

MESSIANIC

TORAH HELPER

edited by Margaret McKee Huey
with J.K. McKee

MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS
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Messianic Torah Helper

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Abbreviations and Special Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as *TWOT* for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament
Ara: Aramaic
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)
b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.
BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)
BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.
CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)
CGL: *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (2021)
CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)
CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)
CJSB: Complete Jewish Study Bible (2016)
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls
EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*
EJ: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*
ESV: English Standard Version (2001)
Ger: German
GNT: Greek New Testament
Grk: Greek
HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)
HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)
Heb: Hebrew
HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible
IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*
ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*
Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)
JBK: New Jerusalem Bible-Koren (2000)
JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
KJV: King James Version
Lattimore: The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore (1996)
LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)
LES: *Lexham English Septuagint* (2019)
LS: *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott)
LSJM: *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)

LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)

LXX: Septuagint

m. Mishnah

MT: Masoretic Text

NASB: New American Standard Bible (1977)

NASU: New American Standard Update (1995)

NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*

NEB: New English Bible (1970)

Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*

NETS: New English Translation of the Septuagint (2007)

NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*

NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*

NIV: New International Version (1984)

NJB: New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic (1985)

NJPS: Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1999)

NKJV: New King James Version (1982)

NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1989)

NLT: New Living Translation (1996)

NT: New Testament

OT: Old Testament

REB: Revised English Bible (1989)

RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)

t. Tosefta

Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament

Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

TLV: Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version (2014)

TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)

TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition

v(s). verse(s)

Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*

Vul: Latin Vulgate

YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)

WMB: World Messianic Bible (2020)

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MICAH 4:1-3; ISAIAH 2:2-4

“The Torah Will Go Forth From Zion”

J.K. McKee

ki m’Tzion teitzei Torah u’davar-YHWH m’Yerushalayim

Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4 both contain a very important prophecy, speaking of the significant influence of Israel in the “end-times,” and how the nations are to be instructed from God Himself in the ways of peace. Both of these passages feature prominently within the Jewish liturgical tradition, but they have had significantly more influence in motivating faithful Jews and Christians to be active in care for the downtrodden, humanitarian efforts, and in helping to foster world peace. Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4 are very well known to Jewish and Christian philosophy, even though in today’s Messianic community these passages are probably not probed as much as they should be for their theological, spiritual, and missional significance. This prophecy, delivered via *two* prophets, anticipates great changes which will affect the entire world, directly involving God’s Torah.

Not enough of today’s Christian laypeople—or even various Messianics—are aware of the profound message which Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4 communicate (as opposed to theologians and Bible teachers). Too frequently, our level of engagement with these verses is just limited to the words of various praise songs. In some cases, in hearing about how God’s Word will go forth from Zion, Christians will associate it with the proclamation of the gospel of salvation in Yeshua—yet some key details of what this involves are noticeably left out. This prophecy speaks to the need for the nations to be instructed from the Law of God, specifically so that conflicts can be moderated and that His *shalom* will prevail. Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4 have a great deal of importance for today’s Messianic movement, especially in terms of the relevance *or* non-relevance of the Torah for non-Jewish Believers. With some of the discussions witnessed as to whether non-Jews should

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be Torah observant—or whether following the Torah is only relevant for Jews—it is quite surprising that this prophecy has not been given a great deal of attention.

Because the oracle of Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4 is essentially the same, there is understandably discussion over where it would have first appeared. Did it (1) first appear in Isaiah, and then Micah, or (2) first appear in Micah, and then Isaiah? Did (3) either Isaiah and Micah both import this word separately from a third party source? Or, (4) did a redactor(s) edit this prophetic word into the final textual form of both the Book of Isaiah and the Book of Micah, because it was found to be consistent with the two Prophets' overall message? There might not be a definite answer agreed upon among scholars, but no Bible reader can fail to notice how this prophecy appears in two locations in the Tanach, intensifying its significance.

Any examination of both Micah and Isaiah commentaries on this passage will see a variety of opinions and options presented, as to where this prophetic oracle originated. Walter Kaiser does not try to be dogmatic at all, simply noting that the prophetic ministries of both Micah and Isaiah were "at most twenty to forty years apart,"¹ and how their messages could easily have overlapped. While an appropriate thought, many interpreters think that the prophetic word of Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4 somehow originated separately from both Prophets, and then via some means—either the Prophets themselves or a redactor of their materials—made it into the Books of Micah and Isaiah. Brevard S. Childs summarizes,

"It is possible that the passage predated both prophets and was accommodated by each collection in a slightly different form. Although the redactional age of the composition remains contested, the material of the passage is clearly ancient, even with mythopoetic roots, which has been encompassed with old Hebrew pilgrimage traditions."²

While it is entirely possible that via the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, both Micah and Isaiah prophesied the same message as witnessed in Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4, it is most inviting to think that both Prophets appropriated some kind of previous composition into their messages. It is reasonable for us to think that both Micah and Isaiah employed some kind of a popular hymn or a well known poem used in the Temple worship of Israel, no different than how a pastor today might quote pieces from a hymn like Amazing Grace, although without having to state it as such. J. Alec Motyer thinks, "the fact that the poem is found in two prophets indicates its popular currency."³ What both of these Prophets referred to

¹ Walter Kaiser, *Mastering the Old Testament: Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (Dallas: Word, 1992), 58.

² Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 28.

³ J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 53.

Micah 4:1-3; Isaiah 2:2-4: “The Torah Will Go Forth From Zion”

must have been a rather common expectation for some religious sectors within Ancient Israel, known and believed by many of the common people as well, and then possibly expanded as the Lord moved upon Micah and Isaiah. In the estimation of John N. Oswalt,

“The majority of recent scholars, in the light of what is now believed about oral tradition and literary formation, doubt if either author copied from the other. It is more likely that the saying, certainly one of remarkable beauty and force...had become a common possession of the several priestly and prophetic communities within the nation and that one or both of these prophets drew it from that common heritage.”⁴

If the oracle seen in Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4 originated from within the liturgy of Temple worship, can we actually determine the specific sources from which it was derived? Until Biblical archaeologists discover a lost inscription with this prophetic word, or perhaps some kind of forgotten collection of period songs and poems, the main material to consider is witnessed in the Tanach Scriptures. Regular pilgrimages to the appointed place in Jerusalem are commanded in the Torah (Exodus 12:17; 26:28; Leviticus 23:41-44), something which the nations surely do (Micah 4:2a; Isaiah 2:3a). The Psalmist expressed great joy at being in the presence of the Lord in His House (Psalm 84), and the nations declare how they will be going to the House of the Lord (Micah 4:2b; Isaiah 2:3b). Most importantly, the Psalmist declared how God is a Protector who delights in peace (Psalms 120-122), and the expectation is that as the nations are taught by God, their weapons of war will be turned into objects of peace (Micah 4:3; Isaiah 2:4).

The prophetic ministries of both Micah and Isaiah were quite close, and conservatives will agree that they occurred sometime in the 700s B.C.E., in conjunction with the pressing threat from Assyria on the Divided Kingdom. The Book of Isaiah is unique in that it specifically records how Isaiah’s prophetic service began in the year of King Uzziah’s death (Isaiah 6:1), 740 B.C.E., and then continued on to at least the death of Sennacherib of Assyria (Isaiah 37:38), 681 B.C.E. Three kings of Judah reigned during the service of Micah, as recorded in Micah 1:1: Jotham (750-732 B.C.E.), Ahaz (732-716 B.C.E.), and Hezekiah (715-686 B.C.E).⁵ While the prophetic ministries of both Isaiah and Micah overlapped, Micah probably began his service before Isaiah, and so for that reason we will examine Micah 4:1-3 before Isaiah 2:2-4.

⁴ John N. Oswalt, *New International Commentary on the Old Testament: Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 115.

⁵ Cf. Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), pp 275-276, 398.

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Both Micah and Isaiah prophesied in the time frame of the mid-Eighth to early-Seventh Centuries B.C.E.—sometime before and after the conquering of the Northern Kingdom of Israel by Assyria. But with the prophecy looking sometime into the future, does this even matter? By the time Isaiah delivered his prophecies, it is notable to recognize that the Southern Kingdom of Judah would have been the primary audience.⁶ But, if this oracle originated within Israel's Temple worship and/or Psalm traditions, then even with Isaiah's proclamation of this word taking on some different dimensions to a Southern Kingdom without a Northern Kingdom widely present, this message would still affect all of Israel in the future, as the people will be gathered back together *and* their restoration will have a resonating impact on the world at large. **It is something which surely, in some way or another, we are being affected by today via the growth and expansion of the Messianic movement.**

This paper will consider the significance of both Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4, by examining both the text and the thoughts of a selection of Micah and Isaiah commentators. How important is this oracle within the scope of events to occur in salvation history? What does it teach about the role of the Torah? Would the Apostles have considered this prophecy important, in regard to the expansion of the good news and the instruction of the non-Jewish Believers in the First Century? How important will properly understanding and applying both Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4, be for the future development of the Messianic community?

Some of the thoughts we will be examining for both Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4 will overlap, but it will be important to analyze both passages and the array of suggestions offered by interpreters. This single prophecy, although delivered by two Prophets of God, can aid all of us in our service for Him today. We have a responsibility to make sure that we are providing for a venue of peace, where people can understand the supernatural nature of the Torah, and its ability to instruct men and women in the ways of holiness.

⁶ Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 113.

Micah 4:1-3

“And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, ‘Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths.’ For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war” (NASU).

Within the Book of Micah, this prophetic word appears among a series of messages, which alternate between being either positive or negative about the future of Israel. Preceding in Micah 3:9-12 is a rather negative word about Jerusalem becoming a heap of ruins, concerning the imminent future for Micah’s audience. Micah 4:1-5 then regards the more distant future for Israel, including some hope about how “the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established on the top of the mountains” (Micah 4:1, WMB). Yet, the pattern alternates again in Micah 4:10 with a mention of Babylon, and how the daughter of Zion will have to go there in exile. Later in Micah 5:5 a reference is made to Assyria invading the Land of Israel.

Because of the specific mention of both Babylon and Assyria, critical theologians will sometimes date the composition of the Book of Micah to the exilic or post-exilic period, denying the principle of predictive prophecy. Of course, of notable interest to any Bible reader, is why Micah 4:1-3 appeared in a somewhat disjointed section, which alternates between negative words of judgment and positive words which promise restoration. Either a redactor of Micah’s prophecies has simply strewn different sources together and failed to really organize them, or what is seen in the Book of Micah are firsthand prophetic oracles, which were delivered orally and then transcribed more-or-less the way that the Prophet originally spoke them. In the view of S. Goldman, “the spoken word permits of abrupt transitions more readily than does the written word; and a change of tone, expression or gesture may have made the transitions seem more natural to Micah’s listeners than to his readers.”⁷ The important point which is made throughout Micah, even though there was an alternation between positive and negative words, was how God would be faithful to save Israel and bring them back to fruition.

The time when Israel will be restored to its fullness will be *b’acharit ha’yamim* or “in the last days” (Micah 4:1a), meaning for Micah’s audience “When present

⁷ S. Goldman, “Micah: Introduction and Commentary,” in A. Cohen, ed., *Soncino Books of the Bible: The Twelve Prophets* (London: Soncino Press, 1969), 169.

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days are past" (*NICOT*).⁸ It is rightly concluded that these last days or end-times are the Messianic Age (cf. Daniel 12:4; Hosea 3:5). At this future point in history the Lord's House will become *rosh he'harim*, or "chief among the mountains" (Micah 4:1b, NIV), something which is to stand in contrast to what it has been in the past (cf. Micah 3:9, 11). Zion becoming chief or preeminent among the peaks of the Earth, will signify great significance and importance, as past misfortunes are reversed. **Jerusalem will become the focal point of all humanity**, although as Goldman states, "In a figurative, not a physical, sense; Zion will be the religious metropolis of the world, the focus of men's spiritual desires."⁹ He may simply want to read the prophecy as meaning that beyond people streaming to Zion (Micah 4:1c), how Zion will have a worldwide effect without people always having to go there. As Psalm 48:8 exclaims, "As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God; God will establish her forever" (NASU). As people stream to Zion, then the fame of the city will spread.

It is important to realize how authority in the Ancient Near East was often associated with hills and mountains, in particular how high places were sites for idolatry (1 Kings 22:43; 2 Kings 23:3; 18:4). Yet, it is also true that Abraham sacrificed Isaac on a mountain (Genesis 22:2), Moses received the Ten Commandments on a mountain (Exodus 19:16), and the city of Jerusalem was located on a hill. Within the Tanach, God's power is often expressed in terms of His authority over mountains (Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 40:12; Nahum 1:5). God's supremacy over nations and principalities can be portrayed in terms of His ownership of the mountains as Creator, seen in Psalm 68:15: "A mountain of God is the mountain of Bashan; a mountain of many peaks is the mountain of Bashan" (NASU).

While figuratively speaking, it is easy to see how Zion "will be raised above the hills" (Micah 4:1c, NASU) regards the city of Jerusalem taking on new prominence, this could still very well represent the enlarging of Jerusalem to new physical heights. It is frequently thought that in conjunction with the Second Coming of Yeshua, that there will be such seismic changes, that the city of Jerusalem will be uplifted above its current elevation of 2,500 feet above sea level (cf. Zechariah 14:9-10).¹⁰ At the same time, an interpreter like Daniel J. Simundson prefers to look at the elevating of Zion as only being an eschatological metaphor:

⁸ Leslie C. Allen, *New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 321.

⁹ Goldman, "Micah," in Cohen, 169.

¹⁰ Cf. Kaiser, *Micah-Nahum-Habakkuk-Zephaniah-Haggai-Zechariah-Malachi*, 59.

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“Do mountains grow bigger? Hyperbolic language like this gives a kind of eschatological, ‘end of the world’ feel to this passage, especially if one is prone to think of it literally and not as a metaphor for the renewed and increased authority of the city and its Temple.”¹¹

Regardless of which position one takes—whether Zion is elevated in prominence and in physicality, or just in prominence—**an era of great significance for Jerusalem will be inaugurated**. It is declared *v’naharu alayv amim*, “Peoples shall come streaming to it” (Micah 4:1c, NEB). This signifies Jerusalem having more significance than just being a place for Judah and Israel to congregate, worshipping the Lord. *It will be a place everyone will look to, worshipping the Lord*. Ralph L. Smith describes, “Rather than [just] being the worship center for the tribes of Israel the renewed Jerusalem will be the worship center for all people,” further stating how “All nations will make pilgrimages to Zion to learn the law of Yahweh and to walk in his ways.”¹²

With Jerusalem established as the chief center for the worship of God and instruction, there is a stirring in the hearts and minds of *goyim rabim* or “many nations.” They say to themselves, “Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob” (Micah 4:2a, NASU). And they do not only have an interest in worshipping the Lord, either. The nations say, “He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths” (Micah 4:2b, NIV), paraphrased by Allen as, “We want him to instruct us in his way of life, we want to travel his road” (NICOT).¹³ Both Jewish and Christian interpreters have identified the “He” as being the Messiah,¹⁴ who will be responsible for ruling the Earth.¹⁵

With the nations intending to go to Zion, the narration of the prophecy made the key statement *ki m’Tzion teitzei Torah u’devar-YHWH m’Yerushalayim*, “for Tora shall go forth from Ziyyon, and the word of the LORD from Yerushalayim” (Micah 4:2c, JBK). While most translations will render Micah 4:2 with “for...,” it is notable to be aware of how the Hebrew *ki* can possibly be rendered as “because” (CHALOT).¹⁶ While the nations purpose in their hearts to go to Zion to learn, at the same time this is accompanied by the proclamation of *torah* and *devar-YHWH*. But do the nations purpose to go to Zion, and then as a result are instructed—or is

¹¹ Daniel J. Simundson, “The Book of Micah,” in Leander E. Keck, ed., et. al., *New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. 7 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), pp 564-565.

¹² Ralph L. Smith, *Word Biblical Commentary: Micah-Malachi* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984), pp 36-37.

¹³ Allen, *Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*, 322.

¹⁴ Cf. Ehud Ben Zvi, “Micah,” in Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1211.

¹⁵ Kaiser, *Micah-Nahum-Habakkuk-Zephaniah-Haggai-Zechariah-Malachi*, 59.

¹⁶ William L. Holladay, ed., *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1988), 155.

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the instruction declared, and then the nations decide to go hear more? Probably, a bit of both is intended, as God's Word goes forth into the world, and then the desire for further teaching is inquired. The verb *yatza*, appearing in the Qal stem (simple action, active voice) simply means "go or come out" (*BDB*),¹⁷ rendered in the Keter Crown Bible as "emanate." **The point to be recognized is that the nations, and not just Israel proper, will benefit from being instructed in God's Torah.**

And the benefits of being instructed from God's Torah are quite good, in fact! It is stated how the Messiah "will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations" (Micah 4:3a, NASU). This righteous judgment over the nations—*l'goyim atzumim ad-rachog*, "for strong nations far and wide" (Micah 4:3a, NIV) actually—will serve to establish how His Torah really is proper for jurisprudence when used according to its original intention. Not only will the nations at large finally be able to be blessed by God's Law, but the previous social circumstances to which Micah declared this word in Ancient Israel will be gone. Leslie C. Allen comments,

"How fitting that Jerusalem should become renowned for justice after the travesty that Micah had known within the contemporary courts! No more bribery, no more fixed verdicts; men could be sure of finding justice."¹⁸

The kinds of rulings which are to be made from a basis of Torah jurisprudence, do not just concern how people are to relate to one another on either a familial or community basis. The second half of Micah 4:3 declares, "They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore" (NIV). Rather than being instructed or taught (Heb. *lamad*) in the ways of war, the nations will learn of peace from the Law of God—and the weapons of war will be worthless for fighting. They will instead find a more constructive and beneficial use. An era will emerge where Psalm 119:165 will be realized: "Those who love Your law have great peace [*shalom rav*], and nothing causes them to stumble" (NASU).

No theologian or Bible teacher can express any kind of dismay at the thought of all nations being brought to the capital of God's Kingdom, and being instructed on how to stop their continual warfare. On the contrary, being brought to God's House—"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD'" (Psalm 122:1, NASU)—and being taught from Him on how to see universal *shalom* established, **is quite good**. Bruce Waltke indicates how in Micah 4:1-3, there is a combination of elements all brought together:

¹⁷ Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 425.

¹⁸ Allen, *Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*, 326.

Micah 4:1-3; Isaiah 2:2-4: “The Torah Will Go Forth From Zion”

“Moses arranged for Israel to make three annual pilgrimages to the central sanctuary, and David with his psalms provided a libretto to accompany their worship [cf. Psalm 122:4]. Micah enlarged it to include the nations.”¹⁹

Any reader or interpreter of Micah 4:2 has to acknowledge how serious it is to have God’s Torah go forth from Zion. As the nations inquire, “That He may teach us about His ways” (NASU), the verb *yara*, primarily meaning to “throw, shoot,” but also “*direct, teach, instruct*” (BDB),²⁰ is employed—undeniably related to the noun *torah*, representing God’s Law. The Torah will be taught to the nations from Zion, and it will enact a positive change within them. The following are a few valuable remarks made by Micah commentators:

- Thomas E. McComiskey: “Micah saw a change in the hearts of all peoples at this time when the law of the Lord would be received universally rather than by Israel and Judah alone.”²¹
- Walter Kaiser: “Imagine the *tôrâh* as the featured attraction at the house of God for all the nations of the earth in that coming day of the Lord!”²²
- Gary V. Smith: “The purpose for coming to Jerusalem is not just to see the exalted mountain or the temple, but to hear the words of God, to be taught his ways, and to understand the ‘law’ (*torah*) from God himself. God’s ways will describe how he acts and reflect who he is. His words contain his spoken will, which reveals his glorious wisdom, and his instructions direct people to walk in godly ways.”²³

The scene, of the nations going to Zion to be taught from God’s Torah, can definitely be compared to the giving of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34—and how being forgiven and cleansed from sin, God’s Torah is to be supernaturally transcribed upon the heart.²⁴ Many Christian interpreters of Micah 4:2 (Old Testament theologians, specifically) have understandably associated the going forth of God’s Word or *devar* with the gospel message of salvation—something to be connected to the going forth of God’s Law as His standard for proper living. James Limburg’s thoughts are well taken:

¹⁹ Bruce K. Waltke, “Micah: An Introduction and Commentary,” in *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Obadiah, Jonah, Micah*, Vol 23a (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 169.

²⁰ BDB, 435.

²¹ Thomas E. McComiskey, “Micah,” in Frank E. Gaebelein, ed. et. al., *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 422.

²² Kaiser, *Micah-Nahum-Habakkuk-Zephaniah-Haggai-Zechariah-Malachi*, 59.

²³ Gary V. Smith, *NIV Application Commentary: Hosea/Amos/Micah* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 508.

²⁴ Cf. Simundson, in *NIB*, 7:565.

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"This dimension of the vision...comes to expression in Acts 1:8, which announces the program for the earliest Christian mission. The Book of Acts tells how that program is carried out, reporting the spread of the good news from Jerusalem 'to the end of the earth.' Thus for the Christian, the 'latter days' announced in the prophetic vision have already begun. The word of the Lord, the Torah, has been going out from Jerusalem, though the task of bringing it to all nations is not yet complete."²⁵

The term *shalom* is missing from the prophetic word of Micah 4:1-3, but the concept is doubtlessly present. When the nations are instructed from God's Torah, **all warfare ceases**. But it is surely not enough to limit this peace to the *eirēnē* of classical literature. With warfare ceasing via the declaration of God's Word (gospel) and Law (instruction), those from the nations get transformed. Allen comments that "God was not to leave his enemies in the dust but would transmute their lust for war and guide their misguided energies to better ends."²⁶ G.V. Smith further indicates, "Weapons of war and death will be destroyed and transformed into instruments of agriculture, which will preserve life."²⁷ In the eschaton, a more agrarian and simple life appears to be witnessed, with a God-provided peace and security for all:

"Each of them will sit under his vine and under his fig tree, with no one to make *them* afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken" (Micah 4:4, NASU).

With all people having been instructed from the Lord and from His Law, people will no longer fight to exploit one another—even for basic food staples. The future Messianic era is one which we should all eagerly anticipate, in Goldman's view, being "An idyllic picture of the blessings of peace as affecting the individual man and woman, whose well-being is in the ultimate measure of the value of a social or political system"²⁸ only provided by God.

²⁵ James Limburg, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: Hosea-Micah* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), 183.

²⁶ Allen, *Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*, 323.

²⁷ Smith, *NIV Application: Micah/Amos/Micah*, 509.

²⁸ Goldman, "Micah," in Cohen, 170.

Isaiah 2:2-4

“Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths.’ For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war” (NASU).

When one compares Isaiah 2:2-4 to Micah 4:1-3, these texts are largely identical. The prophecy as seen here is notably prefaced by, “The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:1, NASU), a significant claim that this was a supernatural revelation delivered via the Prophet Isaiah. This should not discount a previous usage of the same oracle by the Prophet Micah, nor that this was likely in common knowledge in the Temple worship or poetry of Israel. What this should do is point out how this is credited to be a genuine, prophetic, pre-exilic expectation—and not the reflection of a later editor or redactor of Isaiah’s prophecies. John D.W. Watts confirms,

“what is more important in the book of Isaiah is the claim that this view of Zion’s future..actually belongs to Isaiah of eighth-century Jerusalem. It was not an invention of convenience by the post-exilic community.”²⁹

No different than in Micah 4:1-3, Isaiah 2:2-4 was given within the view of Israel being restored to a position of prominence and respect in the world, and this would have a significantly positive resonating effect on humanity. The nations will come to Zion to have their disputes mediated, and the Lord will use His Torah to see that peace is enacted. Later questions posed in the Apostolic Scriptures, such as whether or not the nations of the Earth are somehow made a part of Israel’s Kingdom polity by acknowledging the Messiah (i.e., Galatians 6:16; Ephesians 2:11-13; 3:6), are not specifically asked *here*, even though there might be some hints. The principal issue was how the Torah will bring about world peace and security by the Messiah’s reign. Obviously, without *shalom* present, questions about how people from the nations are to relate to, in association with, or as a part of the Kingdom realm of Israel—cannot really be answered.

²⁹ John D.W. Watts, *Word Biblical Commentary: Isaiah 1-33*, Vol 24 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 28.

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The expectation as declared by Isaiah, is to take place *b'acharit ha'yamim* or “in the last days.” The prophecy will manifest itself sometime in the future from the point of Isaiah’s delivery in the Eighth Century B.C.E. For those who hold to a pre-millennial eschatology, Isaiah 2:2-4 is something to be fully realized in the Millennium. But the issue can be raised whether “in the last days” involves any kind of partial fulfillment or experience of what Isaiah 2:2-4 envisions, in the lives of God’s people, *before* the complete manifestation of the Messianic Kingdom. With certain futuristic elements to be realized, Oswalt suggests that *b'acharit ha'yamim* be better understood as “in the afterward of those days,” describing how “The Hebrews did not face the future as we do. Rather they faced the past and backed into the future. So the past was before them and the future behind them.”³⁰ The point made is that “the last days” cannot be limited to just any future Millennium, and how this prophecy (among others seen in the Tanach) would have begun experiencing fulfillment at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at *Shavuot*/Pentecost.³¹

The declaration is made *nakon yih'yeh har beit-YHWH b'rosh he'harim*, “The Mount of the LORD’s House shall stand firm above the mountains” (Isaiah 4:2b, NJPS). In attaining such a high stature, “it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations [*kol-ha'goyim*] will stream to it” (Isaiah 4:2c, NJPS). While we should probably expect that the establishing or raising up of the House of the Lord involves some physical upheavals, most important to be aware of is how His authority over mountains concerned some common Ancient Near Eastern concepts about the gods being associated with different abodes on mountains. Childs describes, “The application of the ancient, Canaanite mythopoetic imagery of Zion being transformed into the highest of all mountains reflects the theme of a new creation...”³² Barry G. Webb further points out how,

“Mountains played an important part in the religions of Israel’s neighbours. They were the points where heaven and earth were thought to meet and were therefore highly favoured as sites for altars and temples. The Canaanites worshipped their gods at the ‘high places’, and these became a snare to the Israelites. Even when such high places were removed from within Israel’s borders in times of religious reform, the surrounding nations continued to worship their gods on their holy mountains.”³³

³⁰ Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 116.

³¹ Ibid., pp 116-117.

³² Childs, *Isaiah*, pp 29-30; cf. Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 117.

³³ Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 45.

Cf. Isaiah 36:7; 2 Kings 18:4, 22; 2 Chronicles 14:3; 32:12.

Micah 4:1-3; Isaiah 2:2-4: “The Torah Will Go Forth From Zion”

Rather than one of the gods of the Canaanites having some regional or parochial appeal, to only one group of people adjacent to a high point—the message of this prophecy is that God’s mountain is the highest of all points, **and that He has supreme authority as Creator**. Isaiah 2:2-4, in communicating a welcoming message to all nations to come to Zion, deliberately subverted some Ancient Near Eastern views of gods on their own mountains ruling over a small fraction of humanity. The One God of Israel on Mount Zion *possesses complete dominion* over all of the mountains—and whatever demonic principalities dwell on them—and He desires all people to come to a knowledge of His goodness and love. A commentator like Gene M. Tucker, of course, has to note how “Zion was not even the highest peak in the immediate neighborhood.”³⁴ Yet, given the supreme power of the Lord (i.e., Psalm 46:8-9) and the reality of Yeshua’s Second Coming—Zion will indeed one day be the highest peak in more than just preeminence.

The supremacy, and indeed superiority, of Israel’s God over the regional gods of Canaan (or any other deity of the ancient world), is seen in what coming to Zion involves. Realizing how great the God of Israel is, “many peoples” or *anim rabim* will inquire and say, “Come, Let us go up to the Mount of the LORD, to the House of the God of Jacob; that He may instruct us in His ways, and that we may walk in His paths” (Isaiah 2:3a, NJPS). What they want is clear: “There he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths” (Isaiah 2:3b, NLT). And, the reason all of this will occur is restated by Isaiah: *ki m’Tzion teitzei Torah u’devar-YHWH m’Yerushalayim*, “For from Zion will the Torah come forth, and the word of HASHEM from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3c, ATS).

Isaiah 2:3 notably includes a usage of two important Hebrew verbs. *Yara* is used for “teach,” and *halak* is used for “walk.” It is possible to stretch Isaiah 2:3b a bit, and think of it in terms of the nations being taught and instructed from the Torah, and the Lord Himself establishing proper *halachah* for them in how to live and prosper. The Message actually tries to capture this, rendering Isaiah 2:3b with “He’ll show us the way he works so we can live the way we’re made”—meaning that by being instructed by the Lord, all people can live properly as human beings made special by Him, reflecting His image and good intention.

How would an Eighth Century B.C.E. audience from Ancient Israel or Judah have taken this message—that the nations will actually come to Zion and be instructed from Moses’ Teaching? Would they have rejoiced in hearing that the world at large would come to a knowledge of the One God of Creation, and follow Him? Or, would they be spiteful of it? Watts observes,

³⁴ Gene M. Tucker, “The Book of Isaiah 1-39,” in Leander E. Keck, ed., et. al., *New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. 6 (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 67.

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"His [God's] attraction for nations and peoples is so great that they will 'flow' uphill to the summit of the mountains and learn from 'the God of Jacob' the lessons to which Israel and Judah turned deaf ears."³⁵

By the time the Messianic era dawns, it is surely anticipated that Israel and Judah's corporate sins will be cleansed and the Torah transcribed upon their hearts as a part of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27). Yet, the restoration of Israel involves the whole world and all nations, and as Motyer puts it, "Their coming transcends nationalism: they acknowledge the God of a single nation...They are moved by desire...They also come responsively."³⁶ So, within Isaiah 2:2-4 there might be just a bit of rebuke witnessed to the generation to whom the Prophet originally delivered this message—given a widescale failure to obey the Lord and worship Him exclusively.

God's purpose in establishing His mountain as the chief of all points on Planet Earth, was not only so that all nations will hear of Him and come streaming toward Him—but is critical to establish His exclusivity as the source of salvation. Even when read from a vantage point of realized eschatology, where the core emphasis of this prophecy is experienced today among men and women who have received Yeshua as Savior—comes the realization *that redemption only comes through Israel's Messiah*. All the high points of Canaan's gods, or even the gods of Greece on Mount Olympus, have nothing to offer humanity when compared to the Lord Yeshua who was sacrificed so that all might be saved. Oswalt excellently comments,

"The emphatic position of *Zion* here stresses the fact that there are not many ways to heaven. There is one way: by means of truth which has been mediated through the historical experience of the people whose life has come to be centered upon Jerusalem...Jerusalem has become a symbol of God's self-revelation through history."³⁷

The main result of the Torah going forth to the nations, will be the complete abolition of warfare, something which the gods of Canaan could certainly never provide. The Messiah "will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples" (Isaiah 2:4a, NIV). In turn, the world "will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war" (Isaiah 2:4b, NASU). The statement which really strikes deep into the heart of anyone who reads this is *v'lo-yil'medo 'od milchamah*, "they will no longer study warfare" (Isaiah 2:4b, ATS).

³⁵ Watts, 29.

³⁶ Motyer, *Prophecy of Isaiah*, 54.

³⁷ Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, pp 117-118.

Micah 4:1-3; Isaiah 2:2-4: “The Torah Will Go Forth From Zion”

Those who have acknowledged Yeshua as Messiah and Lord, have already been restored to right relationship with the Father, and no longer have to war within themselves (cf. Romans 7:16-25) or with others in the community of faith. Yet, we also affirm that even though His sacrifice on the tree has cleared us of our sins, we still await His return and all things being subjected to Him (Hebrews 10:12-13). When Yeshua returns, there will be a complete abolition of warfare on Planet Earth. Tucker may remind us how, “Swords and spears are relatively cheap today, but in antiquity their production divested significant resources.”³⁸

A modern-day equivalent of what is to be expected in the weapons of warfare being turned into weapons of peace, would somehow be turning military trucks, tanks, and aircraft into farming equipment. Trucks transporting troops for battle, will instead move agricultural produce and animals to and from market. Tanks designed to unleash destruction, will be converted to plow fields and landscapes for cultivation. Aircraft which would bomb villages and cities, will be used to help water and fertilize fields. Helicopters will carry field workers to and fro, instead of carrying the wounded to hospital.

In the Messianic Age, with war largely going to be a thing of the past—why would anybody need to look to Zion to be taught from the Torah? This is basically, after all, what many of today’s theologians advocate; they claim that following the Torah was only for a previous era, and has no continuation in the post-resurrection time following Christ’s death and resurrection. Oswalt, an Old Testament theologian, actually has a very important answer to why being taught in God’s Instruction is vital—even in this post-resurrection time—especially as it concerns the personal and national *shalom* Isaiah 2:2-5 envisions. He observes,

“Persons who have learned such truths and are walking in them (v. 3) can show *šalōm*, or ‘well-being,’ and when two persons are walking in this way they can know such *šalōm* together because both can know that their interests are being cared for by God, and both know that the other will submit his or her needs to God rather than attempt to satisfy them by force (John 14:27). When these principles are extended to the nations, world peace can result. However, the thought of producing peace on any other ground is hollow (Jer. 6:14; 8:11). Until persons and nations have come to God to learn his ways and walk in them, peace is an allusion.”³⁹

Even in a post-resurrection era, where the capital punishment of the Torah has been absorbed in Yeshua’s sacrifice (Colossians 2:14) and some changes are naturally resultant via His fulfillment of the Torah (cf. Matthew 5:17)—totally dismissing Moses’ Teaching as having no relevance for the lives of Messiah

³⁸ Tucker, in *NIB*, 6:67.

³⁹ Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 118.

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followers, is most ill-advised and problematic. The declaration of this prophetic oracle is clear, in that only when the nations hear and obey God's holy Law will worldwide *shalom* manifest. And surely, if hearing from the Torah can cause weapons of war to be changed into instruments of peace—what kind of positive effect can heeding the Torah enact within individuals, who often just want to live happy, productive, and satisfied lives in the Lord?

Just “Instruction”?

Both Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4 anticipate how the nations are to be brought to Zion to be taught from God's Torah. It is perfectly valid, as witnessed in both the NJPS and HCSB renderings, to translate *torah* as “instruction” in these verses. The Torah is God's Teaching or Instruction. Some interpreters one may encounter, though, have been seen to skew the expectation that the nations will be taught from the Law of Moses, and so they have to employ tactics whereby some other “*torah*” than *the Torah* is what will go forth to inaugurate global peace. The dispensational *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, for example, actually claims, “**Law** (*tôrâh*, ‘instruction’ not the Mosaic Law) will be given in **Zion**.⁴⁰ On the one hand you might be able to appreciate the thought that this “*torah*” is to be associated with the reign of the Lord—and so it is His Law—but ultimately Moses' Teaching did originate with Him.

While this oracle, delivered via two of God's Prophets, anticipates how revelation will come forth from Zion and Jerusalem to change the world—there should be no doubting that this *torah* is indeed Moses' Teaching. In the Septuagint of both Micah 4:2 and Isaiah 2:3, *torah* was rendered with *nomos* or Law—meaning that what will go forth from Zion will indeed be the Pentateuch. Ancient Diaspora Jews or Greek readers examining the LXX would have undeniably associated this *nomos* to be the Law of Israel's God. Yet, we are very safe to assume that the *torah* or instruction which will go forth from Zion will not include Genesis-Deuteronomy exclusively, and that it also will include instruction coming forth from God's Prophets and the Tanach Scriptures in general. Childs describes,

“Indeed there is a broadening of the term invoked in part by the larger context of an expanding collection of sacred scripture...[T]he subject matter of the prophetic message as divine truth continues to exercise a coercion on Israel such that the Mosaic Torah itself increasingly received its full meaning from the divine reality witnessed to by the prophets...In a word, both law and prophetic proclamation were expanded in terms of a deepening grasp of God's reality, but neither was subordinated in principle to the other.”⁴¹

⁴⁰ John A. Martin, “Micah,” John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1484.

⁴¹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 30.

This should be fairly easy for Believers in Yeshua to understand, as He insisted that He did not just come to fulfill the Law, but more specifically the Law *and* the Prophets (Matthew 5:17). Coupling *torah* as relating to the Tanach Scriptures, and the fact that in the eschaton it will be the Messiah Himself delivering their authoritative interpretation, we are probably also justified to regard the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament) as a part of “the word” (*devar*) to be declared.

The Words of the Prophets

According to Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4, *God’s Law is supposed to supernaturally go forth*. I would submit that given the original circumstances surrounding the assembling of the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council, that these were among the prophecies in the mind of James the Just when he issued his decree regarding the new, non-Jewish Believers who were coming to faith in Yeshua. These people did not need to be “ordered” (cf. Acts 15:5, ESV) to follow the Torah, as insisted upon by some of the hyper-conservative Pharisees. James instead acknowledged how “the words of the Prophets” (Acts 15:15) were to be allowed to take shape. Why rigidly or forcibly insist that these new Believers were to follow the Law, when the Prophets anticipated the nations coming to Zion to be taught it? Would it not be better to see such an expectation take place as was sovereignly decreed by God?

Rather than insisting that these new Believers be circumcised as Jewish proselytes, James issued four non-negotiable requirements for them to enter into the *ekklēsia*. The Apostolic Decree of Acts 15:20, 29, when followed, would see the new, non-Jewish Believers effectively cut off from their previous social circles in Greco-Roman paganism—making their new social circles communities of Jewish Messiah followers, and the wider Jewish population. Given the natural fulfillment of prophecy, and not meddling mortals forcing things, the non-Jewish Believers would find themselves participating in what was anticipated by words such as Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4. The responsibility of the Jewish Believers was to welcome them into the community of faith as fellow brothers and sisters, facilitating an environment where they could be mentored and discipled in God’s Word—and above all **loved**.

The key emphasis of Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4, is that the teaching of God’s Torah to the nations will bring forth great peace. Is there at all implied within this prophecy the idea that the nations, in being taught from the Torah, will adhere to many of the same commandments as Israel proper—or only those things which would be directly concerned with peace, love, and mercy? Would going to Zion to be taught from God’s Torah imply that the nations, in being instructed, would find themselves observing things like the seventh-day Sabbath/*Shabbat*, the appointed times or *moedim*, or eating kosher? Were Torah directions like these only intended

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for ethnic Israelites, or useful directions for all who look to Israel's God for hope and salvation? Noting the opinion of David Kimchi (or Radak, 1160-1235), I.W. Slotki considers the *torah* the nations will hear to be "religious and moral instruction."⁴² This seems to imply that the training they will receive will be more encompassing than just ethical and moral matters. It can hardly be overlooked, among the many examples to be considered, how in the future Millennium all people on Earth will be observing the seventh-day Sabbath (Isaiah 66:23).

The oracle of Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4 is obviously most concerned with the nations being properly instructed in their ethics and morality, **beginning with casting aside their weapons of war**. At the same time, though, its message is rooted within the fact that faithful Israelites were to go up to Zion several times each year during the *moedim* or appointed times (cf. Leviticus 23, et. al.)—and such Israelites would go there to be similarly taught the main ethical responsibilities involved with following Moses' Teaching. Allen indicates,

"Year by year bands of pilgrims would make their way to Jerusalem to engage in festive worship, in the course of which they would receive instruction in the moral traditions of the covenant. This Israelite pilgrimage is here magnified to universal dimensions. Not merely Israel, but their pagan neighbors from all around would one day...[will] there learn lessons which they would put into practice back in their own communities."⁴³

The message of the Apostolic Scriptures, is that all of God's people make up a Kingdom entity known as the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11-13), which is to acknowledge Yeshua as Messiah, honor the Torah as a positive result of His redemptive work (Romans 8:3-4), and with all persons functioning in mutual submission to one another (Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:3-4). All three of these principles *joined together* is not frequently heard in today's Messianic movement, but it forms the thrust of what it *truly means* for born again Believers to truly make up the "one new humanity" (Ephesians 2:15, NRSV/CJSB) the Lord wants to see emerge. Nowhere in the Bible do we ever see the implication that the Kingdom of Israel is to remain an exclusively Jewish entity, as the Tabernacle of David is to be rightly recognized as an enlarged Kingdom realm of Israel welcoming in the righteous from the nations (Acts 15:15-18; Amos 9:11-12). But, even if true, we never see the Jewish people replaced as unimportant, as they do indeed have an irrevocable calling to be honored and respected (Romans 11:29; cf. 3:2).

Looking at Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4, the need for the nations to submit to Moses' Teaching cannot be denied—as it will truly and ultimately result in worldwide *shalom*. In Webb's estimation, "Peace on any other terms is a cruel

⁴² I.W. Slotki, *Soncino Books of the Bible: Isaiah* (London: Soncino Press, 1983), 10.

⁴³ Allen, *Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*, 323; Waltke, 169.

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delusion, a truth we need to bear in mind constantly as we seek to be faithful to God’s word in our own, modern world of religious pluralism.”⁴⁴ There are, in fact, serious consequences to those who will not desire to be instructed by the Lord, as Micah declared: “I will root out your Asherim from among you and destroy your cities” (Micah 5:14, NASU). No leader or teacher wants to be responsible for failing to instruct any one of God’s people in what it means to live appropriately from His Word—resulting in them having to suffer either some kind of temporary chastisement or worse, eternal punishment. Yeshua’s statement of Matthew 5:19 is useful to remember here: “Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever keeps and teaches them, this one shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (TLV).

What does it mean for the Torah to “go forth”?

The importance of Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4, is something which is witnessed every *Shabbat* in the liturgy of the Jewish Synagogue. Far be it from *torah* being declared just being some vague “instruction,” the pronouncement “Torah shall come from Zion, the word of Adonai from Jerusalem,” is made right at the point when the Torah scroll is brought forth from the ark.⁴⁵ Ehud Ben Zvi only confirms, “In Jewish liturgy this portion of [Micah 4:2]...is read when the Torah scroll is taken out of the Ark to be read.”⁴⁶ After this, then the *sefer Torah* is unrolled and the weekly *parashah* is canted to the congregation. While this tradition connects Jews to their past before modern printing and books, the expectation that the Law will go forth to the nations from Zion, is something largely futuristic. This same liturgy is often repeated in today’s Messianic Jewish congregations as well. But, has speaking it over and over again, become so rote, that not enough have a grasp on its significant prophetic implications—**taking place right before us in our day?**

There is an eschatological expectation witnessed in the Prophets, that the Torah will go forth from Zion, with the nations streaming to hear it. How does this affect the purpose and mission of today’s Messianic movement, and the role it is to play in the wider world? How are we to capture as much of the expectation of Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4 in our service for God’s Kingdom **now**, before Yeshua returns?

⁴⁴ Webb, 45.

⁴⁵ Jules Harlow, ed., *Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals* (New York: Rabbinical Assembly, 2007), 139; cf. J.H. Hertz, ed., *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book* (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1960), pp 473-475; Nosson Scherman and Meir Zlotowitz, eds., *Complete ArtScroll Siddur, Nusach Ashkenaz* (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1984), pp 432-433.

⁴⁶ Ben Zvi, in *Jewish Study Bible*, 1211.

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This prophetic oracle very much anticipates how the separation of the nations at Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) will be reversed. All nations and peoples will worship the One God of Israel, they will be taught from His Law, and true world peace will prevail. The Torah, while originally given to Israel, is something which is to not just affect Israel proper—but the whole world—because as R.L. Smith observes, “Israel did not live in a vacuum.”⁴⁷

We should expect Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4 to take on some significant fulfillment in the future, but given the Apostolic Scriptures’ common emphasis of a realized eschatology—of Believers living and experiencing the life of the age to come now, *before* it is fully manifest (cf. Galatians 1:4)—much of what has been foretold can already be enacted. The Last Days are a stage in history which started two millennia ago with the First Coming of the Messiah (Acts 2:17; Hebrews 1:2), although more is undoubtedly to be expected.

Throughout history, faithful Christians have frequently looked to Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4 to emphasize “the word” as the gospel going forth to the world, and born again Believers possessing peace in their hearts via the salvation they cherish in Jesus Christ.⁴⁸ Along with this have been those, who have truly thought that the proclamation of the good news is to be attended with some kind of proclamation from God’s Law, as a matter of proper conduct for the redeemed. Limburg describes,

“In the future here envisioned, the word of the Lord will go forth from Mount Zion and it will be for all peoples and ‘strong nations.’ This Torah is not simply head knowledge, a body of dogma or doctrine. It is instruction, a word from the Lord which calls for a response resulting in a new way of living for those who hear it, here described as walking ‘in his paths’...”⁴⁹

Understanding the value of God’s Torah begins with comprehending how it is to bring peace to His people. Even while some Messianics may criticize Christians today who widely cast aside the Law of Moses, there have been influential Protestant traditions in history (Calvinism, Wesleyanism) which have always upheld the Law as a source of piety and morality. They have expelled more concentrated effort to see the thrust of Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4 realized in the lives of people, than perhaps anyone else since the First Century has. This has manifested not only in seeing people saved from sins, but also in wanting to help one’s fellow human beings via various good works (i.e., building hospitals, orphanages, schools, homeless shelters, relief missions). Today’s Messianic people stand in their debt,

⁴⁷ Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, 38.

⁴⁸ McComiskey, in *EXP*, 7:422.

⁴⁹ Limburg, 181.

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and have the responsibility to continue their positive work—especially now in reaching out to the Jewish people who do not yet know Yeshua!

Most importantly, the oracle of Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4 can only be fulfilled if an environment of peace can be created by leaders and teachers within the Body of Messiah. Sadly, this is the one area which is not accomplished too well by a number of today’s Messianics—but even more so, various “Torah teachers” in the independent Hebrew/Hebraic Roots movement, are among some of the most likely, in fact, to cause unnecessary divisions and discord. Those who promote some degree of a “restoration of Torah” are not always associated with a great, sizeable message on how born again Believers are to be about restoring human wholeness. Micah 4:6-8 specified some of the disenfranchised groups who are to be immediately affected by Moses’ Teaching going forth to the world:

“In that day,’ declares the LORD, ‘I will assemble the lame and gather the outcasts, even those whom I have afflicted. I will make the lame a remnant and the outcasts a strong nation, and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on and forever. As for you, tower of the flock, hill of the daughter of Zion, to you it will come—even the former dominion will come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem” (Micah 4:6-8, NASU).

If the “restoration of Torah” one hears so much about, is not concerned with serving the needs of the lame and downtrodden—*more* than other areas of obedience—then what does that say? G.V. Smith is right to emphasize, “The goal of God’s teaching is the practical direction of people’s lives...His powerful presence and persuasive message will transform the thinking and behavior of millions in the last days.”⁵⁰ I believe that today’s Messianic movement surely does possess the potential to make such a difference, but that it will require the implementation of some significant changes in how we think and act.

While much more could be said on the changes our faith community needs to make, when I read Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4, what immediately strikes me is how Yeshua emphasized “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9, NASU). If the Torah is to be declared to the nations, and is to result in peace—then anyone teaching it is to be a diligent peacemaker, wanting all to experience Divine blessing and harmony in their lives. Teachers are to desire the full realization of the Aaronic Benediction (Numbers 6:24-26), brought about by the indwelling presence of the Spirit (John 14:17), which can only result in people being edified (Romans 12:18; 14:19). When this becomes our vision for spiritual service—then we will truly make the sizable difference the Lord wants us to make, culminating in the return of Yeshua and His Kingdom of total *shalom*.

⁵⁰ Smith, *NIV Application: Micah/Amos/Micah*, 508.

Messianic Torah Helper

In seeing the Torah go forth to the world, let us truly anticipate and look forward to the Messiah's reign of peace! Let this prophetic word be as common to us as it was to the generations of Micah and Isaiah!