED WEALTH WILL ONLY BRING THE **JUDGEMENT** OF GOD ON US.



GOD SAYS, "IT IS AS **HARD** TO FIND AN **HONEST** MAN AS GRAPES AND FIGS WHEN **HARVEST** DAYS ARE **OVER**. THE **GODLY** PERSON HAS **PERISHED** FROM THE LAND, AND THERE IS **NO** **UPRIGHT** PERSON. WE LIVE IN A **SIMILAR** SITUATION TODAY. **GODLY** MEN ARE RARE TO FIND EVERYWHERE. THERE IS A LOT OF **INJUSTICE** AND **BRIBERY** IN SOCIETY AND **POOR** PEOPLE ARE BEING **EXPLOITED**. BUT **EVERYONE** WILL HAVE TO GIVE AN **ACCOUNT** OF HIMSELF TO **GOD**.

MICAH'S WORDS IN 7:6 WAS QUOTED AND EXPANDED BY **JESUS** AS FOLLOWS: "DO **NOT** THINK THAT I CAME TO BRING **PEACE** ON THE **EARTH**; I DID **NOT** COME TO BRING **PEACE**, BUT A **SWORD**.. WHEN WE READ MICAH 7:6, IT DOESN'T LOOK AS IF IT REFERS TO **DISCIPLESHIP** AT ALL. BUT **JESUS'** USE OF IT TEACHES US THAT THE WORDS OF THESE PROPHETS HAD **MORE** THAN **ONE** **MEANING**. MANY PROPHECIES HAVE A **DOUBLE** FULFILMENT. AND HERE IS JUST ONE OF THOSE EXAMPLES.





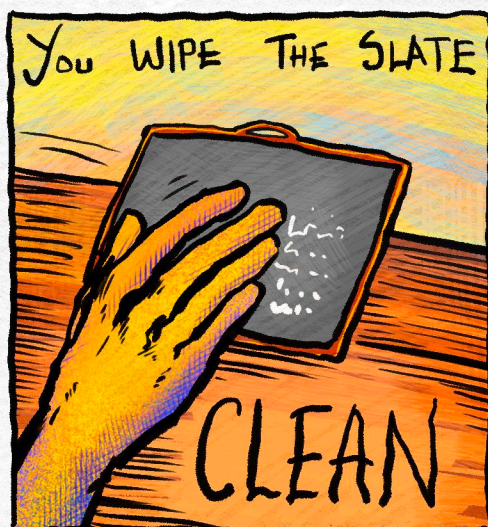
HEHEH...WHERE IS THAT
GOD OF YOURS?

DO NOT
REJOICE
AGAINST ME, O
MY ENEMY

WHEN I SIT IN DARKNESS,
THE LORD HIMSELF WILL
BE MY LIGHT.

ASHAMED

MICAH THEN SPOKE SOME
WONDERFUL WORDS WHICH WE
CAN USE IN OUR **SPIRITUAL**
BATTLES WITH **SATAN** IN CHAPTER
7 FROM VERSES 7 TO 10. THOSE
ARE WORDS THAT WE CAN SPEAK
TO THE DEVIL WHEN WE HAVE
FALLEN INTO **SIN**, OR **FAILED** THE
LORD IN SOME WAY, OR WHEN WE
ARE BEING **CHASTENED** BY THE
LORD. DON'T **EVER** LET **SATAN**
DISCOURAGE YOU BY SAYING, "YOU
HAVE **FALLEN**. THERE IS **NO** HOPE
FOR YOU NOW." **MEMORISE** THIS
PORTION OF SCRIPTURE AND **QUOTE**
IT TO **SATAN** WHENEVER NEEDED.



YOU WIPE THE SLATE

CLEAN



MY
PAST
SIN

MICAH CONCLUDES HIS PROPHECY PRAISING GOD FOR HIS WONDERFUL
MERCY (7:18--20). THAT IS ANOTHER PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE THAT
ENCOURAGES ALL WHO FEEL THEY HAVE **FAILED** THE LORD. THE
PROPHETS ALWAYS HAD A WORD OF **ENCOURAGEMENT** AND HOPE FOR
GOD'S PEOPLE AFTER PREACHING JUDGEMENT AND **PUNISHMENT** FOR SIN.
AND THAT IS AN EXAMPLE FOR ALL OF US WHO PREACH GOD'S WORD. HOW
SHOULD WE **CONCLUDE** OUR MESSAGES, WHEN WE HAVE TO PREACH A
STRONG WORD OF **JUDGEMENT** OR REBUKE? ALWAYS WITH A WORD OF
ENCOURAGEMENT, THAT GOD IS ON THE **SIDE** OF HIS **PEOPLE**.
REMEMBER THAT **GOD IS ALWAYS ON YOUR SIDE AGAINST THE DEVIL**.



YOU WHO PREACH THE WORD OF GOD ARE LIKE **SURGEONS** SEEKING TO REMOVE A
CANCER FROM A PATIENT. YOU CUT THE PERSON OPEN AND EXPOSE THE **CANCER**.
WHAT SHOULD YOU DO THEN? **REMOVE** THE **CANCER**, **STITCH** HIM UP, GIVE HIM A
PAINKILLER, AND SEND HIM HOME **HAPPY** AND **REJOICING**! BUT A LOT OF
PREACHERS JUST CUT THE PERSON OPEN AND EXPOSE THE **CANCER** AND THEN
SEND THE PERSON HOME WITH HIS STOMACH CUT OPEN -- **DISCOURAGED** AND
WITHOUT HOPE! DON'T EVER DO THAT. **COMPLETE** THE JOB.



GOD
SINKS

OUR
SINS

TO THE

BOTTOM

OF
THE

OCEAN

MICAH 7:19

MY
SINS