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**C1103 – February 2, 2011 – Micah 5:7-15 -- Israel The Head**

I hope you enjoyed last week's study on the remnant by Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum. I apologize for not being able to be here due to illness. But I chose Dr. Fruchtenbaum's study on the remnant because the scheduled text for last week's study in Micah 5:7-15 dealt largely with the remnant of Israel. Hopefully, you gathered from Dr. Fruchtenbaum's study that *the remnant is the believing element in the nation Israel*. You should also have gathered that *there is always a remnant*. It may be small, but it is there. There have been times when certain believers in Israel, like Elijah, thought they were the only member of the remnant. But it was just that at that time in history the remnant had grown to such small numbers that certain members were having a hard time finding one another. But there is always a remnant.

Tonight, in the book of Micah, we come to a time in history, history future, but history nonetheless because it is already written, when *the remnant of Israel will merge and become the entire nation, Israel*. In other words, the remnant will not be a subset of the nation; it will be the entire living nation. So, that means that every member of the nation Israel living on earth will be a believer. Now, how that takes place is the subject of detailed revelation in Old and New Testament prophecy. The substance of the prophecy is that after the church is raptured the veil that is partially blinding the nation Israel will be lifted and they will be able to see that Jesus is the Messiah. Very quickly, there will be 144,000 Jews that come to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. These 144,000 will be tremendous witnesses, sort of like 144,000 of the Apostle Paul running around, in fact, many of them may come from high ranks within Judaism just like the apostle Paul. But they will believe in Jesus as the Messiah and they will minister during the first half of the 70th week of Daniel. At the same time, you will also have the two Jewish witnesses, perhaps Moses and Elijah, carrying out their fantastic ministry.

And through this ministry, at the mid-point of the 70th week of Daniel, a great number of Jewish people will come to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. As for those who remain in

unbelief, the Assyrian/Antichrist will kill the vast majority of them during the second half of the 70th week of Daniel, what Jesus called the Great Tribulation. So, the only Jews remaining on planet Earth at the end of the 70th week of Daniel will be the remnant of believing Jews. And they will call on the Lord to be saved and as Rom 11:26 says, “All Israel will be saved.” So that is how the remnant of Israel becomes the entire nation and is brought into the kingdom.

That is when we enter the events of Micah 5:7-15. Let's pick up our study with Micah 5. When you see the remnant in verse 7 and verse 8, you will understand that the remnant here *is* the nation Israel, the whole nation, every single individual Jew on the planet is included in this remnant. It does not mean that the remnant always refers to the whole nation. But in this context, the remnant does refer to the whole nation, because the remnant is composed of Jacob. Jacob is the patriarch who wrestled with God and was renamed Israel, which means “wrestles with God,” and it was Jacob from whom the twelve tribes came. As important as Abraham and Isaac are (and they have their place), when you want to refer to the nation of Israel as a whole, you go back to Jacob who was re-named Israel by the angel of the Lord. Jacob is the key. We may be children of Abraham by faith in the New Testament, but we are not the children of Jacob. The children of Jacob are the nation, Israel.

When he says the remnant of Jacob, he means that at this future time, every member of the nation Israel is believing. So, this has to do with the nation Israel but more than that it has to do with God and His covenants being fulfilled. God is the one who brings this to pass because God is the one who made a written, verbal agreement with the nation Israel to give them a land, a seed and make them a worldwide blessing. And since it is God's word that controls history, then, in the covenant God has given us His word as to the direction history is going to take. History is not controlled by the actions of man, whether they are military choices or social choices or political choices. Those factors are all subsidiary to the word of God in the covenant. It is His word in the covenant that is the drive train of history. If you are studying history under the eyes of military conquest or political rule or social aspects, then you are studying symptoms, not causes. History is not run by those things; history is run by the word of God in the covenants.

It may not be sexy to think that God runs history according to covenants, but what it means is that history is revelatory of Him. History, the unfolding of it, is a manifestation of God's character. And that is why the Bible is so full of history. History is a teaching tool God

uses to reveal Himself. This is why we insist on the historicity of these events we study. You cannot poo-poo them and say, well, we are not really sure those events happened because our historical canons of historicity over here say those things can't happen. If you do that, then what happens to God's character that was tied in with that event? It gets washed out. It gets lost. You have washed out revelation of God's character.

We cannot de-historicize the Scriptures. God has a character and God put His character on the line in the covenants. Is God faithful to do what He has said He will do or not? And is God sovereign such that He is able to bring it to pass? That is what this book and that is what history is all about. It is one big revelation of the fact that God is faithful and God is sovereign. He is bringing it to pass and no one is going to stop Him. History is going to culminate in the fulfillment of God's word in His covenants to Israel.

And what this means is that Israel will be in the land, she will be under the rule of the seed and she will be the channel through which blessing will come to the world. Israel will once more be the greatest superpower on all the earth. To the great disapproval of the UN, Israel will become the number one nation. Israel, to the dismay of the Arabs, will displace the Palestinian people, as well as the Jordanian people, and the Lebanese people, and the Syrian people, and the Iraqi people. Those people are squatters on Israel's territory. Now, if you drop that idea in the present world, and it is enough to drop the idea that the so-called Palestinians are squatters; but if you make the claim that all these other nations are squatters that will be the last thing you ever get printed in the media. But that is what this book says. In the future world, Israel will be the greatest superpower on the earth and all the other nations will tremble in fear.

Let's look at this from the standpoint of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2. In the dream, he sees this statue. It is a dream about Gentile powers, Gentile kingdoms, the contributions of these kingdoms and their progress in history. God is unquestionably giving world power into the hands of Gentile kingdoms in the sixth century BC. Gentiles have every right to reign at this present hour. God is using the Gentile powers to discipline Israel for her disobedience. So, this is the hand of God in history. The very fact of Gentile rule demonstrates the sovereignty of God over all nations, not just Israel. He gave them the right to rule.

The first Gentile kingdom He authorized is represented in the statue by the head of gold, which is Babylon. Babylon, gold, you think of wealth, and Babylon's contribution to the

world system is the idol of fractional reserve banking as a tool to build wealth. Babylon uses a corrupt system that allows the money supply to expand and contract, setting it free from the gold standard and making it easier to steal in order to build wealth. All economies on earth today operate on this system inherited from Babylon. It is an idolatrous system. We are all a part of it.

The second Gentile kingdom represented by the arms and chest of silver is Medo Persia. See, there is a declination of value, from gold to silver and on through the metals, that means inflation of currency, but Medo Persia's contributes in another area. She contributes to the world system the idol of globalism as a means of expanding the interests and destiny of man. It is that global spirit of autonomy that we will make a name for ourselves, we will make our name great, man will create a global empire.

The third Gentile kingdom, the waist of bronze, depicts the Greeks. The Greeks' contribution to the world system is the idol of rationalism; the human intellect as the self-sufficient legislator of reality. It is the idea that man can carve out his reality, that man dictates the terms of knowing and the nature of being. The mind of man is sovereign and can control whatsoever comes to pass.

The fourth Gentile kingdom represented by the legs of iron and the feet mixture of iron with clay is Rome. Rome comes in two phases. That is why you have the legs exclusively of iron, but you have the feet mixture of iron and clay. The legs are Rome one, and the feet are Rome two, if you will. The contribution of Rome to the world system is the idol of military power as the means to provide security from any outside interferences in the building of man's global empire.

During the time in which these four Gentile kingdoms reign, Israel is given up, so from the sixth century BC to the present day, Israel is under the oppression and dominion of these Gentile kingdoms as a disciplinary procedure by God. That is what Micah 5:3a is referring to, "Israel will be given up," until the woman in labor gives birth to a baby, the baby born in Bethlehem. He was born in the fourth kingdom, Rome, which means, theoretically, that if Israel had received the baby as their King, then verse 3b would have rapidly unfolded. That is, you would have had the restoration of the nation Israel and her return to world power. Israel's kingdom would have come and their King, Jesus, would have arisen and shepherded His flock in the strength of Yahweh, in the Majesty of the name of Yahweh His God. Israel would remain at the top of the nations, not because of themselves, but

because at that time, the Messiah will be great to the ends of the earth. However, as it occurred, they did not receive Jesus as their King. They rejected Him and therefore, there is a break, a gap of time between verse 3a and verse 3b. Now, we have an interregnum, a gap of time in Israel's 70-week calendar.

During this time, we have this organism called the Church, of which we are a part, and which was a mystery in the Old Testament, something completely unknown because unrevealed. God simply did not say anything at all about the Church to the prophets in the Old Testament. It was not made known until the New Testament. So, we live in this interregnum or parenthesis in Israel's 70-week calendar.

All during this interregnum the nation Israel remains given up, in Exile, under the oppression and dominion of Gentile powers. This allows for the final form of Rome to develop. Rome two will come into the phase depicted as the feet made of iron mixed with clay. This is the most ferocious form of Gentile rule. This final form is so ferocious that it is described in Daniel 7 as "dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong...it devours and crushes and tramples down." It is so dreadful because it takes all the contributions of the prior Gentile kingdoms--Babylon, Medo Persia, Greece and Rome one--and combines them into a single empire. It takes the idea of fractional reserve banking as a means of acquiring wealth and applies it globally under one banking system. It does this to pay for the expenses of a global empire. It uses military might to secure the interest and destiny of this global empire that has been projected by the autonomous mind of man. It is a wicked, wicked system that takes all of the great forms of idolatry--money, influence, intellect and power--and combines them into one single entity that will attempt to finally exterminate the nation of Israel. History is a Gentile war against Israel. Israel is hated. The only thing getting in the way of this Gentile Empire fulfilling its dream is God's covenant promises to Israel.

The vision of Nebuchadnezzar does not end with the great statue, it ends with the destruction of the great statue. A great stone, cut out of the mountain without hands crushes the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold. It is a fifth kingdom, a Jewish kingdom, that finally crushes all Gentile kingdoms; including not only the power structure, but also the core contributions, anything and everything that is worthless will be totally destroyed. Then the fifth Jewish kingdom will come in the earth and this is where the power shift is reversed and Israel becomes the greatest superpower. Israel is the head and the Gentiles are the tail.<sup>1</sup>

To see what effect this has on the Gentile nations in the kingdom, let's look at Micah 5:7. This is all in the kingdom. Micah 5 is almost exclusively blessing. You will see that all blessing to other nations is funneled through the nation Israel. If you are a Gentile nation in the kingdom, your blessing is channeled to you through Israel; and if you turn against Israel, then you do not get any blessing, you get cursing. Remember, these are great promises that come from the Abrahamic Covenant. The third promise is worldwide blessing. All the blessing comes through Israel. What addendum is put on that promise? If your nation blesses Israel, your nation will be blessed; but if your nation curses Israel, your nation will be cursed.

Verse 7: **Then the remnant of Jacob Will be among many peoples Like dew from the LORD, Like showers on vegetation Which do not wait for man Or delay for the sons of men.** What is all this describing? The refreshment that the nation Israel will bring to the Gentile nations. See, the world thinks that Israel is the source of all the problems. But actually, she will turn out to be the source of all blessing for the world. **Like dew from the LORD, Like showers on vegetation.** In Israel, you have the early rains and the latter rains but the dew in between. The early rains get the seed to sprout and grow to sufficient strength so that they could survive on the summer dew, and the latter rains to bring the plant to fruition. All three were necessary to get across. The nation Israel will be the early rain and the dew and the latter rains to the Gentile nations. She will be necessary for them not to wither away. She will be essential to their survival. She will be the source of blessing. This is saying that all the blessing on Gentile nations in the kingdom will be channeled through this one nation. They simply cannot get any blessing whatsoever independently of Israel.

Such blessings, such refreshments, he says, **do not wait for man Or delay for the sons of men.** What he is saying here is that just as man cannot do anything to manipulate the weather so as to bring rain upon his crops, so the nations will not be able to do anything to manipulate and get blessing in the kingdom. Blessing will be exclusively channeled through the nation Israel. She will be the key to all blessing. And apart from her, there is nothing but cursing. So, they had better be in good foreign relations with the nation Israel.

In verse 8, we see what will happen to the nation that is not in good foreign relations with the nation Israel: **The remnant of Jacob Will be among the nations, Among many peoples Like a lion among the beasts of the forest, Like a young lion among flocks of sheep, Which, if he passes through, Tramples down and tears, And there is none to**

**rescue.** In other words, if you are not in good relations with Israel, she will be like a lion that tramples and destroys you; she will defeat you militarily.

When it says at the beginning of the verse, **The remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, Among many peoples**, where is the **among**? Does it mean they will be scattered all over the Earth among the nations in that sense, sort of as they are now in the dispersion, but in positions of authority? Or does it mean they will be in the midst of the nations, as in the heart of the world, at the center of the world, and they will rule from there? It means they will be in the center of the world, at the heart of the world and will reign from there, because God promised to give them the land and to regather them, so they are going to be ruling from the center of the world under their King on Mt Zion.

Sort of like Israel is basically the center of the world right now, geographically speaking. She sits at the crossroads of three major continents: Europe to the Northeast, Asia to the West and Africa to the south. I don't know exactly what the new geography in the kingdom will be like, but there is no question that it will not look like the present geography. We already learned in chapter 4:1 that Jerusalem will be the “chief of the mountains,” it will be the highest point on Earth. And if Jerusalem is the highest point on Earth, then major geographical changes will occur at the introduction of the kingdom. Therefore, you have to throw out the present globe and recalibrate the GPS for the kingdom. The point is that in verse 8, whatever the new world is shaped like, whatever the continents look like, Israel will be in the center of it all. If you are in good standing with the nation Israel, then Israel will be to you a great source of blessing; but if you have bad foreign relations with the nation Israel, then Israel will be to you as a young lion, she will be a source of great cursing for you. If you try to get help from some other nations, then the text says at the end of verse 8, **there is none to rescue.** Again, the text is emphasizing that in this period of world history, Israel is the only channel of blessing. No foreign alliances can help you. The only nation that can help you is the nation, Israel.

Verse 9: **Your hand will be lifted up against your adversaries, And all your enemies will be cut off.** It is all in the singular, so it could be the Messiah or it could be the nation Israel, collectively. Probably, it is saying that the Messiah's hand, which stands for His omnipotence, will be lifted up against any adversaries, and all His enemies will be cut off, which means executed. It is possible (I say possible, because these passages are not always the clearest on the subject) that it refers to the final battle of Gog and Magog at the end of the kingdom, after the 1000 years; not the battle of Gog and Magog from Ezekiel 38-39,

but the final battle of all history when Satan is released and he gathers the nations against Israel and they surround Jerusalem. When that final attempt to destroy Israel and the Messiah occurs, God will rain down fire upon them and destroy all of them.

Now we come to verses 10-15, in which he says, **“It will be in that day,” declares the Lord...**” In what day? If we go back to 4:1, we find “that day” defined. **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<sup>2</sup> Many nations will come and say...**” So “that day” in Micah 5:10 is referring to the kingdom period. Now, let’s go back to “that day” in Micah 5:10: **And it will be in that day,” declares the Lord, “That I will cut off your horses from among you And destroy your chariots.”** It is in the kingdom that God is going to cut these things off from Israel. And if you scan through the verses, there is a whole series of things that God is going to cut off. In verse 10, "I will cut off your horses." In verse 11, "I will also cut off your cities." In verse 12, "I will cut off sorceries." And in verse 13, "I will cut off your carved images and your sacred pillars." So, the main idea of this section is clearly this cutting off. And what it amounts to is Israel being severed from gimmicks. Israel has tried every gimmick in the book to try and solve her problems, and here we have a whole series of gimmicks that they used. God is saying, “I am cutting off the gimmicks.”

See, God does not want His children to solve problems by gimmicks. God wants His children to solve problems by faith, trusting His promises. But the problem is that you cannot just work up faith. You have to be convinced that God’s solutions will work. The only way you can increase your ability to trust His solutions is to hear the word, hear the word, hear the word. That is why we are so intensely focused on teaching the word of God around here. It is not that we are against the other things, i.e., a great music program, a special program for singles or any of that. It is just that God says faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. So, if you have to sacrifice the word of God for these other things, it is just not worth it. I am convinced we need so much more content than we are aware of. Our faith falters every day and we turn to gimmicks. I see it in my own life and you see it in yours. If you don’t see it, it is probably because you don’t know enough to see it. It is remarkable how much content God says we need in order to make it. You know how much He says we need? This whole book. We need every book, every chapter, every verse division of this book. If we didn’t, He would not have given it all to us. He would have said, “Memorize this chapter or this verse and that is all you need.” But He didn’t. When we don’t know this whole book, we are turning to this gimmick and we are



turning to that gimmick because we have sucked all that up from the pagan culture we live in.

Think back to Israel's history in the period beginning with the end of the Golden Era of Solomon, moving into the kingdoms divided, the kingdoms in decline, and finally the Exile. This era of Israel's history is where they sink spiritually. David and his generation had developed a high biblical culture. They had two or three generations of strong Israeli families and this is what it takes to build a biblical culture. Strong families. By Solomon's generation, they had a high biblical music, not rock bands onstage assaulting you with sexual gestures, they had a high biblical art, they had a high biblical poetry, they had a high biblical architecture, and it was the greatest culture ever produced in the history of the world. It was better than Greece, it was better than Rome, it was better than America. But what did Solomon do? He began to import. He brought in foreign wives, he imported everyone from everywhere and, much like we are doing, the whole thing became a big melting pot of religious pluralism. You cannot import people without importing their idols.

This is why God established nations, and He set Israel in the middle of the nations to set them apart, to show the world there really is a difference and so they might seek God and find Him, though he is not far from each one of us. But once you decide to blur national distinctions and begin to destroy boundaries between nations, you are only creating a problem. But that is what Solomon did. Solomon created certain problems, he brought in the surrounding cultures and he began to multiply horses which the book of Deuteronomy forbade them to do because horses were key implements of battle. While it is not wrong to have implements of battle, it is a problem when you begin to put your trust in the implements of battle. Then he began to build chariots and chariots are another implement of battle which give you speed in conflict. Again, while it is not wrong to have implements for battle, like chariots, it is wrong to put your trust in chariots. How did the psalmist put it? "Some may trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will trust in the name of the Lord, our God." Well, Israel began to trust in horses and chariots. It is a gimmick. And it is the same thing we do. We have some problem in life and we try to solve the problem the way we were trained in the world system. Rather than going back to this book and trusting the Lord, we go with the world system. And God says that is rebellion against Me. And so, with Solomon, a cultural rot set in and God began to discipline them. Why? Because they were His elect nation. God loves His elect. They are His children, and He does not want His children living like the bastard nations.

So, He ripped the kingdom away from Rehoboam. Now you had two kingdoms, the northern and the southern. But did Rehoboam learn to trust the Lord? No, Rehoboam added his gimmick solutions to his father's, and then Jeroboam I added his gimmicks to the pile, and Ahab added his gimmicks to the pile and they built this great big pile of sin over here. Now they are not dealing with one or two sins down here in Micah's day, they are dealing with a whole pile of sins. In that situation, your view of God is so warped you cannot trust Him; because sin damages our soul. It distorts our view of God. If you no longer have a clear picture of God, it becomes very difficult to confess your sin and be restored. It is the same thing that happens when we sin and sin and sin; and what are we doing every time we commit this sin? We are training our flesh in unrighteousness, just as we train ourselves for any other activity in life. Eventually, our flesh becomes so well-trained that this sin becomes a life-dominating problem and we can never genuinely confess the sin and get restored.

That is where the nation Israel is today. They have built up these life-dominating sin problems. They depend on their military implements, they depend on fortresses like Iron Dome, they depend on fortune-tellers. These could just as well be military analysts, people who claim to predict the future, people Israel turns to for information about the future. They do all this to try and solve their problems and God says that in vv. 10-14. Joshua led the first conquest but he did not complete the conquest. You left pagan temptations all over the land and you eventually sucked up their program and became like all the other nations. So, this time, the greater Joshua is going to finish the Conquest and God is going to cut off everything in the land that is a gimmick solution and replace it with Himself.

**Verse 10: I will cut off your horses from among you And destroy your chariots.** Both are war implements in which they put their trust. God says, I am going to cut them off. You are not going to have them to trust. You are going to have Me and Me alone.

**Verse 11: I will also cut off the cities of your land And tear down all your fortifications.** These are the fortified cities or devices designed to protect cities in which they put their trust when the enemy invades. And God says I am going to sever you from these false gods. Military weapons and defense systems can become false gods. And God says when Israel comes into My kingdom, I'm going to cut them off from these false gods and I will be their defense system.

Verse 12: **I will cut off sorceries from your hand, And you will have fortune tellers no more.** Here is another gimmick that was common in the land of Israel, a gimmick used by King Saul. He went into the witch of Endor to gather information about the future. As I said, these could be military analysts who claim to predict accurately the future. It is all a false god, and God says I am going to cut all that off. There is not going to be any more of that. Do you see what God is doing here in cutting all this off? He is removing all the temptations to sin. There is something about being removed from the temptation. I mean, you could not have been tempted to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil if there was no tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For something to be a genuine temptation, it has to be there. What God is doing is removing all these things. I will cut off war implements, I will cut off defense systems, I will cut off future-tellers, and in verse 13, **I will cut off your carved images And your sacred pillars from among you.** Then he gives the purpose clause: **So that you will no longer bow down To the work of your hands.** They depended on them, they put their trust in them, and yet they were the work of their hands. Who built the weapons? Who built the defense systems? Who analyzed the future? Men did this. They are all gimmicks.

Then you have the things described in verse 13, the **carved images and sacred pillars.** The **sacred pillars** were, to put it bluntly, phalluses. Because the cult spoken of here was the Baal and Asherah cult, which was a fertility cult. They had taken trees and carve them into these pillars that represented the male genitals to stimulate fertility. They were an agricultural society and they wanted fertility in their crops, they wanted fertility in their animals and they wanted fertility in their families. So, the pornography was to stimulate sex, lots of sex, it was a prop to get you going. The males would have sex with their cattle and with female prostitutes, and the females would have sex with the male prostitutes. It was one big orgy cult facilitated by these phalluses all around. They were having all this sex because the gods and goddesses are like us. Notice what is happening here. The gods and goddesses are like us, they need pornography to get them going, they need to see us having sex so they can be stimulated to give us fertility. See what is happening? They are taking human experience and applying it to their concept of god and saying the gods are like man; they are just amplified versions of man. What doctrine is that? The Continuity of Being. They had no Creator-creature distinction going here. Their view of god was that he is down here with us, he is like us, he is just like a superman, but he is subject to all the same principles we are. And God is upset about this. Israel has a totally screwed up view of who God is and He says that's it. You are not going to do this anymore; I am removing all this, I am cutting it out, I am severing you from it.

Verse 14: **I will root out your Asherim from among you And destroy your cities.** This is a summary: **Asherah** was the female consort of the god Baal, and he is just simply summarizing the fact that God is going to get down to the root issue, which is idolatry, and He is going to root it out. Always, the root is idolatry; it is theological evil. Once we get that straightened out, then we can talk about murder, theft and all the other forms of social chaos. But to root out the idolatry, you have to get down into people's hearts. That is what God is going to do with the nation Israel. He is going to rip out the depraved, wicked heart and He is going to replace it with a new one. That is the only thing that will solve the problem. Then all these other externals, these outside temptations are going to be cut off in the kingdom. He is saying, no more fall for Israel; no more temptation to sin means no more fall. God is going to destroy that junk and He is going to bring in His great stone kingdom.

In v. 15, he concludes, **and I will execute vengeance and anger and wrath On the nations which have not obeyed.** In other words, here in the kingdom, the nations which do not obey the King are going to be punished. When Jesus Christ, the greater Joshua comes, and conquers, and is installed in His Kingly Davidic throne, He is going to rule with an iron rod. That rod is going to crush anyone that does not obey. The world is going to be forced to submit to the King.

Now, that may sound tough, but let me conclude with a quote from C.S. Lewis that brilliantly captures the essence of our God. It comes from his Narnia Chronicles. In the first book, Lucy and Susan ask Mr. Beaver to describe Aslan. Aslan is the Christ figure and these two children have never heard of Aslan. They ask, "Is Aslan a man?" Mr. Beaver says, "Aslan a man? Certainly not. I tell you he is the king of the wood, the song of the great Emperor beyond the sea. Don't you know who is the king of beasts? Aslan is a lion – *the* Lion, the great Lion." "Ooh!" said Susan. "I thought he was a man. Is he – quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion." "That you will, dearie, and make no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver, "if there is anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they are either braver than most or else just silly." "Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy?" "Safe?" said Mr. Beaver. "Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about being safe? Of course, he isn't safe. But he is good. He is the King, I tell you."

And so, He is fierce, He is not safe, but He is good. Perfectly holy, perfectly just, perfectly good. May He come and reign upon the Earth, and may He establish Israel as chief among the nations; and may His blessing flow through her to all who look upon Israel with favor and may He crush all who oppose.

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<sup>i</sup> Let's back up to where this is all predicted in the book of Deuteronomy. We have seen a lot of the discipline of the nation Israel in the book of Micah, and those are the cursings due to Israel's disobedience. We always turn to two Old Testament chapters to trace the five degrees of cursing which would come on the nation Israel for disobedience, Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. Normally, we are interested in looking at the cursings; but now we want to look at the blessings. In Deuteronomy 28:1-14, you have the blessing; observe how it is described. Try to observe the basis of the blessing. Why is God going to bless? Then try to observe what is the nature of the blessing? What is the substance of the blessing? Get all this soaking in your mind and then Micah will fall right into place. "Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. 2 "All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God:" What do verses one and two tell you are the basis of the blessing? Obedience to the Lord. So, it is spiritual in nature. It is not that we develop some new technology that is the basis of our economic prosperity. It is not that we have the biggest military which is therefore the basis of our security. It is spiritual in nature. Obedience issues forth blessing. Why are they in obedience? Because God will have given them a new heart, He will have placed His Spirit within them. So, He is not saying they get blessed because they have good works. Underneath it all, it is that they are already regenerated and they have the Spirit living within them; out of that, there is obedience that results in blessing. The flesh cannot produce obedience to God. So, this is an issuing forth out of the fact that they are in belief, they are regenerated, the Spirit of God has been given to them. He is the source of the obedience that issues forth blessing.

Let's look at some of the blessing. Verse 3: "Blessed *shall you be* in the city, and blessed *shall you be* in the country." Both urban and rural blessing. 4 "Blessed *shall be* the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock." That is all fecundity, population growth, starting with man, moving down to nature, both in the animals and in the soil, great production. All this is the nature of the blessing. It is not that you get to sit on a cloud strumming a harp. Verse 5: "Blessed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl. 6 "Blessed *shall you be* when you come in, and blessed *shall you be* when you go out. 7 "The LORD shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they will come out against you one way and will flee before you seven ways." That is blessing in the area of military victory. You don't get the blessing because of your strong military; you get the blessing because of your spiritual obedience to the Lord. The military victory is the blessing that comes as a result of the obedience. 8 "The LORD will command the blessing upon you

in your barns and in all that you put your hand to, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you. 9“The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, as He swore to you...” Where did He swear to them these great blessings in the land? In the Abrahamic Covenant. That is where the land comes in, “if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways.” That is the other covenant, the Mosaic Covenant. The land was theirs by divine right, the blessing in the land was conditioned on obedience. God will secure that by giving them His Spirit. Verse 10, “So all the peoples of the earth will see...” So now we come to what impact does live on all the peoples of the earth. "So, all the peoples of the earth will see That you are called by the name of the LORD, and they will be afraid of you." Who is at the head? Who is the great superpower? 11“The LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your beast and in the produce of your ground, in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. 12“The LORD will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.” Economic prosperity. 13“The LORD will make you the head and not the tail.” What is that? It is the same end as Nebuchadnezzar's statue describes when the great stone comes in and destroys the great statue. Israel at the head. "And you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I charge you today, to observe *them* carefully, 14 and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.” In other words, again, it is all based on spiritual obedience. All that is a lot of physical blessing but the basis of it is spiritual obedience effected by God the Holy Spirit living within the remnant of Israel which is the entire nation.

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