

The Book of Micah

from the book

Minor Prophets: Major Messages

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How To Use This Study Guide

1. A slow, unhurried reading of *Micah* is essential. Reading the chapter before looking at the notes, while working with the notes, and after finishing with the notes will give each researcher a powerful sense of the series of meanings within each chapter. It is important to be comfortable with all the names and places in the prophecy and to understand the announcements the prophet makes on behalf of the Lord. When possible, historical information will be included in the notes to increase reading comprehension and enhance application.
2. Our study of each chapter of *Micah* will begin with quotes from a work of the Writings called *Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms*. This work includes a verse-by-verse overview of all seven chapters of *Micah* that provides general information about the internal sense. Our research will help move us from the generals to the particulars of the internal sense.
3. Another important reference tool is *Searle's General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations*. This reference is used to find passages in the Writings where a verse(s) from the Word is either explained specifically or used to illustrate a doctrinal point that we can use in our study. There is also another use of this work. As we study, each researcher will be led by the Lord's Providence in myriad ways, according to specific needs or states. Knowing how to use this book will help each of us to explore relevant topics and look up related passages to increase our knowledge of the three-fold Word.
4. You will soon discover that not every verse, word, name, etc. is directly quoted in the Writings. But there are often other references to the same name, place, or thing in the explanation of a different verse of the Word. The hope is that reflection on these other doctrinal explanations will help us see possible applications to our study of *Micah*. We will need to use "derived doctrine" often. Please don't run away from this maligned term. If we use it properly and admit openly that it is derived doctrine, we bring no harm to the internal sense.
5. Keep some kind of notebook handy during your study times. Write out insights, questions, and any summaries you find helpful in organizing your thoughts about each chapter. **The goal of this study guide is not to give a detailed summary of the internal sense but to start each researcher's quest for deeper insight.**
6. At the end of each chapter in the study guide, you will find a study review. The review includes a summary of each section to help you reinforce and build on your understanding of several of the key points.
7. Begin each study unit with a devotional prayer asking the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts. Certainly, beginning in this sphere has the power to inspire and open our minds with a higher spiritual priority that will keep us in the company of the Lord's angels. As the Writings teach, we must seek to love truth for truth's sake. Such an approach will free each reader from preconceived ideas that might limit his or her ability to "see" the intent and message of the Lord's Word.

Introduction

Welcome to a rich, challenging, and wonderful study of *The Book of Micah*—one of the books of the Lord’s Word. This book makes clear from its opening verse to its closing verse that everything that is shared in this prophecy is from the Lord alone. “**The word of the Lord...came to Micah...**” The Lord indeed came to Micah. Micah did not have a retreat time to study, meditate, or write out insights he had while thinking about the Lord. He was not part of a special group called “the sons of the prophets.” The seven chapters are not about Micah, nor are they personal words arising from Micah’s deep concern about or sorrowful reflections on current or pending national events. Micah was a faithful servant who listened carefully to the Lord and then reported, without editing or altering, what was revealed to him. He did not sanitize the revelation for political correctness. The Lord called Micah to speak to the church about the serious decline of its spiritual health and to tell the church what was going to happen to it. Micah faithfully repeated the Lord’s declaration that the Jewish church was spiritually coming to an end. He had to tell the people that the Lord was going to make His advent so as to form a new church out of many people and other nations. Did the people of Israel want to hear these words? Would they be inclined to warmly embrace Micah for this message? As far as the Jewish church was concerned, this message was “nonsense.” They were the Lord’s favored people. Nothing—nothing!—could or would remove them from that special status. What Micah told them must have been a hard lesson and irritating for them to hear. Micah did not argue with the Lord, nor did he try to put “a positive spin” on the Lord’s words.

We would do well at the onset of this study to dedicate ourselves to a “Micahian” approach to the spiritual message of the Lord. Otherwise, we will be drawn into a series of natural, historical suppositions that could mislead and distract us. You might not have the time and academic resources to check out what biblical scholars do in this area, but believe me, they are sometimes “over the top” with their speculations and assumptions. Here are some examples: the dates of Micah’s life are uncertain, and some question whether Micah lived long enough to write the whole book, hypothesizing that some his followers finished his work for him; some scholars try to tie precise applications of “Micah’s words” to a particular king, perhaps an imposing neighboring king; others attempt personal speculations on what it must have been like when Micah visited Jerusalem, coming from his hometown in the farmland into the big, sophisticated city. In one section of *Micah*, scholars are amazed and amused with Micah’s “puns.” (See *Micah 1:10-15*.) They point to his “play on words.” Really, is that something the “Word of the Lord” would allow Micah to employ? Puns? Plays on words? There are many other examples of scholarly speculation that could be cited, but perhaps these will suffice for the time being.

The New Church teaches us that it is a sound spiritual principle of exposition to stay away from a preoccupation with the person and instead to focus wholly on the substance of the Divine revelation. As interested as we might be in Micah, his

lineage, his timetable in relation to other prophets, the kings ruling at the time of his prophecy, or what enemies were waiting to invade and conquer, these things are only secondarily important in relation to the correspondential representation and meaning of the spiritual sense, from the Lord, to eternity. The Lord's truth is not confined by time or space. His Word is infinite and eternal. We need to know about Micah to the extent that he was a faithful "scribe." He did obey, honor, and respect the truth of the Lord. We, too, need to be faithful scribes and adhere honestly to His Word. Will we avoid playing thematically popularizing games with the Word? The Lord will come to us when we are in a receptive state, willing to listen and obey. The all-pervading question is this: Do we want to learn the lessons in *The Book of Micah* to prepare and school us in the spiritual process of becoming a member of the Lord's new church? Are we willing to lay aside a "dead church" to take up a living church with the Lord at the center? If so, we want to go to the core of scriptural meaning and context and not to imaginative scholastically driven forms of speculation.

Having offered a cautionary note on scriptural study and application, let's look, with spiritual "balance," at some of the facts we are given in the Word about Micah. Our inquiry will strive to address the following questions:

1. What is said about Micah's name and lineage?
2. What was his timetable in reference to other prophets and kings?
3. What are some of the more familiar and loved passages in *The Book of Micah*?
4. What specific themes and passages challenge us to apply our hearts unto wisdom so that we can build up the walls of the Lord's new church?

WHAT IS SAID ABOUT MICAH'S NAME AND LINEAGE?

The name "Micah" means "Who is like the Lord?" Indeed, we must have awe and love for the Lord as our highest end. All other gods must fall down and leave His holy presence.

The Word informs us that Micah came from a town called Moresheth. Scholars are not sure where that town was, but they believe that it was about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem. That area is a productive agricultural area. Therefore, it is assumed that Micah, and his family, were "farmers" of simple heritage: no royalty, no prestigious pedigree, just farmers with a feeling of closeness to one another and nature.

Nothing more is known of his family. Did he have brothers or sisters? Did his family experience a "rustic" rural life on a farm? Let us state it again: Nothing is known about Micah except for his name, his hometown, and the kings ruling during his lifetime. Is his personal information omitted by Divine design? Is the implied message that we should focus not on the person but on the spiritual truth we are about to hear?

WHAT WAS HIS TIMETABLE IN REFERENCE TO OTHER PROPHETS AND KINGS?

Scholars state that Micah was “a contemporary of Isaiah and Amos and Hosea. Some have even speculated that Micah might have been a student of the prophet Isaiah...” (Al Maxey, “The Minor Prophets,” <http://www.zianet.com/maxey/Prophlst.htm>) The basis for this theory is a perceived similarity between certain passages of *The Book of Isaiah* and *The Book of Micah*. Why does Isaiah come off as the senior teaching prophet? (Note *Micah* 4:1-3 and *Isaiah* 2:1-3 for the similarity of messages.)

A check for similarities between Micah and other prophets provides an interesting study. *Micah* and *Isaiah* have fifteen or more passages with similar wording, *Micah* and *Jeremiah* about six. *Micah* is cited in *Matthew* 2:5-6; *Matthew* 10:35-36; *John* 7:6, 42; and *Luke* 1:72-73. Why mention this? The Word of the Lord comes to each prophet. There is no prophetic ownership of revelation. There are no schools or students who “said it first.” When it comes to the Word being written, the rule is simple: the Lord said it first. The Lord shared His insights and truths with His prophets. They did not make up the truths as teachers or preachers. They all heard it from the one inner source of truth—the Lord.

Concerning the kings mentioned in the passages of *Micah*, we are taught that Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Jotham is thought to have reigned from 739-734 BC, Ahaz 734-728 BC, and Hezekiah 716-687 BC. Jotham and Hezekiah were “good kings,” but Ahaz was a bad king. Some scholars say that the time of their three reigns combined totals 61 years. I don’t follow their math, but I offer it as an example of what happens when speculations become involved in reckoning physical historical facts.

If these three kings reigned a total of 61 years, how old was Micah when he began to write the words of the Lord? Was he led by the Lord from the beginning of Jotham’s reign, and did he complete his work for the Lord near the end of Hezekiah’s reign? Would it be more of a help, spiritually, if we were to reflect on the spiritual significance of the number of kings (three) and the spiritual meaning of the word “king” and the uses of kings? This certainly could come in handy when we recall that two kings were good and one was bad. What makes for a good king, and what made the one, Ahaz, significantly bad? Is it of spiritual significance that Ahaz reigned between two good kings?

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MORE FAMILIAR AND LOVED PASSAGES IN *THE BOOK OF MICAH*?

Here are a few. I hope you will add your favorites to this list:

Micah 4:1-5 “They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks...they shall no longer learn war.”

Micah 5:2-5 “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, for everlasting...for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth; and this One shall be peace.”

Micah 6:6-8 “With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil...He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Micah 7:7 “Therefore I will look to the Lord. I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.”

Micah 7:18-19 “Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage...He will again have compassion on us and will subdue our iniquities.”

WHAT SPECIFIC THEMES AND PASSAGES CHALLENGE US TO APPLY OUR HEARTS UNTO WISDOM SO THAT WE CAN BUILD UP THE WALLS OF THE LORD’S NEW CHURCH?

There are so many passages one could cite, powerful passages that warn us what will happen when priests and rulers misuse their offices. The Lord warns against the error of favoring self-intelligence. Pride, arrogance, and self-directedness will cause the church within to die. External ritual may go on, and the vestiges may be ornate, the rituals carried out in meticulous detail, but if the heart is not humble before the Lord, it is all for naught. If the shepherd is not vigilant and protective of the flock, they will be plundered by predators that stealthily lie in wait to attack in a vulnerable moment. Israel allowed the worship of other gods to enter into the Lord’s temple. Unbelievable atrocities were being committed against the Lord’s truth. Micah told the people the Lord called them “harlots.” They were receiving “the pay of a harlot.” (*Micah 1:7*) Things got so bad spiritually in the church that they had “no one to determine boundaries...” (*Micah 2:5*) “You have taken away My glory forever.” (*Micah 2:9*) Israel’s prophets were chanting “peace” while chewing away at the flesh of the people. Therefore, they were in a night state “without vision.” (*Micah 3:6*) The church was no longer offering fairness, justice, or truth. The Lord lamented that there was not a single person among them who cared for honesty and integrity. They had “wicked scales...with the bag of deceitful weights...” (*Micah 6:11*)

As the narrative of this sad calamity unfolds, the Lord’s report in Chapter 7 causes the glorious sun of heaven to break through the clouds of remorse. The Lord, through the prayerful petition of Micah, tells everyone of His planned corrective action. **“In the day when your walls are to be built...shepherd your people with Your staff...as in days of old.”** (*Micah 7:14, emphasis added.*)

Are you moved to pray Micah's prayer for our own church? Lord, build Thou the inner walls of Your New Church solidly. Please make our walls large, substantial, and secure so as to keep out the wiles of the hells. As Your sheep, we invite You to guide us with Your staff. In asking this, we will remember that a staff is used to guide, it is used to protect, and it is used to prod us along when we wish wrongfully to tarry.

"As in the days of old" is a wonderful part of Micah's prayer. The Writings teach us that it is a petition to become like the Most Ancient Church. What does that mean? It means to become innocent, to trust completely in the Lord for all of our benefactions, and most importantly to return to seeing the Lord as a Divine Human. Having the Lord walking among us, talking to us, counseling, and "touching" us is a goal worth pursuing. One of the passages in the Word that still moves me as it did in the days of my youth is the story of the Lord taking the children up in His arms—touching them, kissing them, and blessing them. How I wished I could have been one of those children.

The Lord's earthly ministry involved many forms of "touching." He touched the widow's dead son, and he arose from his funeral bier. He touched Jairus' daughter, and she awoke from her death sleep. When Peter began to slip below the raging waves, He reached out His hand and immediately brought Peter to the surface again. The blind recovered their eyesight because He touched them. What about the lame, the deaf, the palsied, the lepers, and the maimed? They were restored because "He touched them." Is it any wonder that Micah's prayer was to recover the ways of the Most Ancient Church? It was a prayer for the Divine Human to touch lives in restorative ways.

I hope you read well the story of *Micah*. Don't let the hells discourage you with their intimations that it dwells too much on gloom and doom. Instead, work through the prophecy with the knowledge that the Lord will come to the church's rescue. He will build our walls sturdily. The enemy will not be able to plunder and intimidate those within the walls of His new church. He wants us to leave behind the "dead" church. He invites us to come into a living, vibrant, and bright church that deals in fairness with honest scales. It is a church that knows its boundaries and will not play or get the pay of a harlot.

The Lord, in *Micah 7:2*, observed that "...the faithful man has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among men." Isaiah, when he heard the call from the Lord, said, "Here am I; send me." Micah, too, heard the call. He went forth to tell the church the "straight" news. Did they listen? There is no way of answering that question except to say that the Lord always preserves a remnant to work with when He builds again. The best we can do is to make sure we ready ourselves so we can say afresh: "Here am I; send me."

Chapter One

MICAH 1:1-2

“The word of the Lord that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. Hear, all you peoples! Listen, O earth, and all that is in it! Let the Lord God be a witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple.”

Passages from the Writings

Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms (P&P)

- “The descent of the Lord from heaven, and His coming into the world.”

Arcana Coelestia (AC) 2921 [3]

- “...the name ‘Lord Jehovih’ is used especially when the aid of omnipotence is sought and implored...that...such aid is sought, may be seen...in Micah 1:2... and frequently elsewhere.”

Derived Doctrine

“The word of the Lord that came to Micah of Moresheth...”

- This superscription puts before us the true beginning, or origin, of this prophecy. We are told that the word of the Lord **“came”** to Micah. Thus, the prophecy we are about to study is from the Lord’s revelation and is not the result of Micah’s keen discernment or judgment, nor from any disciplined process of meditative reflection. The “word of the Lord” **came** to Micah.
- *AC 426* explains that the “‘word of the Lord’ is spiritual and not verbal.”
- *AC 2015* teaches that the “‘word of the Lord’ must be in the glory of heaven and none of [it in] the world’s glory.”
- The name **“Micah”** means “who is like the Lord?” This is a name clearly designated to inspire praise of the Lord above all other kings, prophets, idols, or gods.
- The exact location of Micah’s hometown, Moresheth, is uncertain. Speculation puts Moresheth some 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem, 1200 feet above sea level, overlooking the coastal plain. “The city was ringed by a circle of fortifications built first by King Rehoboam, the son of Solomon...and designed to protect Judah from attacks by the Philistines and major powers...thus Micah was probably not from a simple peasant background but was familiar

with the civil officialdom and military authorities..." (*New International Biblical Commentary: Minor Prophets I*, by Elizabeth Achtemeier, page 292)

"...in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah..."

- Jotham reigned from 742-735 BC, Ahaz 735-715, and Hezekiah 715- 687.
- This indicates that Micah's preparation and delivery of this prophecy may have spanned some 55 years.
- What were the legacies of these three kings? **Jotham** was an able administrator. He subdued the Ammonites and built the upper gate of the Temple. **Ahaz** preferred playing international politics. Instead of heeding the Lord's advice, he scorned a sign from the Lord. Ahaz sought to buy the favor of other kings. He dabbled in idolatrous cults and weakened his country morally and financially. **Hezekiah** brought about reform. He ended the worship of pagan gods. He stood fast against the Assyrians. With the help of the Lord, a plague came upon the Assyrians and subdued them. Hezekiah built a tunnel through rocks to bring water to the people during the siege of the Assyrians. His reign constituted a "peak" in the history of the kings of Judah.

"...which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem."

- Why does the Word specifically mention these two cities in the prophecy of Micah? They were capital cities. Samaria was the capital of the Northern kingdom and Jerusalem the capital of the Southern kingdom. Together, they were centers that influenced the whole nation. The Lord gave Micah a message to help the church focus on the quality of leadership coming out of these important centers.
- *Apocalypse Explained (AE) 724* helps us understand what these cities represent: "**Samaria** means the spiritual church and **Jerusalem** the celestial church each in respect to doctrine." (Emphasis added.) We also have this teaching in *AC 2466*: "**Samaria**' denotes the church which is in the affection of truth and '**Jerusalem**' that which is in the affection of good." (Emphasis added.)
- The negative meaning of "**Samaria**" is as follows. "**Samaria**" denotes knowledges of falsity. (*AC 6592*) "**Samaria**" denotes the church of perverted faith. (*AC 9156*)
- The negative correspondence of "**Jerusalem**" denotes a perverted church; to be cut off from the understanding of the things of the church; and the church which is in falsities from evils. (*AC 10283, 5354, and 9960*)

"Hear, all you peoples! Listen, O earth, and all that is in it!"

- *Apocalypse Revealed (AR) 87* explains that to "**hear**" signifies "...to perceive and to obey; because one attends [hears] that he may perceive and obey..."

- To **“listen”** means to accept. AC 5467 and 5475 explain that “not listening” means “non-acceptance.”
- AC 10417 has this explanation of the word **“people”**: “People signify receiving influx from the Lord for the purpose of receiving mercy.” According to AR 483, **“people”** signify the church in falsities and those who are in evils.
- **“...all you peoples”** seems to represent an inclusive judgment or evaluation of the needs of the church. No one is above or beyond the need of the Lord’s mercy and of the primary truths of the Lord’s spiritual church.
- **“Listen, O earth and all that is in it”** seems to be a Divine call to the church to graciously accept the ways of the Lord, storing them up in the heart and in the mind. “O taste and see that the Lord is good.” (*Psalms 34:8*)

“Let [permit] the Lord God be a witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple.”

- These words, when said as a prayer, have a degree of softness to them. Self-examination requires the light of the Lord so we can probe the secret and dark places of the heart. He knows where sin lives. The Lord knows the intricate and stealthy inner connections of the roots of our propriums. The directions for the spiritual disconnection of these complicated bundles of evil come from the Lord out of His holy temple. What is the church’s part in all of this? We need to **let**, or **permit**, the Lord to be our faithful witness. The church needs to prayerfully implore His guidance and mercy.

Putting It All Together

P&P instructs us that the prophetic words given to Micah by the Lord refer to “the descent of the Lord from heaven, and His coming into the world.”

Micah—whose name means **“who is like the Lord?”**—brings us good news from the Lord. It is not a report of good news originating in the mind of a creative writer. Nor is it the culmination of tribal oral tradition. It is a message to the church coming from the holy temple of the Lord. Nothing of human self-intelligence composes or directs the prophetic words of the Lord. The Lord’s temple announces excitedly and lovingly the Messianic mission to save and establish His new church.

Those who “hear” Micah’s message need to do all they can to perceive and obey it, to change their spiritual attitude. The call to **all within the church** is inclusive; these words are not addressed to selected favorites. All are to “listen” to and accept the words of the Lord. Why? The spiritual condition of the church had fallen. Evil and falsity were at the center of the decision-making processes in the two kingdoms of Samaria and Jerusalem. The leaders of Judah and Israel were vacillating perilously. Their inconsistencies brought serious spiritual defects into the church. The people were spiritually lost and confused. Sadly, they were unaware of the consequences of the dangerous paths they were following. The conjugal principle, of joining the good and truth of the Lord into a holy union, was grievously lacking.

The Lord had to come to the rescue of the people. His mercy and love would not let the church go the way of destruction. How would the Lord go about saving the church? One way is mentioned in this prophecy: Let (or permit) the Lord God witness against the evil and falsity of all people. Let (or permit) Him to direct the process of self-examination. The truths from the temple of the Lord will remove—uproot—the vast tentacles of evil tendencies within the proprium. Will the combat against “the first root of life” (the proprium) be hard? *The Doctrine of Life* has this answer: “This combat is not severe except in the case of those who have given free rein...and have indulged them of set purpose, and also in the case of those who have stubbornly cast off the holy things of the Word and of the church. With others **it is not severe**; let them even once a week, or twice in a month, resist the evils they are inclined to, and **they will perceive** a change.” (*Doctrine of Life* 97, *emphasis added.*)

Spiritual hearing and listening are essential. These are the ways and means of perceiving and obeying and of receiving help from the Lord. Following the Lord always leads to spiritual victories. His way invigorates the hearts and minds of His people.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 1:1-2.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- May we think for a moment about perceiving and obeying? How does one learn to perceive? Perception is not something that is unique to the mind of a genius. Perception comes to those who are simple (sincere) of heart. Perception comes to the humble. As we desire to be enlightened by the Lord, He opens our hearts and minds so that we will see things that the proud and haughty will never see. Do any incidents come to mind wherein you were able to see things that previously had seemed obscure? Did the new insight come about because of your willingness to hear and obey the Lord?
- Obedience to the Lord does not arise from blind faith. Obedience starts with a strong belief that the Word of the Lord is true. Obedience is an effort to shun evils as sins. How did *The Doctrine of Life* say it? “Let them once a week, or twice a month, resist...evil...and they will perceive a change.” Are we willing to believe this teaching and obey the Lord by trying to cooperate with Him to uproot our unregenerate proprium?
- Micah’s name means “who is like the Lord?” Isn’t this a wonderful way to begin a prayer? No one can match His magnificent ways. So why would anyone want to reject His providential leading? We need to believe that the Lord will lead us in His way so that when it is good for us, He can show us what evils are to be shunned and help us overcome their controlling influences.

- Samaria and Jerusalem were powerful centers of religious life for the children of Israel. The leaders in these cities strayed and erred in their spiritual duties. Do you think it is necessary for us to pray for the church and its priesthood? Our church, like any other human church, is vulnerable to trends and mistakes. As the people of the church, we need to pray and involve ourselves in self-examination without being morose about it. Have you been successful in this endeavor?
- Our proprium is called the “first root of life.” The Writings teach us that this root needs to be plucked up and that we are to seek ways to let the Lord’s Proprium replace it. Can you identify with this concept? Do you think it will work? The human proprium is spelled with a small “p.” The Lord’s Proprium has a capital “P.” Is this a way we can distinguish the two in our minds and hearts?
- It is possible for the Lord’s Proprium to replace our proprium. It just doesn’t happen immediately. The question is, how patient and diligent will we be in a world that values instantaneous gratification?

MICAH 1:3-7

“For behold, the Lord is coming out of His place; He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth. The mountains will melt under Him, and the valleys will split like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place. All this for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what are the high places of Judah? Are they not Jerusalem? Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field, places for planting a vineyard; I will pour down her stones into the valley, and I will uncover her foundations. All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces, and all her pay as a harlot shall be burned with the fire; all her idols I will lay desolate, for she gathered it from the pay of a harlot, and they shall return to the pay of a harlot.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “The state of heaven then became changed. Then all the representatives of the church, which had been totally falsified, will be destroyed.”

AC 1311 [2-3]

- “...‘the highest’ is predicated of Him, that is, He is said to be the highest...On the other hand, judgment or the penalty of evil takes place in lower and lowest things. This explains why He is said to ‘come down;’...to ‘come down’ denotes the penalty, or judgment, inflicted upon evil. In Micah...1:3, 4.”

AE 405 [42]

- “In Micah...1:3-5...The Last Judgment is meant by ‘Jehovah going forth out of His place, He cometh down and treadeth upon the high places of the earth,’ ‘upon the high places of the earth’ signifying upon those who were in the high places, that is, upon whom judgment was executed, for in the spiritual world, just as in the natural world, there are lands, mountains, hills, and valleys. The destruction of those who are upon the mountains and in the valleys, who are such as are in evils from the love of self and the world and in the falsities therefrom, is signified by ‘the mountains are melted under Him, and the valleys are cleft, as wax before the fire, as waters poured down a descent,’ ‘mountains’ signifying the evils of the loves of self and of the world, and ‘valleys’ the falsities therefrom; of these evils of the loves of self and of the world that are signified by ‘mountains’ it is said that they are melted ‘as wax before the fire,’ since ‘fire’ signifies those loves; and of the falsities that are signified by ‘valleys’ it is said ‘as waters poured down a descent,’ since ‘waters’ signify falsities.”

AC 9156 [2]

- “In Micah...1:5, 13...‘sin’ denotes what is contrary to the good of charity and love; and ‘transgression’ what is contrary to the truth of faith; for ‘Samaria’ denotes the church of perverted faith, and so does ‘Israel’ in this passage.”

AE 919

- “...that ‘vineyard’ signifies the spiritual church is evident from the passages in the Word where ‘vineyard’ is mentioned.” *Micah 1:6* is cited as an example.

AE 587 [15]

- “In Micah...1:6, 7...‘Samaria when it became idolatrous’ represented the church devastated in respect to the truths of doctrine and the goods of life, or destroyed by the falsities of doctrine and by the evils of life; devastation in respect to all the truths of the church is signified by ‘it shall be made into a heap of the field, and its stones shall flow down into the valley, and its foundations shall be opened;’ ‘the field’ meaning the church; ‘the heap of the field’ its devastation; ‘the stones’ the truths of the church, and ‘foundations’ the natural truths upon which the church is founded; the complete devastation of these is signified by ‘the stones shall flow down into the valley, and the foundations shall be opened;’ the destruction of the church by the falsities of doctrine is signified by ‘her graven images shall be beaten to pieces, and her idols laid waste;’ ‘the hire of whoredom which shall be burned up with the fire,’ signifies the falsification of truth by applications to favor the loves of self and of the world.”

AE 695 [24]

- “In Micah...‘Samaria’ means the spiritual church in respects to the truths of doctrine, here in respect to the falsities of doctrine; for their ‘graven images’ signify things falsified, which are from self-intelligence; ‘the rewards of her whoredom that shall be burned up with fire’ signify the falsifications of truth from a love of falsity from evil and the consequent infernal delight; and as that love is from hell it is said that ‘they shall be burned up with fire,’...‘and all their idols will I waste’ signifies the falsities that must be destroyed; ‘for she hath brought them together from the reward of whoredom’ signifies from the love of falsity that is from evil and from the consequent infernal delight; ‘therefore to the reward of whoredom shall they return’ signifies that all things of that church will be truths falsified, because they are thence...”

AC 10406 [8-9]

- “...falsity...is invented, and evil which falsity defends; for it is said ‘the maker of his invention,’ and ‘the teacher of a lie.’ Like things are signified by a ‘graven image’ and a ‘molten image’ in the following passages...” *Micah 1:7* is cited.

AR 459

- “By idols are properly signified the falsities of worship from one’s own intelligence.” *Micah 1:7* is cited.

AE 141 [10]

- “In Micah...1:7...‘Graven images’ and ‘idols’ signify falsities that are from self-intelligence; ‘the rewards of whoredom’ are the knowledges of truth and good that they have applied to falsities and evils and have thus perverted.”

Derived Doctrine

“Behold...”

- The word **“behold”** means to keep something in sight, to look at, watch, view, survey, and discern. (*Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*) The Lord is directing us to focus on the purpose of His coming. As we pause, watch, stop, and stand before Him, it is essential to keep within ourselves a heart and mind that desire to see things in their proper perspective. With humility and an affection for good, spiritual discernment will show us how small and unworthy self-love is.

“...the Lord is coming out of His place...”

- **“Coming out”** of the Lord’s **“place”** suggests a state of holiness proceeding from the Lord’s Divine Human. See *AC 6845*, where **“place”** is explained in these terms. In *AC 3210*, the most holy place, or the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle, signifies the veriest Divine Good and Truth in the Lord’s Divine Humanity. Thus, we need to picture the cleansing radiance of Love and Wisdom coming forth from the Lord to clear out, replace, and overcome the evil and falsity that filled the minds of the people within the church. The Lord’s coming will require a humble acquiescence to His authority, His commandments, and a complete commitment to His providential ways.
- *Isaiah 40:3-5* reminds us what things will happen in preparation for the Lord coming out of His holy place: “Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

“He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth.”

- *AC 10019 [4]* instructs us that **“tread”** signifies that the Lord will overcome evil and grant the faithful the power to destroy evils and falsities. Those who misused their good offices to gain power and prestige will be exposed and stripped of their authority. The “logic” of their sensual corporeal ways will not be defensible. They will crumble as a result of the Lord “coming down” to assume the Divine Human.
- As much as evil and falsity seek to intimidate us with their boastful statements of authority and invincibility, they will easily fall from their “high places.”
- **Note thoughtfully** the following examples from the Word about how easily hell and its legions of believers will succumb to the advance of the Lord from His holy temple. This is a story of evil’s demise and not a story of the Lord’s anger.

“The mountains will melt under Him and the valleys will split like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place.” (Emphasis added.)

- “...‘mountains’ and ‘hills’ in the Word signify heaven and the church, where there exists love to the Lord and love to the neighbor, and, in the opposite sense, hell, where there exists self-love and the love of the world.” (*AE 410*)
- *Isaiah 13:7* pictures what will happen when the day of the Lord comes to fruition: “...all hands will be limp, every man’s heart will melt...” (Emphasis added.) The meaning of a melting mountain is quite clear. The haughty **“mountains”** of self-love and love of the world will **“melt”** away in the Lord’s

presence. The illusion of the enormity of self-love will vanish because it has no connection with **substance** and **form** from the Lord.

- “**...the valleys will split...**” A “**valley**” signifies the lower things of the mind, which are grounded in all things natural and sensual. See *AE 376*. When Israel journeyed toward the Promised Land, their periods of temptations (wars) often took place in valleys. Each enemy they fought represented a war against some serious, troublesome, natural or sensual evil and falsity.
- A “**split**” represents the breaking down of a lower natural system of thought. That which had seemed unified and cohesively bound together by the natural person had to be “**split**” by the Lord so the true inner dissimilarities could be seen. See *AC 9606*.
- *AC 35* offers this insight about the necessity of exposing “**split**” minds (a split will and understanding): “...those who say they have faith, and yet live in contradiction to faith, then the one mind is divided [split] into two, one of which desires to exalt itself into heaven, while the other tends toward hell...”
- “**...split like wax before the fire...**” To help us understand the correspondence of “**wax**,” do we need to consider the many types and multiple uses of wax? There is bee’s wax. There is a plant wax. Wax is used by bees to store honey. Wax is used as a sealant to help preserve things. Wax is used in beauty products. “Wax museums” make and display figures replicating people. Candles are made with wax. Signet rings need a drop of wax to leave an identification mark. Or, are we to focus on the malleable characteristics and low melting point of wax when it is near a flame? Maybe all of these wax characteristics have accumulative correspondential relevance to our spiritual lesson. The fallen church certainly tried to put a seal on its man-made concepts, valuing them above the Lord’s commandments. The leaders of the church tried to make themselves look ornately beautiful and honorable in the sight of others. Like wax, the truths of the Lord were molded this and that way to please and satisfy human prudence. Idolatrous images were presented and preserved in the temples. Customs and traditions were made binding and oppressive as if by a signet sealing this or that human law. The Lord’s love, like a flame, will easily **melt** and **split** all of the superficial “**wax**” impressions of natural and sensual people. Self-love may look flexible and durable, but it “melts” easily in the light of the Lord’s heavenly truth.
- “**...like waters poured down a steep place.**” *AE 405 [42]* explains that the “**waters**” that are poured down represent falsity. Water pouring down the steep incline gives a picture of what rushing water (flooding falsity) can do to the minds of those in a devastated church. A torrent of false ideas can wash away our internal spiritual resistance. Does the pouring water down the steep incline illustrate what powerful popular opinion can do to our decision-making? With the emotional shouts of the crowd, many a spiritual principle has been eroded by compromises. Can we picture “**waters**” pouring down a “**steep**” place? Visualize the momentum, mud slides, force, chaos, ruts carving out imbedded stones so they tumble from their place causing an avalanche. This phenomenon is a result of falsity, not of the Lord’s truth. This

prophecy illustrates the way self-love's mountain of falsity will "melt" and "erode" when the Lord comes down and treads on it.

"All this is for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel."

- Note well: we must pay close attention to the wording and meaning of the **"transgression"** of Jacob and the **"sins"** of Israel. Why? Consider the explanation we have in AC 6563: "Mention is made of both '**transgression**' and '**sin**' because of the marriage of truth and good in every detail of the Word; for '**transgression**' signifies **evil against truth, which is less**; and '**sin**' **evil against good, which is greater**; hence it is that both are mentioned..." (Emphasis added.)
- **"Israel"** in the highest sense "means the Lord in relation to the internal of the church... 'Israel' means the church with those who are interiorly natural, and have truths therein from a spiritual origin." (AE 768 [15]) From this we can infer that the **"sins of the house of Israel"** against the Lord's internal church had caused greater harm to the people and church than had the **"transgressions of Jacob,"** which denote a pride that falsified external truths. This was a lesser transgression. The two together, however, had undermined the marriage of truth and good.

"What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria?"

- We are given a clue regarding the nature of the **"transgression of Jacob."** Consider the representation of **"Samaria."**
- **"Samaria"** "denotes the church of perverted faith." (AC 9156 [2]) **"Samaria"** "denotes knowledges of evils." (AC 6952 [7]) **"Samaria"** "means...the falsities of doctrine...from self intelligence." (AE 695 [24]) **"Samaria"** "means a church whose faith is perverted." (AC 9156) And as a last example, **"Samaria"** "signifies a church in which truths are falsified." (AE 355 [30])

"And what are the high places of Judah? Are they not Jerusalem?"

- There were well over 80 passages we could have chosen to explain what **"Judah"** signifies, represents, and means. The following choices seem to convey the meaning of our text. **"Judah"** signifies "truth from the good of love to the Lord..." (AC 3654 [2]) **"Judah"** signifies the will of good and, in the contrary sense, the will of evil. (AE 962 [3]) **"Judah"** signifies "the perversion...and adulteration of the Word that is brought forth from evils of life and falsities of doctrine." (AE 922 [2]) **"Judah"** signifies "celestial love, which is love to the Lord...and in the contrary sense diabolical love, which is the love of self, from which is all evil, [causing] the devastation of the church." (AE 653 [7]) **"Judah"** means "saving faith which results from love to the Lord." (AC 3881) Lastly, this quote: **"Judah"** "represents the celestial element

of love, and the celestial element of love resides in the will part of the mind.”
(AC 6367)

- The “**high places of Judah**,” in the positive sense, represent the good of love from the Lord that would lift the will to exhilarating heights to see the saving power of His celestial love. The contrary sense points to the will of self-love perverting and adulterating the Word. This kind of love has no real height and leads to the devastation of the will.
- “**Are they not Jerusalem?**” This question, when studied in the light of doctrine, can open for us a picture of what the Lord intends the church to have freely. He wants us to experience the power of good and truth. He wants us to experience the exhilaration of good and truth. To appreciate the wholesomeness of good and truth, we need to see the contrast of an evil self-love that shuts down the power and potential of what the Lord perpetually endeavors to give us. What does the Lord want to give freely? Note what follows.
- “**Jerusalem**” represents “the new church in respect of the doctrine it derives from the Word.” (True Christian Religion (TCR) 217) “**Jerusalem**...means the church in respect to doctrine.” (AE 780 [7]) “**Jerusalem** represents those that are in the doctrine of genuine truth.” (AE 612 [3]) “**Jerusalem** signifies the truth of the church wholly vastated by evils.” (AE 401 [18]) (Emphasis added to preceding quotations.)
- AC 3858 calls our attention to what was intended: “**Jerusalem means the Lord’s New Church.**”
- Putting these passages to use, do we see more of the meaning of what the Lord wanted to freely give to Jerusalem? “**Are they not Jerusalem?**”

“Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field, places for planting a vineyard...”

- To begin the process of seeing and understanding the meaning of this verse, it appears we must first unlock the representation of the word “**heap.**” AC 8286 teaches that “to be heaped up” represents the Lord **gathering together**, into a **one**, the **offending falsities** that were part of religious life, in this case Samaria’s religious life. AE 223 [3] includes the word “vastations” when explaining “**heap.**” Therefore, heaping represents a clearing out, within a straying church, of false doctrines.
- In the negative sense, “**Samaria**” (the Samaritans) represents the “false doctrine of those who reject the Lord...” (AE 223 [20]) Doesn’t it make sense that, to renew the church, the **heap** of false doctrine must be cleared away to provide fertile ground to plant a spiritual vineyard? So, what does “**planting a vineyard**” represent? Simply, it means the beginning of the spiritual church “where the Word is.” (AR 650) Where the Word is, the Lord is.
- The “**planting**” is to occur in the “**field.**” AC 368 gives an expanded meaning: “a field signifies doctrine; whoever receives a seed of faith, whether a man, a church, or the world, is also called a field.”

“I will pour down her stones into the valley, and I will uncover her foundations.”

- In the positive sense, when the Lord acts to **“pour,”** it means He is instructing His people in the things of truth. It also means He is giving intelligence to those who genuinely desire truth from good. See *AE 518 [7]*.
- But in our text, we have the Lord exposing the negative conditions within the church to root them out so that Divine Love and Wisdom can establish a much-needed corrective and restorative plan of salvation.
- The **“stones”** being poured into the **“valley”** represent truths in the lower (natural) mind that had been built up to appear high and mighty. These **“stones”** were, in reality, lower truths that were spoiling and polluting the church’s worship with sensual and profane forms of self-worship. See *AC 1292*. In *AE 405 [23]*, the **“valley”** is described as a place where those who are in good will be separated from those who are in evil.
- The Lord’s announcement through Micah that He would uncover Samaria’s **“foundations”** pinpoints our attention specifically to the doctrines of the church that were erroneously derived from the literal sense. See *TCR 197* and *AR 876*. Why would the Lord need to uncover, or expose, these man-made spiritual **“foundations”**? Doesn’t the reason relate to the meaning of stones being poured into the valley? That which was polluting worship; that which was from human tradition and human prudence that mislead the people, had to be exposed. These errors had to be methodically eliminated. To borrow from the Lord’s parables, new wine cannot be put into old wineskins. New cloth cannot be sown with old cloth. New wine had to be put into new wineskins. Otherwise, the old skins would burst open and the new wine would be lost. New cloth had to be sown with new cloth to prevent the one tearing away from the other. The wise man built his house upon the rock, and the foolish man built his house upon the sand. Sturdy **“foundations”** are consistently mentioned by the Lord as goals to work toward. So let’s courageously ask the Lord to help us uncover any faulty foundation we might have built from the literal sense.

“All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces, and all her pay as a harlot shall be burned with the fire...”

- *AR 107* has some important things to say about **“carved images.”** “They who are in works alone and in no truths are like those who act and do not understand, and deeds without understanding are inanimate. They appear before angels like images carved out of wood; and they who have placed merit in their works, appear like those carved images, naked, without any covering whatever...”
- For the direct teachings of *Micah 1:7*, please go back and read *AE 141 [10]*, *AE 587 [15]*, and *AE 695 [24]* on pages 14-15.
- A **“harlot”** signifies the profanation of the holy things of the church “by the diabolical love of having dominion.” (*AE 1083*) A **“harlot”** “signifies

everywhere in the Word falsified truth...A harlot signifies that doctrine that had previously been the doctrine of genuine truth has become the doctrine of falsified truth." (AE 887 [3])

- **"Pay,"** in the positive sense, "signifies truth, by means of which...amendment is effected." (AC 9087) Therefore, **"pay"** in the opposite sense represents the means by which falsity resists the amendment of the heart to the end that it fosters spiritual deterioration.
- **"Fire,"** in the negative sense, represents "the loves of self and the world, and all evils thence..." (AE 539) **"Fire"** "signifies the rejection of the whole of that religious persuasion..." (AE 1083) This shows us that those who love themselves and the world have a love that will burn itself out. This is not the Lord's doing. It is just the opposite. Self-love inflicts a harm that is tragic because it turns the **"harlot"** loose in the heart. The **"harlot's"** unfaithfulness to conjugal principles seeks to undermine and disconnect the powerful benefits the Lord would give freely to those who remain faithful to Him.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes the first seven verses of *Micah 1* as a spiritual representation of the Lord's Advent: "The descent of the Lord from heaven, and His coming into the world. The state of heaven then became changed. Then all of the representatives of the church, which had been totally falsified, will be destroyed."

This is a prophetic message for those who intend to remain lovingly faithful to the Word of the Lord. This is a message for anyone who worries or wonders, "How long, O Lord, will You tarry in amending the wrongs of the world and the church?"

- The Lord promises that He will tread on the boastful concepts of the world. He will not be stopped nor influenced by the will or expectations of human opinion polls. *Isaiah 55:8-9* reminds us, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways...For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."
- All mountains of self-love will melt, split, and crumble before Him. The flood of falsity will undo itself. What, to evil, had appeared as impenetrable, invincible, and cohesive will melt in His presence.
- All transgressions and sins will be exposed and corrected by the Lord. This healing process will be performed thoroughly and with love, not anger. The foundations of evil will be uncovered so that all will see and understand the insidious nature of self-love.
- All idols, in whatever form they take, will be beaten to pieces. The unfaithfulness of the church to the doctrines of the Word will be exposed. Harlotry is the illustration used for the twisting and turning of the spiritual truth of His Word. The harlots "pay off," "bribe," and "curry favor" to "justify" their heinous actions.

- Will the harlot’s tempting plan of seduction work in the presence of the Lord? The Lord announces that the harlot will be burned and all her idols will be made desolate. Is the Lord responsible for this burning? No, it is the fire of self-love from within the harlot that brings about this destruction. The harlot reaped what was sown. Those who live by the sword shall die by the sword.

AC 10406 [8-9] offers us some information to reflect on when we sum up these verses. The harlot and the idols represent a “...falsity [that]...is invented, and evil which falsity defends; for it is said ‘the maker of his invention,’ and ‘the teacher of a lie.’” Our duty, as readers and believers in the Word, is to expose the inventions of falsity. With the Lord’s help, we can uproot the evil and falsity that defend idols. Maybe we should include in our daily prayer life a petition for help exposing the inventions of falsity—“the teachers of lies.” By exposing the lies and inventions of the harlot, we will have done a work that will be acceptable and honorable in the sight of the Lord.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 1:3-7.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- There is something comforting to the soul about hearing the Lord’s plan to overcome the efforts and goals of self-love, hell, and destructive disorder. In the face of appearances that seem to offer evidence to the contrary, it is most satisfying to get the fuller picture. His coming down changed things in heaven and on earth. Can we, in our limited way, appreciate the magnitude of His coming down?
- Has this study helped you with your faith and patience in waiting for the day when hills and mountains will be trod on by the Lord and melted down? Waiting for and wanting the New Church to be the crown of all churches can provoke some forms of worryment. Does this impatience cause a sense of disillusionment about the growth and survival ability of the organized New Church?
- Can you remember some hill or mountain in your life that you got help in melting down? Were there only a few or many more than you expected to recall?
- Idols take on many forms. For a moment, recall and review things that you feel are dangerously distracting and harmful idols. Do these idols have well-defended support in our daily life?
- The melting down process, the crumbling of mountains, the stones rolling into the valley are quite illustrative in the literal sense. Can you now bring those pictures into the spiritual realm so they can give extra power in your fight against them?

- What inventions of falsity try to work a subtle seduction of your principles? Hellish spirits try to prevent us from thinking about their inventions. They exhort us, “Don’t fixate on guilt and sin!” “Loosen up!” “Be flexible!” “Roll with the punches!” “Everybody makes mistakes. Look at so and so. They are role models, and if they do it, why not you?” Or, I have heard this comment carried further: “If they are role models and they make silly and grievous mistakes you don’t make, relax! You’re ahead of them.” The point here is that hell wants us to ignore any principled effort to love and establish good and truth in our lives. Hell loves waffling and procrastination to exist in spiritual matters.
- Is there some example you can think of wherein self-love eventually destroyed itself? We really need to have examples to work with so that we are not duped by the invincibility illusions hell tries to maintain before the world.

MICAH 1:8-12

“Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked; I will make a wailing like the jackals and a mourning like the ostriches, for her wounds are incurable. For it has come to Judah; it has come to the gate of My people—to Jerusalem. Tell it not in Gath, weep not all; in Beth Aphrah roll yourself in the dust, pass by in naked shame, you inhabitant of Shaphir; the inhabitant of Zaanan does not go out, Beth Ezel mourns; its place to stand is taken away from you. For the inhabitant of Maroth pined for good, but disaster came down from the Lord to the gate of Jerusalem.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Consequent mourning and that it will extend even to those who were in celestial good.”

AE 695 [24]

- “...‘for this I will lament and howl’ signifies the grief of the angels of heaven and of the men of the church in whom the church is, and thus with them with whom the Lord is; ‘I will go stripped and naked’ signifies mourning because of the vastation of all truth and good.” *Micah 1:8* is cited.

AR 537

- “...by ‘the dragon’ are meant those who are in faith alone, and reject the works of the law as not saving, has been testified to me in the spiritual world...I have seen several thousands of them...when from a distance they have appeared like a dragon...”
- NB: the Writings’ translation of *Micah 1:8* is closer to the King James Version than to the New King James Version (seen above). In *AR 537*, we read “I will

go despoiled and naked, I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning like the daughters of the owl." The King James Version reads: "I will go stripped and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons and the mourning as the owls."

AE 714 [20]

- "In Micah 1:8...this treats of the vastation of Samaria, which signifies the spiritual church in respect to doctrine, here the church vastated; devastation in respect to truth and good is signified by 'going stripped and naked;' lamentation over it is signified by 'lamenting and howling,' lamentation over devastated good by 'making a lamentation like dragons,' and lamentation over devastated truth by 'making a mourning like the daughters of the owl.' The lamentation and mourning are said to be like that of 'dragons and the daughters of the owl' in a representative sense; also 'his going stripped and naked,' 'stripped' signifying, the like as the dragon, to be destitute of goods, and 'naked,' the like as the daughters of the owl, to be destitute of truths."

AE 1129 [2]

- "In Micah...1:8...'wailing' has reference to good, and in the contrary sense to evil, it is said, 'I will make a wailing like dragons,' 'dragons' being those who are in the lusts of evil; and because 'mourning' has reference to falsity it is said, 'I will make a mourning like the daughters of the owl,' 'daughters of the owl' being those who are in falsities and their pleasantness, 'owls' signify falsities, because they see in darkness and not in light."

AC 2851 [15]

- "...the gates to the New Jerusalem and the gates to the new temple are much treated of...by which nothing else is meant than the entrances to heaven... Hence Jerusalem is called the 'gate of the people' (Micah 1:9)..."

AC 2327

- "...roll yourself in the dust..." "...that, in former times, especially in the representative churches, they bowed themselves so low that they let down the face to the earth, was because the face signified man's interiors...and the reason they let it down to the earth was that the dust of the earth signified what is profane and condemned...For the same reason they prostrated themselves, pressing the face to the earth, and even rolling themselves in dust and ashes, and sprinkling dust and ashes upon their head (as may be seen from...Micah 1:10...)..."

AC 7418 [3]

- “...in these passages...Micah 1:10...and also in the historical parts of the Word...by dust upon the heads, and also by the casting down of the body and of the head to the earth, and there rolling in the dust, was represented humiliation, which when genuine is such that the person acknowledges and perceives himself to be damned, but to be received from damnation by the Lord...”

AE 1175 [2]

- “Mourning on account of condemnation of evil is signified by ‘dust upon the head,’ and ‘rending the mantle’ signifies mourning on account of condemnation of falsity. The same is signified by...‘Rolling themselves in the dust’ (Micah 1:10)...”

Derived Doctrine

“Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked...”

- **“...I will wail and howl...”** signifies a sense of grief or sadness over the state of the church. It reflects a sense of grief over the absence of goods and truths in the worship services of the church. See *AR 1* and *27*. The same is expressed in *AC 4060*, *AE 695*, *AE 406*, and *Doctrine of Faith 53*.
- The meaning of **“stripped and naked”** was covered in *AE 714 [20]*.

“Tell it not in Gath, weep not all...”

- **Gath** was a city of the Philistines. As a Philistine city, it represented the false doctrines of faith separated from charity. Therefore, the Lord directed the inhabitants to cease speaking of such doctrines and to not weep over their end. Listen again to the directions of the Lord: **“Tell it not...weep not all.”**

“...in Beth Aphrah roll yourself in the dust...”

- The name **“Beth Aphrah”** means **“house of dust.”** The location of Beth Aphrah is unknown, so we need to turn to the signification of “house of dust.” The Lord was calling for a true sense of humiliation and repentance. He wanted them to lament over the lack of good and truth in the church and worship services. He wanted the interiors of their hearts and minds to be filled with the cleanliness of humility.

“...pass by in naked shame, you inhabitant of Shaphir...”

- The name **“Shaphir”** means **“beautiful.”** The location of Shaphir is not known, so once again, we need to consider why the Word uses this place of inhabitants and calls them to be embarrassed for their **“naked shame.”** Could it represent their turning what was beautiful, good and truth, into something that was empty and embarrassing? *AE 240* explains **“naked”** as signifying those who are without the understanding because they are without the will of good. *AC 9141* teaches that **“inhabitant”** denotes goods.

“...the inhabitant of Zaanan does not go out...”

- The name **“Zaanan”** means **“going out.”** We do not know the location of this place. *AE 445* explains that **“going out”** signifies having a delight in all genuine truths and goods. *AC 3690* tells us that **“going out”** signifies living more remotely from doctrine. *AC 4638* teaches that **“going out”** signifies desiring good to be communicated by others so that one’s own empty truths (hollow faith) might be strengthened. From these teachings, it seems the **“inhabitant of Zaanan”** represents those who have no interest in going out and finding what is from the Lord, no interest in filling their hollow faith with Divine substance.

“...Beth Ezel mourns; its place to stand is taken away from you.”

- The name **“Beth Ezel”** means **“house of nearness.”** The location of Beth Ezel is unknown. Turning to doctrine, we find the meaning for **“nearness.”** *AC 9378* teaches that **“nearness”** means togetherness and presence, a place where there are similarities. *AC 8159* explains that to be **“near”** means to receive influx. *AC 5884* describes **“near”** as meaning interior communication. *AC 9375* teaches that **“near”** means to be joined to the Lord through the good of love and the truth of faith. The **“house of nearness”** in this verse is said to mourn. Its “place to stand” is taken away. Why? When any part of the body is not used, there is a risk of atrophy. Is this what is being communicated about the church? Because they did not strive to be near to the Lord, they were in a state of spiritual atrophy.

“...the inhabitant of Maroth pined for good, but disaster came down from the Lord to the gate of Jerusalem.”

- The name **“Maroth”** means **“bitterness.”** The Word teaches us that they pined for good. Is this a positive statement about them? If we look up the word **“pine”** in Webster’s Dictionary, we read that **“pine”** means to “languish, to lose vigor, to have grief and anxiety...hence to wear away.” *AE 633 [3]* teaches that to **“pine away”** means to die out. *AC 10037* explains that **“pine away”** means to be consumed with iniquity. *AR 463* identifies **“pine**

away” with the ceasing (shutting down or disconnection) of the will and understanding. Although these passages do not use the word “atrophy,” it is certainly included in the meaning of pining. So we gain an insight into why disaster comes down and the gate of Jerusalem is mentioned. To **“pine away in bitterness”** is to lose the ability to enter through the gate of Jerusalem. The way, the gate, to heaven is lost when the will and understanding are disconnected and not functioning.

Putting It All Together

P&P explains the meaning of these verses with this teaching: “Consequent mourning and that it will extend even to those who were in celestial good.”

When a church diminishes and gives up on its covenant with the Lord, there is a sense of sadness that reaches far and wide. One of the direct teachings, *AE 695 [24]*, tell us that there was grief in the heavens among the angels over the sad spiritual state of the church. The church was despoiling things. The dragons and owls mentioned in the text represented the harm that faith-alone beliefs brought to the church. There was a heart-felt lamentation throughout the heavens over the disregard of good and truth. Angels were worried. They wondered how the damage would be repaired and by whom.

The Lord alone can save the church. Will His call for a state of genuine humiliation brought by rolling in the dust and bowing humbly before Him restore life to the church? Shouldn't there be some more noble or dignified act of contrition? Dust and ashes are representative of the uselessness of the sensual person. Dust is worthless and therefore to be overcome and dealt with in a sincere act of remorse and contrition. This is a worthy task—especially when the Lord directs us to deal with the dust of the sensual person.

The Word illustrates what opportunities were being lost by the church, using the examples of various **inhabitants**:

- “Tell it not in Gath, weep not at all.” Gath was one of the five principal cities of the Philistines. As a city, it changed hands often. As a city, it was near Judah. When the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant, they sought to carry it to Gath. What is this prophecy about? *AE 652 [29-30]* gives us a clue. The streets of Gath represent doctrines in which falsities from evil reign. *II Samuel 1:20* mentions Gath. “Tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.” In other words, the Lord is directing the people to cease from publishing the doctrines of falsity that were akin to the Philistines’ faith separated from charity. The Lord will not allow this message to be pronounced on the streets. “Tell it not.”
- Beth Aphrah (house of dust) highlights that the church wasn't willing to humble itself. Instead of bending before the Lord, they were stiff-backed and far too proud to fall on their faces in the dust.

- Shaphir (beautiful) lost its spiritual beauty and was empty, naked, and full of shame. Its people were naked because they were without understanding and without the will of good.
- Zaanan (going out) lost its delight in communicating and sharing genuine truths and goods. It was a hollow faith, void of the substance of the Lord.
- Beth Ezel (house of nearness) didn't desire to be near to or receive influx from the Lord. They didn't want the good of love and the truth of faith. Their place to stand was taken away from them. Where there is no substance, there is no form.
- Maroth (bitterness) pined for good. Because of the lack of sincerity, the church pined, languished, lost vigor, and wore away. Disaster came upon them. In their minds, it was the Lord's fault, so the text reflects their belief that the Lord did this to them. They lost sight of the gateway to Jerusalem. Spiritual apathy eroded their spiritual potential, and they lost their vision of what was to be.

The Lord and the angels of heaven lamented, wailed, and howled over the spiritual demise of the church. But that is not where the message ends. The Lord came down from His temple to restore, to open the way for Divine light to shine brightly in places where darkness hosted owls and where dragons snarled and brought fear into the hearts and minds of the church. The Lord's way and His church will win. His way is restorative and not destructive. The New Church will be the crown of all churches; its reign will be forever and forever. Amen.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 1:8-12.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Can you picture the Lord and the angels wailing and howling over serious mistakes we make? I can picture angels grieving better than I can picture the Lord grieving. I wonder why seeing the Lord doing these things is hard to picture. Is it because I want the Lord to be totally in charge and offering me a "controlled" message of hope and rescue? Or is my difficulty due to the fact that the Lord's grieving involves Infinite grief and that, for me, is a hard picture to comprehend? What is your thought on this point?
- Did the six "inhabitants" help you understand the issues that brought about the demise of the church? I found them enlightening. Taking a separate piece of paper to write out the message was significantly useful. Try it yourself. It helped me see and understand why they needed to roll on the ground and find their humility again. The beginning city of inhabitants, Gath, was told to do what? Stop talking false doctrine of faith separated from charity. Don't weep over this loss. It is the very thing that is killing your faith.

- For us: in what ways do we roll in the dust? How can we bow low enough before the Lord? This is not just a physical act. We are called to do it spiritually. How do we fulfill this spiritual act?
- Do you sense the depth of all six messages? Can we “update” them to match issues in our time? What can we do so that we don’t skip over such messages in favor of “fluff” and “feel-good” topics? This prophecy calls for alertness, dedication, and hard work. By joining together in this project of Word study, maybe we can inspire each other to obey the command to Zaanan: “Go out” and communicate with others. We need to share our faith so that it will become stronger.
- Let’s close by highlighting three of the six “inhabitants.” Please do the same for the others so that we see present-day application.
- Maroth, bitterness, pined for good. Their bitterness caused them to languish and be consumed. They lost sight of the gate of Jerusalem. Do you have a sense of how necessary it is to pray that bitterness will not be your pathway?
- Shaphir, the beautiful, needed to be protected and honored correctly. Following the conjugal principal is the way to restore beauty. Hell tries every trick in its arsenal to make our finest ugly and tarnished. What, for you, keeps you focused on the “beautiful” aspects of life?
- Beth Ezel, the house of nearness, is a worthy goal. We can find the way to be near the Lord. His Word stands ready to draw us to Him. What personal habits or devotional routines help you with your “nearness” to the Lord?

MICAH 1:13-15

“O inhabitant of Lachish, harness the chariot to the swift steeds (she was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion), for the transgressions of Israel were found in you. Therefore you shall give presents to Moresheth Gath; the houses of Achzib shall be a lie to the kings of Israel, I will yet bring an heir to you, O inhabitant of Mareshah; the glory of Israel shall come to Adullam.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Hence even these [those in celestial good] will begin to be perverted.”

AR 612

- “In many places it is said ‘the virgin and daughter of Zion;’ by whom is not meant any virgin or daughter there, but the church as to the affection of good and truth...” *Micah 1:13* is cited among many other passages.

AE 850 [18]

- “‘The virgin’ and ‘the daughter of Zion’ are mentioned in many places, as in the following...Micah 1:13...and elsewhere. ‘The daughter of Zion’ signifies the spiritual affection for the Divine truth, which is the love of truth for the sake of truth, and the desire for it for the sake of the uses of eternal life.”

AC 4816

- “...genuine intellectual is from truths...but in the opposite sense it is one who is not intelligent, and consequently falsity. This falsity is represented by an Adullamite, for Adullam was on the boundary of the inheritance of Judah (Joshua 15:35), and hence signified the truth which is from good; as also in Micah...1:15...but as most things in the Word have also an opposite sense, so too has Adullam, and it then signifies the falsity which is from evil. That most things have also an opposite sense is because before the land of Canaan was made an inheritance for the sons of Jacob, it was possessed by nations by whom were signified falsities and evils; and also afterwards when the sons of Jacob went into what is contrary; for lands take on the representation of the nations and peoples who inhabit them, according to their quality.”

Derived Doctrine

“O inhabitants of Lachish, harness the chariots to the swift steeds (she was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion) for the transgressions of Israel were found in you.”

- AC 9141 teaches that the word “**inhabitant**” denotes goods—loves. The name “**Lachish**” is believed to mean “a team of horses.”
- TCR 815 has a thought-provoking explanation of **noble horses with harnesses**. **People who are free** in spiritual matters are likened to eagles. **People not free** are like swans in a river. **People who are free** are like deer in the fields, groves, and forests. **People not free** are like deer kept in a park to please the prince. **People who are free** are like the winged horse of the ancients called Pegasus. **People not free** are like noble horses with beautiful harness accouterments in kings’ stables.
- In the book *Intercourse Between Soul and Body*, number 9 notes that those who believe nothing but what their senses prove are like charioteers who “... yoke the horses behind the chariot and not before it. It is otherwise with those who distinguish between spiritual things and natural things, and deduce the latter from the former...” (Emphasis added.)
- So we must do some reflecting here to find an answer. Is a “**steed**” representative of people who are free or not free? Will the harnessing of the noble horses be done correctly or incorrectly? When a horse is harnessed, it

is governed by the directions given by the rider. Does a harnessed **“steed”** represent that which is not free?

- **“Horses”** signify the love of learning from the Word. *AC 2760* and *AR 437* teach that a **“horse”** signifies an understanding of the Word as to its interiors. In the contrary sense, **“horses”** signify the understanding as directed by false scientifics. (*AE 654 [47]*) Which is it going to be? The understanding directed by the interiors of the Word or the understanding directed by scientifics?
- We have **four leads** to follow as we search for an answer. *First*, *P&P* summarizes this section by giving a cautionary message: even the celestial will begin to be threatened by the dying church. *Second*, the noble, swift horses are being harnessed to the chariot and will be under the control of the rider. That sounds like the inhabitants (goods) are not free. It also sounds as though the horses will be hitched backwards to the chariot. *Thirdly*, there is a charge that she (Lachish) was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion. *Fourthly*, Lachish is admonished and held accountable, “for the transgressions of Israel were found in you.”

“Therefore you shall give presents to Moresheth Gath...”

- In *Everyman’s Bible Commentary: Joel, Obadiah and Micah* by Thomas J. Finley, we read, “The root of ‘Moresheth’ means ‘become engaged,’ and the term for ‘parting gifts’ can also mean a ‘dowry.’” (*Page 127*) Finley also offers another translation, “You will give a dowry for the Fiancée of Gath.” (*Ibid*)
- We need to consider the words **“virgin” (bride and fiancée)** and **“gifts”(dowry)** in order to discern the spiritual issues behind these words. Let’s begin with the signification of the word **“virgin” (fiancée)**. In *AC 6742*, we read that “a virgin signifies **the good of the celestial church**...” (Emphasis added.) *AR 620* instructs us that a “virgin signifies the church as a bride, who desires to be conjoined with the Lord, and to become a wife; and the church which desires to be conjoined with the Lord, loves truths because they are truths...” *AE 863* explains that a “virgin signifies the affection of genuine truth, **and her defilement** signifies falsification of Divine truth...” (Emphasis added.)
- Doesn’t this last quote tie in with *P&P’s* summary of Chapter One of *Micah*? The church in respect to the doctrine of good and truth was being totally falsified, and that falsification extended even to **those who were in the celestial good**. The virgin, the bride, the fiancée, the church wasn’t being protected and kept chaste.
- As a church (a bride), she did not desire to be conjoined with the Lord. The decline of the church and its unworthy worship took away the elements of anticipation and readiness to be a dignified, chaste bride for the Lord.
- A **“gift,”** a “present,” or a “dowry” signifies “an instillation.” (*AC 5671*) In *AE 1171*, we read “...anyone may see that...by ‘gifts’ and a ‘present’ are signified worships; but what these worships were, and of what quality, cannot be

known unless it is understood what is meant..." AC 4456 tells us that a **dowry** signifies a token of consent. "The dowry" given to the virgin represents "a token of mutual consent" as a "confirmation of initiation." To accept the **dowry** was a sign of "reciprocity." AC 3960 [4] explains the meaning of **dowry** as "...the truth of good and the good of truth" working together to make a heavenly marriage.

- *Exodus 22:16* offers this interesting teaching: "If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and he lies with her, **he shall surely pay the bride-price for her** to be his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, **he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins.**" (Emphasis added.)
- AC 9186 defines a "**dowry**" as "fifty pieces of silver given to the father of the girl." "**Fifty**" signifies what is full and in agreement with good. See AC 9186. "**Silver**" signifies redemption by means of truth. See AC 2934. Thus, if the virgin, or church, was "enticed" and defiled, the offender was expected to make full restitution (redemption) for the offense. Is this what the Lord was teaching through His servant Micah? As the Father, is He telling those who defiled the church that they have violated the holy things of the church (bride) and must make full restitution for such an offense? Is this prophecy issuing a call for humility because they had desecrated the holy things of worship? Or is this prophecy telling them that He, as the Father, would not accept their unworthy "dowry" for the enticement and defilement of the holy things of the church?
- Are you somewhat awed at the depth and degree of meaning we have been able to extract from this passage? Is it any wonder that we are taught that the Word will be studied to eternity and its inner truths will never be exhausted?

"The houses of Achzib shall be a lie to the kings of Israel."

- Let's turn to three commentaries to get some help with the name "**Achzib.**" Charles L. Feinberg, in *The Minor Prophets*, page 156, calls attention to the belief that the name "**Achzib**" means "lie." He bases that meaning on a passage from *Jeremiah 15:18* in which what came to be called "achzabim" are described as brooks that are dry in the summer, "thus deceiving the thirsty traveler."
- Elizabeth Achtemeier, in *New International Biblical Commentary: Minor Prophets*, states that "**Achzib**" sounds like "akzab," which means "deceitful" or "disappointing." (Page 305)
- Thomas J. Finley, in *Everyman's Bible Commentary: Joel, Obadiah and Micah*, says that "the name sounds similar to the Hebrew term for 'deceptive' (akzab)..." He therefore loosely translates this verse as "The town of Deceit will prove deceptive." (Page 127)
- "**Houses**" signify the affection for good and the understanding of truth. (AE 675) "**Houses**" signify the things of the human mind, here the things of the natural mind separate from the spiritual mind. See AE 1146 [3]. "**Houses**" signify goods. See AC 2463.

- **“Kings”** signify truths that are from good, and many kings signify various truths that are from good. See *AE 625*. “Kings signify the truths of the Word and thus the truths of the church.” (*AE 1063*)
- “...the kings of Israel and of Judah, even the worst, represented the royalty of the Lord...” (*AC 665*)
- To draw near the spiritual meaning of this portion of the prophecy, we must start with the meaning of **“Akzib.”** The house of deceptive lies was pouring forth its deadly and voluminous deceit with the intent of destroying the “royalty of the Lord.” And what does **“royalty”** signify? “Royalty signifies the holy which is true.” (*AC 1728*) “Royalty signifies truth from good.” (*Heaven and Hell (HH) 226*)

“I will yet bring an heir to you, O inhabitant of Mareshah.”

- “I” is the Lord. He promises to bring an heir to Mareshah. Why?
- **“Heir,”** in the negative representation, signifies the unclean truths and falsities that belong to the natural mind. See *AC 3301*. **“Heir,”** in the positive sense, represents the good (the love) of truth. See *AE 435 [7]*.
- Is it safe, then, to see this as a reminder from the Lord to the faithful remnant in the church that His Advent was nearing fruition? Minds and hearts being held in captivity were being cheered with a sense of good news. A Divine Conqueror, a Liberator, was coming who would restore spiritual freedom to those in natural and spiritual bondage.
- “Mareshah” is “partly similar to the Hebrew term for ‘conqueror’ (yoresh).” (*Thomas J. Finley, page 127*)

Putting It All Together

P&P explains to what spiritual conditions the prophecy of Micah called the church’s attention. The lies, deceit, and falsity of Israel’s leaders (Lachish) were fast blocking out the light of heaven. The connection between heaven and earth was impaired. When the Word of the Lord is held in low esteem, spiritual indifference blocks out the Lord’s influx into the hearts and minds of His people. *AC 886 [2]* gives a terrific example to consider. The celestial church is the love and charity of the spiritual church. It is “celestial things from which spiritual things radiate like rays of light... from a flame.” Using this image of the light and flame, we can say that the light of spiritual freedom was, at best, flickering and in danger of going out. Good and truth (love and wisdom) were being harnessed and directed by those who only believed in what could be proved by the natural senses. Scientifics were leading people, the bride, the virgin, and the spiritual church. The church was being forced and violated by an arrogant self-intelligence.

The Lord was calling for a spiritual restitution. He wanted spiritual dowries, gifts, and fifty pieces of silver to come out of the hearts and minds of the people. The dowry represented an initiation, a new covenant to be entered into with Him. Why?

The Lord, as promised, was coming. He was going to rescue the hearts and minds of those who turned to Him in humility and sincerity. The Lord was going to be the Conqueror—the Liberator—the Light Giver. He would reestablish the communicational flow of spiritual charity and wisdom between Heaven and earth. The light will shine for all to see, and its flame will not flicker.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 1:13-15.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- It has been said that repetition is an important part of the process of education. Is the oft-given prophecy about the coming of the Lord's New Church needed so that we will never forget it while fighting against evils and falsities? Or is it given often because our actions and choices indicate that our hearts worry about whether, or when, it will happen?
- When studying the rise and fall of Israel, have you noticed that the Israelites often were victims of the very things that the Lord helped them defeat earlier? Why did they succumb to idols and false gods? Why did they forget so quickly the spiritual benefactions of the Lord? Are we any different or just like them?
- Our study used many forms of imagery: a bride who was violated; a house that poured out lies; the need to offer a dowry to make restitution; a renewal through a new covenant; and a strong Conqueror to bring a steady light to overcome the darkness of falsity. In what ways can we use these examples to renew our spiritual being? Are we reading and studying the Word to get the facts straight? We must go to the Lord's Word often so that we don't let others think for us. The Lord warned His people not to make His Word of no effect with man-made rules. Do we have a way of nipping such tendencies in the bud?
- The prophecy of *Micah* warns us that the celestial is under attack. What is our celestial? *AC 4750* gives us some points to ponder. The celestial is where the Lord resides in us. The celestial is where good, love, innocence, and remains inspire us to live the higher life. The celestial embodies our love to the Lord and its derivative love to the neighbor. Is our celestial still under attack?
- When we sit back and reflect on each lesson, there has to be something positive involved in what we are doing because the Lord is directing our thinking. Hell wants us to desist from such a study. To this end, hellish spirits will try to overload us with negative applications. Did you sense their efforts while reading all of the verses? If so, please go back and pick up the thread of hope, victory, and success that the spiritual sense offers.

MICAH 1:16

“Make yourself bald and cut off your hair, because of your precious children; enlarge your baldness like an eagle, for they shall go from you into captivity.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Consequently they also will suffer deprivation of all truth.”

AC 3901 [6-7]

- “Almost all the books of...[the Ancient Church]...were written by means of significatives; but in process of time the significatives have become so completely forgotten that it is not even known that ‘birds’ in general denote thoughts, although they are so frequently mentioned in the Word...That in the opposite sense an ‘eagle’ signifies rational things that are not true, and thus false, is evident from the following passages. In Micah...1:16...”

AC 9960 [6]

- “As mourning represented spiritual mourning, which is mourning on account of the loss of the truth and good of the church, therefore when mourning they made bald their heads; as we read in the following passages...Micah 1:16...‘sons of delights’ denote Divine truths; their ‘going away’ denotes the loss of these (that ‘sons’ denote truths, see AC 9807).”

AR 47

- “...in Micah 1:16...the sons of delights are the genuine truths of the church from the Word.”

AE 724 [12]

- “In Micah...1:16...Mourning because the truths of the church are destroyed is described by ‘making bald,’ ‘enlarging baldness,’ and ‘polling themselves,’ for the ‘hair’ signifies truths in ultimates, and those who are without truths in ultimates are also without internal truths; for this reason those in the spiritual world who have no truths from good appear bald. That truths are destroyed is signified by ‘the sons of thy delights have departed from thee;’ they are called ‘sons of delight’ from love of the truths and the consequent delights.”

De Verbo 10

- “...men who have loved the Word even in its ultimates, after death when they become spirits appear with becoming hair and angels likewise...But on the other hand all they who have despised the sense of the letter of the Word, after death when they become spirits appear bald. This is a sign also that they are without truths...Since baldness signifies truth...they of the Jewish church, when they left Jehovah and rejected the Word, are called bald...” *Micah 1:16* is one of the passages cited to illustrate this teaching.

Derived Doctrine

As we prepare to examine the spiritual sense in *Micah 1:16*, please note the following point: the New King James Version uses the words **“because of your precious children...”** The Writings use the words **“...sons of delights...”** Will our choice of translation be crucial in our pursuit of the spiritual sense? To prayerfully answer that question, let’s pause for a moment to consider the similarities or differences between the words “children” and “sons.”

- *HH 281*: “Children mean those who are innocent.”
- *AE 430*: “Children signify all who are of the church that are in truths from good.”
- *AC 489*: “Children signify the regenerate who have the understanding of good and truth.”
- *AC 9960 [6]*: “...‘sons of delights’ denote Divine truths...”
- *AR 47*: “...the sons of delights are the genuine truths of the church from the Word.”
- *AE 724 [12]*: “...they are called ‘sons of delights’ from love of the truths and the consequent delights.”

“Make yourself bald and cut off your hair...”

- *AR 47*: “By the head of man is signified the all of his life; and the all of man’s life has relation to love and wisdom...”
- *AR 47*: “...by ‘hair’ is meant love and wisdom in their ultimates...in the ultimates of the Word...in the sense of its letter.”
- *AR 47*: “...‘bald’ signifies the Word without its ultimate...Therefore...to induce baldness was the greatest disgrace, and a mark of extreme mourning...For which reason, when the Israelitish nation...perverted all the sense of the letter of the Word, this lamentation was made over them...”
- To **“cut off your hair”** would seem to signify the act of purposefully ignoring or rejecting the Lord and His Word. It seems to imply choosing evil and falsity over good and truth.

“...enlarging your baldness like an eagle...”

- *AE 759* teaches that, in the **positive sense**, an **“eagle”** “signifies spiritual intelligence and circumspection which the Lord gives to those who are of [the] church...”
- *AC 3901 [7]* teaches us that an **“eagle”** in the **opposite sense** signifies “rational things that are not true, and thus false...” (Emphasis added.)

“...they shall go from you into captivity.”

- *AR 567* teaches that to go “into captivity signifies that he who by means of... heretical doctrine misleads others from believing well and living well, will himself be drawn into hell by his own evils and falsities.”

Putting It All Together

When we consider what was mentioned in *Micah 1:13-15*, that the bride or virgin (church) was not being protected, that the church was being lied to and defiled, and its teachings falsified, is it a surprise that we are told in verse 16 that the church was going bald? The literal sense of the Word was minimized, and the significance of its inner meaning was, in time, being forgotten. The hair, the literal sense, was *purposely being cut off*. Little by little, their baldness was enlarged. As spiritual ignorance grew, the “sons of delight,” the “precious children” of Israel, were led into spiritual captivity. The eagle, the positive gift of spiritual intelligence and circumspection, was turned into its negative meaning of rational things that were not true. Thus, the people were being misguided by the priests of false intelligence and false circumspection. *P&P* summarizes the end of a defiled, bald church with these words: “Consequently they...will suffer deprivation of all truth.”

The word “mourning” cannot be left unmentioned in our summary. *AE 1164* teaches that genuine “weeping and mourning” signify the grief of soul and heart. *AE 863* indicates that mourning needs to be present when Divine truths are no longer sought. As readers of this prophecy, wouldn’t we do well to feel some of the grief of this story? Wouldn’t it do the organized New Church some good to mourn over the possibility that we too could follow in their footsteps if we don’t protect the virgin and bride of the Lord’s church? Our course is to not defile, deceive, or mislead. In our worship, we need to call for the eagle of spiritual intelligence and circumspection. By studying the literal sense of the Word and following the correspondential meaning inward, we will avoid “cutting off” the “hair” of the Word. *De Verbo 10* inspires us to love the Word. Those who do so appear after death “with becoming (beautiful) hair.” The flowing, becoming hair is a spiritual sign that means, “Here is an angel who has a reverence and love for the Lord and His Word.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 1:16.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- • What kind of spiritual conditions or “trimmings” lead a church to become bald? What hairs did they begin cutting off first? I’m wondering, what doctrines were seen as needing cutting? Is any dangerous trimming happening today? How bald are things in religion world-wide?
- Obviously, they didn’t see themselves as the Lord saw them because they just kept cutting and cutting. Reflection, having a good eagle, and circumspection are essential for spiritual growth. If I read this verse correctly, the major priority for the church should be close adherence to reading the Word, a love for the literal sense, and alertness to the meaning of the spiritual correspondences. What do you get from this verse? Which do you get the most from—home study or doctrinal classes? I find I like both, but if pushed, I must admit a preference for studying on my own with study guides such as the one before you and working with the many resource tools we have.
- On the quote from *De Verbo* about “becoming hair”: Do angels have any feelings of personal merit in the amount of hair they have?
- Mourning is called for in our lesson. Can you relate to positive mourning? Feeling sorry for a loss of a truth, feeling sad over a mistake of selfishness, feeling mournful that we have been negligent regarding the study of and reflection on the Word all seem to be healthy forms of mourning and not morbid states. Mourning does sound like a useful experience to keep the soul and heart protected from spiritual baldness. What ideas can you add to this call for mourning?
- Enlarging baldness like “an eagle” represents enlarging rational things that are not true. Do we need to work on examples to make this correspondence come alive? Such an eagle, if not checked, will lead the church into captivity.

Chapter Two

MICAH 2:1-2

“Woe to those who devise iniquity, and work out evil on their beds! At morning light they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. They covet fields and take them by violence, also houses, and seize them. So they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Concerning thought with the intention of doing evil, that they also do it from the will.”

AC 878

- “That by ‘hand’ is signified power, also authority (potestas), and the derivative self-confidence, is evident from many passages in the Word, as in... Micah 2:1...”

AC 4402 [9]

- “...in Micah 2:1...‘A hand for God’ denotes that there may be power.”

AR 137

- “That ‘a bed’ signifies doctrine is from correspondence, for as the body rests in its bed, so does the mind rest in its doctrine. But by ‘bed’ is signified the doctrine which every one acquires to himself either from the Word, or from his own intelligence, for therein the mind rests and, as it were, sleeps. The beds, in which they lie in the spiritual world, are from no other origin; for every one’s bed is according to the quality of his science and intelligence, magnificent for the wise, mean for the unwise and filthy for falsifiers...” *Micah 2:1* is cited as an example.

Derived Doctrine

“Woe to those who devise iniquity...”

- The word **“woe”** signifies grievous lamentations over calamity, danger, hardship, unhappiness, and destruction, either that such is present with the

church or as a warning of what will occur. See AR 769, 416, 441 and AE 531 [2].

- AE 844 describes the state of mind of those who **“devise.”** According to this number, devising means “doing evil to the good.” Devisors believe themselves to “be wiser than all others.” To themselves, they feel brilliantly ingenious, but to the angels, they are mad.
- To **“devise iniquity”** represents planning and scheming about ways to bring falsities and evils into the church. It means to plan to confuse people and lead them into living wickedly. See AE 684 [35] and AE 911 [6].

“...work out evil on their beds!”

- AR 137 indicated that a **“bed”** is either a place where the mind rests in the doctrine of the Lord or it is a form of self-intelligence drawn from the world. In this passage, we don’t have to wonder. We are told it is a **“bed”** of evil being supported by their self-intelligence.

“At morning light they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand.”

- **“Morning,”** in the positive sense, means a state of enlightenment. (AC 5221)
- **“Morning,”** in the positive sense, means, if the Lord is present, deliverance. (AC 6442)
- **“Morning,”** in the positive sense, means being raised to stronger proofs. (AC 703)
- It would appear that for the evil, **“morning”** represents just the opposite of the above. It would represent beds of ignorance, bondage, and weak proofs.
- So the evil, believing in the light of science and self, imagine they have a new state of light and that is what they practice **because** it is in the power of **their** hand. We have a clear distinction of powers. It is not the hand of the Lord at work. It is the work of evil’s hands to do that which appears powerful and right but which, in the presence of the Lord, is madness and wickedness.

“...they covet fields and take them by violence...”

- To **“covet”** means the presence of evil in the will and evil going out of the will. See AC 8910 [3].
- **“Fields”** mean the affections of the natural man. See AE 650 [6].
- **“Fields”** signify the church as to the implantation of the truth of doctrine. See AE 650 [49].
- **“Fields”** signify the affections for good in the natural man. See AE 1100 [4].
- **“Fields”** signify things voluntary which belong to the affections. See AE 513 [9].
- A **“field”** means the good of life that has its origin in matters of doctrine. See AC 3310.

- Pulling these teachings together, we get a picture of evil in the will going forth to possess and plunder the **“field”** of doctrinal implantation, the natural good, the voluntary, and the inclination to do good and to follow the Lord. The covetousness of evil urges them all to violence.

“...also houses, and seize them. So they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.”

- **“Houses”** mean man’s interiors, thus the things that are of his loves. Evil wants to destroy these things. See *AE 315 [8]*.
- “...houses, signify the affection for good and the understanding of truth...” (*AE 675*)
- To **“seize”** has an interesting meaning. *TCR 380* says, “It is an astonishing fact that the more anyone believes himself to excel others in learning and judgment, **the more prone he is to seize on and make his own ideas about the Lord** being a human being and not God, arguing that because He is a human being He cannot be God.” (Emphasis added.)
- Evil wants to rob all people of their spiritual inheritance. “...inheritance’ signifies heaven where is the good of charity.” (*AC 8324*)
- Evil wants to take from us our inheritance, which signifies the church wherein the Lord is the all of good (love) and the all of truth (wisdom). See *AE 388 [15]*. In other words, evil wants to remove from us the marriage of love and wisdom; hence, it is willing the destruction of the conjugal principle.

Putting It All Together

Woe to those who devise, practice, and skillfully disguise their intention of doing evil to others. Why? *P&P* teaches that such intentions of doing evil destroy the understanding and will of the schemer. Hellish spirits want to destroy the neighbor. And who is the highest neighbor they plot against? They have a fiery passion to destroy the Lord and His church. In modern spatial terms, their plotting goes on 24/7. It is a morning, noon, and evening fixation. Their maniacal dream is to totally subjugate the Lord to their rule.

It is sad to think about anyone wanting to destroy the Lord. What kind of a heart would entertain such an idea? Where is this idea hatched? It is hatched in a bed of self-intelligence that holds fast to doctrines the Lord calls “unwise and filthy.” It is a bed created by self-intelligence that believes it is “wiser than all others.” Sadly, those who do this hatching feel brilliantly ingenious, but in the eyes of the Lord and angels, they are mad. Read again the quote from *AE 844* where all of this is revealed.

The pitiful end of the hellish schemers is self-destruction. They lose the ability to grow and become wise in and from the Lord. The light and warmth of the conjugal principle flickers and goes out. They huddle in a dank spiritual coldness. They have their beds but no blankets. They have a night that is void of stars and moon. Can

anything sooth the bleak existence of these hellish plotters? They only have fantasy and madness to give them comfort. The Lord speaks this one sobering word to all who intend to follow such a maniacal life—“**WOE.**”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 2:1-2.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Did you find yourself taken with this section? Hearing about the plight of those who want to plunder, rob, and take away one’s inheritance is sad. The Lord calls out a warning. For those who join in with the plotters, schemers, and brilliantly ingenious, the end is not pretty. Did you feel the need to diligently amend the goals of each day?
- What kind of a mind loves to be in its “bed” plotting the demise of the Lord and His church? These plotters want the field and the houses. What does this represent?

MICAH 2:3-5

“Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘Behold against this family I am devising disaster, from which you cannot remove your necks; nor shall you walk haughtily, for this is an evil time. In that day one shall take up a proverb against you, and lament with a bitter lamentation, saying: we are utterly destroyed! He has changed the heritage of my people; how He has removed it from me! To a turncoat He has divided our fields.’ Therefore you will have no one to determine boundaries by lot in the assembly of the Lord.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Hence the church has become perverted.”

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- “...I shall in this first chapter merely adduce passages from the Word which contain the expressions ‘that day,’ ‘in that day,’ and ‘in that time;’ in which, by ‘day,’ and ‘time,’ is meant the Lord’s advent.” *Micah 2:4* is cited among many other passages.

Coronis 58 [3]

- “In like manner as the Lord foretold concerning the consummation of the present Christian Church...” *Micah 2:4* is cited.

AC 9854

- “...in the Word ‘cords’...signify portions of inheritance and of land, for the reason that measurements were made with cords...” *Micah 2:4-5* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

“Therefore thus says the Lord...”

- How many times have we read a statement like this in the Word? Familiarity with certain repetitive phrases has the potential to deaden our appreciation of what is really being said. **“Thus says the Lord”** needs to capture our thoughts so we remind ourselves that what is about to be revealed “is coming from the Infinite and Eternal.” The directive from the Lord is intended to carry us into the stream of Providence so that we might not be distracted by that which is finite and temporal. Eternal ends will be more satisfying than time/space ends. So, let’s concentrate now, with the intent that we will listen, hear, and obey what the Lord is about to say. *Matthew 13:15* reminds us of what happens to people who harden their hearts against what the Lord says: “...the hearts of this people have grown dull, their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.”

“Behold against this family I am devising disaster, from which you cannot remove your necks; nor shall you walk haughtily, for this is an evil time.”

- **“Behold”** calls us to enter into a state of “interior confession,” “humiliation,” and the “affection of good.” *AC 2329* explains the need of these things in connection with Lot entertaining three visiting angels sent to him by the Lord. Lot greeted them with the word **“Behold.”** This passage in the *Arcana* elaborates the positive sense of **“behold,”** that we cannot feign humiliation, we cannot feign affection of good. When insincerity says **“behold,”** it represents a confession being made with the lips when there is a “denial in the heart.”
- *AC 3154 [3]* explains what a **“family”** represents in the positive sense. A **“family”** “signifies truth which is from the Divine.” In the negative sense, a **“family”** would appear to be a discordant mixture of human affections that are not in agreement with the truths of the Lord.

- The Lord in His Advent will come to visit the **“family”** wherein profanation reigns. He does so with love and mercy. To those who are living in a spiritually evil **“family,”** His presence is unwanted, and it appears to them that He is devising a plan of disaster. This passage is written in the appearance of what the disorderly perceive. In reality, the Lord has no need to plot, devise, and plan revenge. These qualities are not in the Divine. Instead, the evil **“family,”** in the presence of the Lord, collapses and falls apart, all while trying to make it look like the Lord is out of control with rage and vengeance. In effect, even in their last moments of falling apart, the hells defiantly try to win converts to their cause by passing all blame on to the Lord.
- **“...from which you cannot remove your necks...”** AC 6033 explains the spiritual meaning of **“neck.”** “...the ‘neck’ joins together the head and the body...the ‘neck’ denotes the conjunction of the interiors with the exteriors... and thus the communication of the interiors with the exteriors, and also of celestial things with spiritual...” What does this mean? The Lord’s visitation of the corrupted “family” will be such that the shame of their external glossy veneer will be exposed, and it will be made clear that their external sensual “proofs” have no basis or connection with interior spiritual concepts. Evil’s head and body will not have a living connection. The miscommunication of “facts” will be around the **“neck”** of the evil, and it is not the Lord’s fault— because in hundreds of millions of ways, He sought to give them new beginnings, but they steadfastly refused His help.
- **“...nor shall you walk haughtily, for this is an evil time.”** AE 820 [7] teaches “...to walk’ signifies to live according to truths...and walk...signifies to consider freely, and to see truths, and do them...” The haughty, on the other hand, don’t want to walk, or see, the Lord’s truth. “...the Lord flows with power into those who are humble; but not into those who are puffed up, because the former receive influx, but the latter [the haughty] reject it.” (AC 9039)

“...for this is an evil time.” (Emphasis added.)

- There seems to be little need to research the spiritual meaning of this passage. If anyone is haughty in their walk of life, evil times will befall their heart and mind. The Lord wants to call our attention to this fact. He calls out, “Behold.” “Thus says the Lord.” Listen, My family, and have none of this kind of spiritual life.
- Let’s consider the words of *Deuteronomy 30:19*: “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life that both you and your descendants [family] may live...”

"In that day one shall take up a proverb against you..."

- *Habakkuk 2:6* has a similar prophecy. In *Habakkuk*, the wording is as follows: "...**all these take up a proverb against him...**" In this passage in *Micah*, "**one** shall take up a proverb against you..." Who is the one? The Lord is the only One who will judge His church.
- A **proverb** is a profound maxim. It is truth couched obscurely. But like a medicated time-release capsule, the truths within the epigrammatic saying release their spiritual antidotal remedies to overcome all the diseases of falsity that the proud and the haughty believe to be invincible or incurable. The Lord, as the One, will "**take up a proverb against**" them to expose their lies. He is announcing that truth will speak against the lies and that spiritual health will be restored to the Lord's New Church. How thorough, or effective, will the Lord's proverb be? Listen to the words of the evil family in this next verse:

*They will "...lament with a bitter lamentation, saying: **we are utterly destroyed!**" (Emphasis added.)*

- We need a picture to go along with this teaching from the Word. Imagine a person who thinks they are the sum total of their own authority. "This is my life, and I can do with it what I please." From their own "cleverness," this person thinks they can justify anything they want to achieve. But eventually, they will find themselves in the presence of the Lord and His Word. Can you picture the torment and lamentation they will experience? The bitterness they will feel will come from the discovery that the Lord's Word will rule over them to eternity. Like it or not, they will have to be ruled by the Lord's truths. To the evil, this will be a bitter reality to accept. They will howl and lament, crying out, "Oh no! Tell me it is not true. If I have to follow the Lord and His truth, it will utterly destroy me and all of my treasured (false) values." Is this intended to be a scary picture, or is it given so we can see and prepare ourselves for spiritual reality? Check out these numbers to see more on what it means to "**lament**": *AE 435, AE 431, AR 411, AE 618, and AE 622.*

"He has changed the heritage of my people; how He has removed it from me!"

- In the positive sense, we are taught, "**heritage**" signifies following the example of the Lord's life to eternity. (*AC 7190*) If we follow His example, we will be on a walk of life that will lead us to heaven. The converse of this is to walk the life of falsity as drawn up by the loves of the natural man, which leads to falsity. See *AE 730 [21]*. *AE 650 [53]* speaks of "**heritage**" as signifying the church.
- Can we, with confident conviction, say that the Lord has positively changed our heritage? He took on our human form and totally ordered (subdued) it and defeated the power and falsity of hell. Can we not join in and say the Lord

will remove falsity from us when we do the work of repentance and reformation?

“How He has removed it [my heritage] from me!” (Emphasis added.)

- These are words of amazement, awe, bewilderment, gratitude, and thanksgiving. When we look back to see what Providence has done for our redemption, it is truly wonderful. Those tendencies toward evil and our tendencies toward good are modified and uplifted by Him for our spiritual betterment. How great and wonderful are the ways of the Lord!
- Speaking of a changed heritage being “removed,” will this prophecy also help Israel face its errant belief in its “favored nation” status? For years, even to the present day, Israel has staunchly lived with a confidence in their “favored nation” entitlements. Subtly, this belief has dulled their sense of accountability and spiritual reformation. Hidden below the surface of this “doctrine” is the notion that no matter what they have done, God will, in the end, forgive them because they are His favored people.

“To a turncoat He has divided our fields.”

- Who are the **“turncoats”**? The traitors? The renegades? The evildoers? In *Micah 2:1-2*, we read about those who devised iniquity, worked out evil in their beds, and, in the morning light, practiced what they had schemed. They coveted fields and took them by force and violence. They did so without concern for a man or his family. Is this kind of person the **“turncoat”** being referred to? Hell seems to fit the role of a **“turncoat”** because a **“turncoat,”** a traitor, a renegade, an evildoer, wants to purposely plunder and misuse our spiritual fields to leave them barren and void of any crop of usefulness.
- A **“field”** represents the affections of the natural man. See *AE 650 [6]*. **“Fields”** signify the church as to the implantation of the truth of doctrine. See *AE 659 [49]*. A **“field”** means the good of life that has its origin in matters of doctrine. See *AC 3310*.
- What, then, do we have at issue here? The **“turncoat”** seems to be that which wants to misuse and possess a **“field”** so that doctrinal unity might dissolve into chaos. The **“turncoat”** wants heretical distortions to enter the church and cause its people to blaspheme the Lord’s truth.
- Did the Lord really give the **“fields”** to the **“turncoat”** so they might be divided? Or did He permit the **“turncoat”** to do this so that there would be an upheaval or breaking up of the hard and lifeless traditional thinking that had taken over the church? *AC 3316* seems to give some credence to this thought. We read that the Lord will allow states of “chaos” to enter into one’s life or church. A state of confusion is permitted to the end that things will be reduced to order. He wants good works working within chaotic states so that a **new order** may return to every misdirected church.

“Therefore you will have no one to determine boundaries by lot in the assembly of the Lord.”

- This verse is reminiscent of *Judges 17:6*: “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”
- The word **“boundaries,”** we are taught, signifies “truth scientifics.” See *AE 654 [8]*. In *AE 739 [11]*, we read that **“boundaries,”** in the negative sense, signify turning “to the world and thus receiving nothing of the Divine.” In *AE 1156*, we read that a **“boundary”** signifies “the scientifics of the natural man [that are] administered to serving the rational man for the purpose of thought...”
- From these *AE* sources, we get a picture of minds in a twirling and tumbling state, a free-for-all. Disciplined thinking was perilously jeopardized. Issues were not decided by turning to the Word or the Lord. Instead, civil and moral decisions were based on the cleverness of the speaker’s “truth scientifics.” Can you picture shouting, arguing, intimidation, and bullying tactics settling what is to be believed?
- Why should the Word make such an issue about having the **boundaries of spiritual discipline**? What is wrong with free (independent) thinking? Does the Lord want us to stay as close to Him as possible when studying the Word? Is this the way to love Him? In the book of *Proverbs*, there is a passage that succinctly captures the necessity of loving and following the ways of the Lord: “...he that sins against Me wrongs his own soul; all those who hate Me love death.” (*Proverbs 8:36*, emphasis added). Of the choices—love the Lord and hate death or hate the Lord and love death—is there really a question as to which one is best for our eternal life?
- There will be “no one to determine boundaries by lot...” To work toward the spiritual meaning of the word **“lot,”** let’s look at the positive and negative spiritual significations. In *AC 3239 [2]*, we read that “...the Lord’s kingdom is represented by land, which is distributed by **lots** among those to whom it is given to be possessed as an inheritance...” (Emphasis added.) *AE 727 [15]* speaks of the **“lot of the righteous”** as “truths from good, which the faithful have, and especially with those who are in love to the Lord...” (Emphasis added.) In the negative sense, **“lots”** and the **“casting of lots”** signify to “disperse the truths of the church by falsities...” (*AE 863 [10]*) See also *AE 376 [24]* and *AC 9942* for a similar meaning of **“casting lots.”**
- When anyone excludes the Lord in their heart, there will be no one to determine their spiritual (inheritance) **“boundaries by lot.”** Instead of Divine inclusiveness, instead of wholeness, there will be dissipation and destruction of good and truth. This is not of the Lord’s choosing. This is the choice of those who hate the Lord.
- **“...in the assembly of the Lord.”** *AC 10727* helps us understand what the **“assembly of the Lord”** will involve. It is a gathering of all the truths and forms of good in their entirety. Such an assembly is for the purpose of enumerating them all. For the faithful, it is an assembly where there is a feast

of plenty. For those who hate the Lord, it is an assembly at which they will be starving in the midst of plenty because they refuse to come and “taste and see that the Lord is good.” *Luke 1:53* says, “He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.” The proud and haughty will be made low, and the lowly will be exalted because of their faithfulness and love.

Putting It All Together

What “red alert” message does the Lord unfold for us in these verses? *P&P* cuts to the core: “**...the church has become perverted.**” This is not a new message. Every Minor Prophet announces this theme. Why do we need to hear about the perversion of the church again and again?

Is the bottom line that we are a stubborn and stiff-necked people? Why can’t we seem to learn from the plethora of examples given to us in the Word? Is it because our proprium thinks it knows better than the Lord what we need for our soul? Could the fact that we don’t read the Word often enough be a contributing factor that causes us to repeatedly wander away from the Lord’s “narrow way” to seek the world’s “broad way”? The Lord taught us that He would give us the truth and that His truth would make us free. If we ignore the truth, don’t we invite disorder and self-love to become the blind eyes of our faith?

The prophecy begins with: “Therefore the Lord says...” These words clearly announce and establish what is Infinite and Eternal. The Lord wants everyone in His church to follow His ways and laws. We are not looking for a democratic system where it is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. In the long run, we do not get to vote and make policies that are binding on the Lord. Those who love the Lord will follow His leadership. He already has a doctrinal formula that will lead us to spiritual freedom and security. “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (*Luke 12:32*) The Lord said that if we love Him, we will follow His commandments. So how will we answer the Lord? Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could commit to Joshua’s statement? “...as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (*Joshua 24:15*)

Those who want to have their own way feel that the Lord has devised disaster for them. In a sense, the people who turn their backs on the Lord will “put their neck” in a noose that cannot be removed. Why? Their walking haughtily brings about evil times. It is not the Lord who devises and delights in their demise. Those who walk alone say bitter things against the Lord. They make the choices that separate them from the Lord. Their choices cause lamentation. The separated ones allow the “turncoat” to divide the fields of their mind, and when they separate from the Lord, there will be no protective spiritual boundaries. Every person will do that which is right in their own eyes. Their separation will keep them from enjoying the “feast of plenty.” Instead of being filled with good things, they will be sent away empty. In a few words, the evil will be like those who starve in the midst of plenty. How sad and how foolish is the choice of this starving emptiness as an eternal path.

Have we answered our opening question: Why do we need so many lessons on the corruption of the church? Is the repetition of this topic not only necessary but essential for every church, age, and state?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 2:3-5.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Will we (the human race) ever find a way to keep perversions from harming the life of the church? *The Book of Revelation* and the Writings hold out the possibility that it will happen. The New Church will be the crown of all churches, whose kingdom will be forever and ever. My heart longs for that to happen. How about you?
- The literal sense gives the impression that the Lord devises disaster. Our doctrines teach otherwise. Why not put this openly in the literal sense so that no one will ever say such things about the Lord? Why allow others to draw on the negative aspects of the Word? I'd much rather have the literal sense of the Word tell it like it really is—hellish spirits devise disaster for those who will listen to them. Hell tries to put everyone's neck in a noose that cannot be removed. The Lord wishes only the best for everyone.
- Those who want to walk in a haughty way don't want the Lord to expose their sham. Of course, they will be bitter and will lament when their dark side is revealed. They want and need the adulation of others to bolster their as-of-self proprial love. They want to supplant the Lord. They want to be the ultimate god. Can we see their plot? Can we arm ourselves so as to escape hell's chaotic delusion? No boundaries, no accountability, no spiritual plan to carry into eternity.
- They were told about the turncoats in their midst. How do you picture the turncoats after reading about them in our lesson? They want to divide our fields. Doesn't this sound like a plan to "divide and conquer"?
- No boundaries— isn't this easily seen in the events of our world? The plan of laissez-faire is alive and well in our current events. In many contexts, we are encouraged to let everyone do their thing with judgment put aside. Can we freely speak to troublesome issues without someone putting a label on us to neutralize our point? Isn't it spiritually healthy to call out sin or disorder to keep our inner church from becoming perverted? That seems to be what this lesson is all about: we need to find ways to effectively protect the boundaries of our minds and hearts. The Lord has a plan that will work. How well do we know that plan? The Three-fold Word stands invitingly before us. If we enter the Word with patience, consistency, and effort, we can and will be given protective boundaries by the Lord.

Micah 2:6-7

“Do not prattle,’ you say to those who prophesy. So they shall not prophesy to you; they shall not return insult for insult. You who are named the house of Jacob: ‘Is the Spirit of the Lord restricted? Are these His doings? Do not My words do good to him who walks uprightly?’”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “There is no longer any use to teach any except those who obey...”

Derived Doctrine

“Do not prattle...”

- **“Do not prattle”** can also be understood to mean “do not chatter and talk nonsense.” That is what the prophets were accused of by those in the perverted church. When the prophets spoke the words of the Lord’s prophecy, they had a hostile audience.
- *Conjugal Love (CL) 232* has an interesting insight into the meaning of **“prattle”** or **“chatter.”** Swedenborg met a group of men called the “reasoners.” These people prided themselves upon being most learned. He posed a question to them: “What must the religion be whereby a man is saved?” They set out to break the question down into four groupings (beside others). After a period of time, Swedenborg asked them if they might have an answer by evening time. They responded that it could not be done “within a hundred years.” Swedenborg remarked, “Meanwhile you are without religion.” He continued, “You are anything but learned, for you are only able to think whether a thing is, and to turn it this way or that...is it not like arguing about [the size of] a cap which is never put on? Or [the size of] a shoe that is never worn?” This number ends with the observation that prattlers or chatterers cannot bring anything from reason. “They chatter [prattle] and talk nonsense.” The perverted church perceived the prophets as prattlers. The perverted church determined that the prophecies of the Lord were nonsense. **The perverted church did not want to listen anymore.**

“So they shall not prophesy to you...”

- The perverted church got what it asked for. The Lord announced to them that He would cease giving them His prophesy. It reminds us of what He said to the disciples when they confronted hostile attitudes while preaching and teaching. He told them: “...cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn and tear you in pieces.” (*Matthew 7:6*)

“...they shall not return insult for insult.”

- What do these words communicate to us? *AC 1844* speaks of the church being with “those who love the Lord, and who love the neighbor as themselves, who have a conscience, and are averse to...hatreds...” But those in the church are insulted and “treated with the utmost possible abuse and persecution, or else are regarded as being simple, mean, and of no account.” Is the Lord commanding His church not to begin a life of trading insult for insult? Taking that route would be injurious to the very core of what we are taught the church is.

“You who are named the house of Jacob...”

- The spiritual significance of these words reveal why the church shall not return insult for insult. *AC 3875 [3]* teaches that the “house of Jacob signifies to be in the **good of charity.**” (Emphasis added.) *AE 448 [11]* reveals that the “house of Jacob means those who are in **the good of life.**” (Emphasis added.) Trading insults with hell is not an essential part of these attributes. *AC 1950 [2]* teaches: “Rational good never fights, however it is assailed, because it is mild and gentle, patient and yielding; for its character is that of love and mercy. **Yet although it does not fight, it conquers all, nor does it ever think about combat, or glory on account of victory...** For no evil can attack good; it cannot even continue to exist in the sphere where good is, for when this merely approaches, evil withdraws and falls back on itself...” (Emphasis added.)

“Is the Spirit of the Lord restricted? Are these His doings? Do not My words do good to him who walks uprightly?”

- Note the three questions. Do they go to the heart of End, Cause, and Effect? The Lord’s Love (End) is not restricted. His love is limitless. His love wants to save all of His children. Is it His end that anyone should be lost or cast off? No! But sadly, there are those who refuse His love. Is that of His doing? Did the Lord cause hell to be filled with hatred and hurt? Does He want that hellish rebellion to be among any of His people? No! He causes not a single ripple of disorder. Together with the angels, He always rejoices over the one lost sheep being found. Those who listen, love, and follow His way will have the full effect of walking uprightly because they are doing the good of the Lord.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes this section with these words regarding the perverted church: “There is no longer any use to teach any **except those who obey...**” (Emphasis

added.) Do these words inspire us, as a church, to be among those who are committed to obey the Lord?

The perverted church doesn't want to hear from the Lord anymore. They count His Word as prattle. From their polluted secular temple, they utter hurtful insults. They count the Word of the Lord as babbling foolishness. The polluted church perceives the followers of the Lord as simple, naïve, and of no account. What do we do about their charges? Do we enter into a debate with them, meeting insult with insult? The Lord urges us not to enter into this fray. The believer will not gain from such exchanges. Instead, we need to hold on to the teaching that rational good never has to fight. The Lord's rational good wins, and the perverted loses. Evil cannot attack good—good conquers evil. Evil rushes away from good and falls back on its own faulty and hateful thoughts.

We need to reflect deeply on the three questions posed at the end of this section.

1. Is the Spirit of the Lord restricted?
2. Are these (disorders) His doing?
3. Do not My words do good to him who walks uprightly?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 2:6-7.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Have we heard, or said, the words “Do not prattle...” respecting the Word and doctrine? Have you ever tired of hearing the prophetic message of the Lord being preached at us? Being straightforward, I can recall some lectures and doctrinal classes that just wore my concentration out. I saw and felt no application of the presentation to my state. What I heard seemed every bit the part of prattle. Am I to be concerned about those times? Fortunately, I have heard some powerful and stimulating sermons and doctrinal classes as well. On the other hand, have you ever tired of the prattle the world lays on us?
- When someone berates you for being a Christian, or a New Churchman, are you tempted to return insult for insult? How about domestic insults? Do we turn back an insult with a soft answer? Remaining charitable in the face of insults is a hard thing to manage. How about the phrase “justifiable anger”? What is that all about?
- *AC 1950 [2]* has been, for many, a favorite quote. “Rational good never fights... it is mild and gentle, patient and yielding...**Yet although it does not fight, it conquers all...**” Is this passage a call for “pacifism”? “Rational” refers to our reasoning level. “Good” refers to our level of and capacity for loving. Together, “rational” and “good” refer to worldly issues being tempered and ordered by the Lord so that our internal spiritual delights will rule over our natural

- worldly delights. Rational good, if operational, helps us to choose that which leads to eternal ends and not proprial ends. Do any personal examples come to mind that might illustrate the term “rational good”?
- What insights have you gathered from the Lord’s three questions: “Is the Spirit of the Lord restricted?” “Are these His doings?” “Do not My words do good to him who walks uprightly?” The Lord’s Love leads to Infinite ends. His causes are not in disorderliness, and His providence will provide us with the effects of orderliness and uprightness.
 - What other insights did you gather from these verses of Micah’s prophecy?

MICAH 2:8-9

“Lately My people have risen up as an enemy—you pull off the robe with the garment from those who trust you, as they pass by, like men returned from war. The women of My people you cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children you have taken away My glory forever.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “...therefore they do evils of every kind.”

AC 9942 [10]

- In *Micah 2:8* “...‘tunic’ is expressed in the original tongue by another word, which, however, signifies spiritual truth and good; ‘stripping the tunic from off them that pass by securely’ denotes to deprive of their spiritual truths those who live in simple good; ‘to hold any one as an enemy by reason of a garment’ denotes to do evil to them on account of the truth which they think, when yet no one is to be injured on account of what he believes to be true, provided he is in good...”

AR 328

- “‘Robes,’ ‘mantles,’ and ‘cloaks’ signify truths in general, because they are general coverings.” *Micah 2:8* is cited as an example.

AE 395 [10]

- “In *Micah...2:8*...These words do not mean that ‘the sons of Israel have set up the enemy for the sake of a garment, and have stripped off the mantle from those that pass by securely;’ but they mean that they held as enemies those who spoke truths, and deprived of all truth those who had lived well and had shaken off falsities, ‘garment’ meaning truth, ‘mantle’ all truth because it

means truth in general; 'to pass by securely' means to live well; 'men returning from war' mean those who have shaken off falsities, 'war' meaning the combat of truth against falsity. Who cannot see that this is the spiritual meaning of the Word; and not that the people of Israel held some one as an enemy for the sake of a garment, or stripped off the mantle from those who passed by?"

AE 555 [8]

- "In Micah...2:8, 9...'To draw off the robe from them that pass by securely, returning from war,' signifies to deprive of truths all who are in truths, and who have fought against falsities; 'returning from war' those who have been in temptations, and who have fought against falsities. 'To drive out the women of my people from the house of their delights' signifies to destroy the affections of truth, and thus the pleasantnesses and felicities of heaven, 'the women of my people' meaning the affections of truth, and 'house of delights' the pleasantnesses and felicities of heaven, for these are the affections of good and truth."

AC 5608 [8]

- "In the following passages also by 'infants' is meant innocence, but in these it was destroyed." *Micah 2:9* is cited.

AR 434

- "By 'women' are signified the affections of truth, from which the church is a church, in many passages, as in the following..." *Micah 2:9* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

"Lately My people have risen up as an enemy..."

- The word "**lately**" means not long ago or recently. Can we determine how recently the people had become the Lord's enemy? No, we can't really determine this because we are not given a useable timeline. Perhaps the best advice we can follow is that given in *Psalm 90:4*. "For a thousand years in [the Lord's] sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night." The turning against the Lord was a slow, steady, and unnoticed process. The people of the church "fell asleep on the watch tower." Hell as the enemy sowed its seeds of discord while the people were asleep. The wheat and the tares looked alike. Spiritual discrimination was impaired. All of this provided fertile ground for hell to work with.

- To have **“risen up as an enemy”** signifies living the life of evil from falsity. See *AE 601 [17]*. In other words, the church moved away from the ways of the Lord into errant doctrines that were unbecoming and opposed to the Lord.

“You have taken away My glory forever.”

- At first glance, it sounds as if the literal sense conveys a tone of gloom and doom. The words “taken away My glory forever” can mislead us if we are not attentively careful. The Writings are consistent in forty-six explanatory references to the signification of the word **“glory.”** Let’s pick one of these references. *AE 365 [11]* teaches that **“glory”** signifies **Divine truth proceeding from the Lord**. If someone pushes the Lord away and chooses hell, what have they done to themselves if they die and enter hell? They have **taken away from themselves** what the Lord wanted to freely give them. He wants everyone to enter heaven. If people reject the Lord’s truth and choose hell’s falsity, **they have lost the Lord’s glory forever**. But hell cannot take the Divine truth proceeding **away**. The Lord is forever. In Him, there is no beginning or end. He is beyond time and space. He is our Alpha and our Omega. Hell can in no way threaten the Lord’s Love, Wisdom, and Use. In His presence, hell shrinks, flees, and knows that it is nothing.

Putting It All Together

Our lesson in *Micah* pictures for us the intention of a perverted church: it corrupts its mission of caring for the salvation of souls. Instead, it looks for every opportunity to rob and embarrass those who are in simple good (the external but innocent-minded worshippers). Those who are in a perverted church work to do evil to the truth that the “simple” want to think and speak. If the “simple” have worked at combating some falsity, the perverted church laughs and scoffs at their silly hope for reformation and regeneration. The cloak, the tunic, the robe are all representative of the efforts the “simple” use to protect their minds from destructive falsities. The perverted church, looking like a friend, snatches away their protection when the “simple” return from their spiritual battle. Instead of giving them congratulatory encouragement for their efforts, they rebuff, minimize, and snatch away their elementary care for fidelity.

To drive the women from their houses and to take glory away from the children conveys the evil intention of the perverted church to rid the “simple” of their affection and innocence. A perverted church wants to drive the thoughts, dreams, and aspirations of the “simple” from their houses of delights and from the pleasantness and felicities of heaven. In the end, who loses? The evil do! The evil take away—from themselves—the Lord’s glory. How long will the perverted church keep the (glory) Divine truth proceeding away from themselves? The Lord’s Love speaks these words of truth to hell: “You have taken away My glory forever.”

All of the above exposes the efforts of a perverted church. Instead of caring for and feeding the “simple,” it offers that which is heartless, uncharitable, and unnecessary. This message seems unbelievable. And yet, isn’t that what *P&P* summed up for us? “...therefore they [the perverted church] do evils of every kind.” Are our hearts troubled with the theme being shared here? Being forewarned about what a perverted church does can be useful. It reminds us about the shallowness of hell. Hell is self-love out of control. Hell thinks constantly about obliterating the Lord and His church. What will it get for its efforts? Nothing! Hell brings about its own end. Hell deprives itself of eternal life and the power it could have had from the Lord. The potential to receive life, beauty, and reality is lost, and in its place are dust, dinginess, hovels, selfishness, and fantasy—forever!

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 2:8-9.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Can you visualize how sin and evil surreptitiously slip into people’s hearts and minds? Some small deviation from good and truth, like the tremor that starts an avalanche, leads to one deviation after another. At first, it seemed like a harmless change. Maybe it was viewed as creative and innovative. The Writings talk about the harm “innovators” can cause. The story of Elisha, the sons of the prophets, and the pot of stew comes to mind. The sons of the prophets were experiencing a famine. Elisha told them to put a pot on the fire to make stew. One of the sons of the prophets went out into a field to gather wild gourds. He cut them and added them to the pot of stew. What was his intent? Was it to add flavor? Was it to add “body” to build a stew? We are not told what his motivation was. But we do know the end results. Those who tasted the stew cried out that there was death in the pot. Elisha solved the problem to represent the way the Lord is our spiritual “purifier.” He is the one who corrects what “innovators” do. Apparently, our lesson from *Micah* tells of a time when no one recognized that there was death in the pot. So, in time, they “ate the stew of the innovators” and became an enemy of the Lord. What can we do to check our “innovations” so we don’t become an enemy of the Lord?
- How do you understand the stealing of the cloaks? What present-day examples can you envision that represent the women and children being chased from their houses? Do you see examples of the “simple” being abused by a perverted church?
- Did you have to correct your thinking about “You have taken away My glory forever.”?
- If hell is self-love “out of order,” can a good and orderly self-love be of positive assistance in leading us to heaven?

- What do you understand to be represented by the meal that Elisha put in the pot to restore its benefits so the sons of the prophets could eat it in the days of the famine?

MICAH 2:10-11

“Arise and depart, for this is not your rest; because it is defiled, it shall destroy, yes, with utter destruction. If a man should walk in a false spirit and speak a lie, saying, I will prophesy to you of wine and drink, even he would be the prattler of this people.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “They shall perish, because they cannot be taught.”

AC 6377 [9-10]

- “As ‘wine’ signifies the good of love and of faith...in the Word...As most expressions in the Word have also a contrary sense, so also has ‘wine’ in which sense ‘wine’ signifies falsity from evil, as in...Micah 2:11...”

TCR 156

- “In the concrete, man’s spirit means simply his mind; for this it is that lives after death, and it is then called a spirit—if good, an angelic spirit and afterwards an angel, if evil, a satanic spirit and afterwards a satan...That ‘the spirit’ signifies also such things as pertain to a perverse and wicked mind is evident from the following...” *Micah 2:11* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

“Arise and depart, for this is not your rest.”

- The call to **“arise”** “signifies the elevation of the mind.” (AC 2695)
- The call to **“depart”** denotes that “they shall not trust any longer in their own wisdom, but in the wisdom from the Lord...” (AC 8185) AE 538 teaches that **“depart”** signifies “the power that is added to reasoning by knowledges that are applied for confirmation...”
- The words **“...this is not your rest”** may best be understood when we reflect on a passage from AC 8510. We read “...he who **acts from the truth**...is not yet in the order of heaven...he who **acts from the good**...is in this order. For the order in which man is led by the Lord is by man’s willing, consequently by means of good, for this is of the will, and then his understanding ministers, consequently truth...When this state is attained, then is ‘the Sabbath;’ **for**

then the Lord has rest... (Emphasis added.) **“Rest”** is a sign of overcoming some disorder in the process of regeneration. **“Rest”** is a sign that the conjugal principle resides in the heart and mind of the one being regenerated.

- The Lord knew the hearts and minds of those in the perverted church. They definitely needed to **“arise”** and **“depart”** from their ways. The perverted church was nowhere near the point of relaxing and resting in their regeneration. Too much work needed to be completed. This was a time to spiritually fight for that which embodied the elements of good and truth. This was not a time for resting in the status quo! **“Arise and depart...”**

“...because it is defiled, it shall destroy, yes, with utter destruction.”

- This verse highlights what we were taught in the passage above. The church, in the eyes of the Lord, had become defiled. There were serious errors eating away at the heart of its doctrines. The hidden falsities were not in a state of remission. Instead, they were growing and multiplying. The Lord was sounding an alarm. The presence of deep-seated falsities would bring about destructive results. Is a hidden disorder a minor thing? The words **“utter destruction”** clearly spell out what was ahead if change didn’t come within the heart and mind of the church.

“If a man should walk in a false spirit and speak a lie...”

- TCR 156 identifies what a **“false spirit”** is. The **“false spirit”** signifies **“such things as pertain to a perverse and wicked mind...”** A **“false spirit”** unashamedly and willingly speaks the lies of hell.

“...‘saying, I will prophesy to you of wine and drink, even he would be the prattler of this people.’”

- AC 6377 [9-10] explains that the **“wine”** in this verse signifies **“...falsity from evil.”**
- AC 3087 gives us two ideas to work with regarding the word **“drink.”** **“...drink signifies what is successive...Drink signifies initiation...”** AE 386 [6] identifies **“drink”** as **“...communication and appropriation...”** (Emphasis added.)
- AE 376 [31] adds a dimension to our study with these words: **“...‘the priest and the prophet go astray through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are gone astray through strong drink,’** signifies that such are those who ought to be in the doctrine of good and truth...**‘they go astray among the seeing, they waver in judgment,’ signifies that they do not see the truths of intelligence.”** (Emphasis added.)
- **“...even he would be the prattler of this people.”** We need to recall several things to grasp what is being revealed. The perverted church called Micah’s words **“prattle.”** They accused him of speaking words of nonsense. In disgust,

they asked him to cease talking to them. They didn't want to listen anymore. Now, we hear the Lord evaluating the teachings of the perverted priests. Their lies, their strong drink have misled the people. They are judged as **"prattlers"** among the people. It is their wavering in matters of judgment that has blinded them to the truths of intelligence. Consequently, the record is set straight: it is the perverted church that speaks nonsense.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarized these verses by saying: "They shall perish, because they cannot be taught." What? Why is this so? Isn't this a sad summation of the end of a church? Were they so stubborn and set in their ways that there was no hope for them? Couldn't they have had some chance, slight as it may have been, to come to their senses? What about the possibility of a remnant coming out of this mess?

Maybe the clue to understanding why spiritual education could not work is found by focusing on the words "strong drink," "going astray," and "wavering." Did the people become spiritually intoxicated with their falsity? Speaking of intoxication, strong drink affects people differently. There are those who, when drunk, will laugh at everything and act the part of a clown. Some drunks act as if everyone in the room is a friend. Others become pugnacious and want to fight anyone and everyone at the drop of a hat. Other drunks slip into a morose state wherein they feel sorry for themselves and feel badly done by, picked on unfairly, and they weep and wallow in self-pity. Some drink themselves into a stupor and have no idea who or where they are, or what they are doing. Intoxication causes some to fall into total denial. "I am not drunk." "I'm able to drive myself home." "My judgment has not become impaired." I have heard of some who, when they drink too much, imagine that the alcohol has given them a more relaxed and comfortable range of flexibility and preparation to handle anything and everything.

The loss of balance and equilibrium is present in all forms of drunkenness. Teaching or showing a spiritual drunk the way of the Lord apparently is hopeless. They will laugh, fight, deny, feel self-pity, and black-out when steadiness, stability, firmness, and clear sight are called for. False priests and prophets will, in their drunken state, talk prattle among the people.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 2:10-11.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Maintaining spiritual sobriety is essential. How do we do this? Our lesson indicates that we need to welcome and want education by the Lord. We need to avoid "strong drink," checking regularly to make sure we are not following along with the "strong drink" of popular opinions. The one way to sobriety

seems to be remaining in close touch with the Word. Study, reflection, and application of the Word to life are essential. Also, it appears that we need to make decisions but stand ready to change and admit errors when we are shown them. How good are we at maintaining this openness to the Lord's corrective ways?

- Did any of the patterns of intoxication strike home? Are we giddy, pugnacious, and prone to self-pity? Do we think that the Lord favors others more than us? Are we into self-denial? Are we wavering in our faith system? Have we listened to false priests and prophets and been blindly led by their persuasive prattle?
- My guess is that if you are willing to read and study the Word using a study guide, you will fare well with some of these questions. Is that your sense, too?
- One last point: Let's turn our attention to the Lord preserving the "simple" within the church. Does "the simple" mean people who have a low IQ? Does "the simple" mean someone who trusts and follows the Lord with little proprium involved? The Lord, when dealing with the end of one church, introduces a new church from a remnant. What do you anticipate will happen when that remnant starts following the Lord's directions?

MICAH 2:12-13

"I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold, like a flock in the midst of their pasture; they shall make a loud noise because of so many people. The one who breaks open will come up before them; they will break out, pass through the gate, and go out by it; their king will pass before them, with the Lord at their head."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "Such things do not invade those who will be of the Lord's new church."

AC 2851 [14]

- "...when a man is of such a character as to admit goods and truths, and thus angels, the infernal spirits are then driven away by the Lord from the seat; and on being driven away, the gate of heaven or heaven itself is opened. This gate is also mentioned in the Word in various places; as in...Micah 2:13."

AR 899

- "By 'the gates' are signified the knowledges of truth and good from the Word...Knowledges of truth and good are...signified by 'gates' in these passages...Micah 2:13..."

Derived Doctrine

"I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob..."

- The Lord will in a sure manner, the Lord will indeed, the Lord will infallibly assemble all of Jacob. What does "assemble" signify? AC 6334 and 6338 explain that to "'assemble' means that they should arrange themselves into order." In our verse, we need to note that the Lord does the assembling. The Lord is promising to return order to the abused and perverted church.
- "**O Jacob**" is mentioned for the following reason: "In general...'Jacob' in the Word...signifies what is external of the church." (AC 4286, *emphasis added*.)
- Why does the Lord announce that the assembling will begin with Jacob? AC 1083 and AC 7795 teach that "before a man becomes a church, that is before he is regenerated, man is in externals; and **when he is being regenerated he is led from externals to internals...**" (*Emphasis added*.)

"I will surely gather the remnant of Israel..."

- The "**I**" in this verse is the Lord. He is our action. We are the reaction. Read *Divine Love and Wisdom (DLW) 68* for additional insights into this concept of the Lord as action and people as reaction.
- AC 5897 [3] helps us with the words "**the remnant of Israel.**" "...in the Word, especially the prophetic Word, by 'Israel' was not meant Israel, nor by 'Jacob' Jacob, but by both the church and what is of the church, and this being the case, by the 'remains' [remnant] are not meant the remains [remnant] of Israel and Jacob, but the truths and goods which belong to the church." Later on in this same number, we are taught that **when the external man is separated from the internal "...unless the Lord were to gather up the goods and truths...into a man during the process of life, the man could not possibly be saved, for without remains there is salvation for none.**" (AC 5897 [5], *emphasis added*.)

"I will put them together like sheep of the fold, like a flock in the midst of their pasture."

- Note that the Infinite "**I will**" is a promise of Divine action. What is He promising to do? He will draw (put) the sheep together. AC 4719 gives us a hint of the meaning of "**to put**" or "to place." These words relate to "state." The Lord will give His new church a new state. The Lord is promising a "state" of togetherness or unity. When the church ignored Him, the flock became scattered. The Lord is promising that He will correct that disorder.
- Why did the Lord use the word "**sheep**"? Why not "lambs"? "Sheep signify the goods of charity." (AE 1154) "...'sheep' signify those who are in love towards the neighbor..." (AE 314 [5]) "Lambs" signify "...those who are in the good of

innocence and the love of the Lord. Sheep signify those who are in the good of charity towards the neighbor." (AE 9 [3])

- When the Lord said He would gather or put them together like sheep of the fold, was He drawing our attention to this distinction? "Man is His creation and the church is His **sheep-fold**." (TCR 538)
- By "**...like a flock...**" is meant "all those who are in good [love], thus those who belong to the Lord's church...by 'flock' are also signified doctrinal things." (AC 3767) In AC 3795, we read that by "**flock**" is "signified those who are led and taught, consequently churches..."
- In "**the midst of their pasture**" carries a sense of "Ah, this is the right place for the sheep." The pasture is a place where nourishing grazing can happen. The Lord is our shepherd. We will not "want" for anything. AE 482 [3] teaches that a "**pasture**" signifies instruction and a shepherd an instructor. AE 632 [4] says a "good pasture signifies all that which spiritually nourishes, **especially the Word...**" (Emphasis added.)

"...they shall make a loud noise because of so many people."

- Why is there a "**loud noise**" being made? AC 8815 teaches that "**loud**" means celestial state." AR 258 illustrates what it means when a "strong angel" proclaims the Word. The Word is full of power which will flow "deeply into the thought." The perverted church closed, or stopped up, the Word. That blockage is going to be removed. PICTURE how that which had been covered was now going to blast away the layers of falsity. In heaven, His Word is soft and peaceful, but when it comes to rescue the church, it will do so with a "**loud noise**" representing a tremendous increase of revelation in the minds of His "sheep." AC 10457 says that "**noise**" means the essential nature of the interiors. Yes, the restructuring of our interiors and the increase of internal revelation is going to be "noisily" awesome. Such a message adds to our understanding of the command to be joyful and to make noise in *Psalm 98:4-6* and *Psalm 33:1-3*.
- The words "**a loud noise because of so many people**" require some thoughtful reflection. AE 331 [9] reminds us that there are numerous passages teaching us that "**people** signify those who belong to the spiritual church..." AC 5113 [8] notes that "the remains of **people** denote truths stored up by the Lord in the interior man..." AC 10227 [14] says that "**...rich people** denote those who abound in truths and goods." (Emphasis added to all three quotations.) Here's what comes to mind, based on the teachings above: When the Lord opens and releases the Word from ages of man-made restrictions, there will be a loud noise of rejoicing and the "remains" within many people will acknowledge and praise the Lord for His loving faithfulness from the beginning of time. Many people will participate in this rejoicing.

“The one who breaks open will come up before them...”

- Do we need to search the Writings to see and understand the meaning of these wonderful words? The Lord is the one who will break open the blockage of hell. Just as the stone was rolled away from His tomb, so too will the wall of falsity be rolled away and broken open. The Lord comes **“up”** before us when we see His truth and love united in spiritual uses.

“...they will break out, pass through the gate, and go out by it...”

- The sacraments of Baptism and Holy Supper are described as two **“gates.”** The first gate, the gate of baptism, is called the gate of instruction. The second gate, the gate of Holy Supper, is called the gate of conjunction. When the Lord breaks down the blockage of good and truth, He will lead us to the gates of instruction and conjunction. Each gate serves as a means of empowerment, and both gates open to us the ability to “go out” and discover the freedom of the Lord’s truth. How wonderful will that be? Listen to the closing portion of this section.

“...their king will pass before them, with the Lord at their head.”

- A **“king”** signifies the Lord in respect to Divine Truth. See *AE 195 [9]*. A **“king”** signifies truth from good. See *AE 654 [46]*. A **“king”** signifies the truth of the church. See *AC 2906*.
- When the Lord calls His people to the New Church, they will pass through the gates with their banners held high. Each banner will have on it a truth, Divine Truth that will help them in their fight against the disorder of hell. And who will they meet on the way? The Lord strong in battle. The Lord strong in mercy. The Lord strong in peace and justice. Where will He be in the procession? **At its head!**

Putting It All Together

P&P offers a message of hope to those who care about and love the Lord’s New Church. The perverted church, the church influenced by the “strong drink” of falsity, will not “invade those who will be of the Lord’s new church.” The words that should catch our attention in the quote from *P&P* are **“those who will be...”** These words draw us to the “intention” to be the Lord’s. If we will to be one of those, consider what this verse says will happen in the process of being ordered by the Lord:

1. The Lord will lead us from externals to internals.
2. The Lord will be our action. His action will cause a positive reaction within us.
3. There will be a gathering of our remains (remnant) to prepare us for the battle.
4. The Lord’s purpose is to give us a new state.

5. He will get His sheep, the goods of charity, into His sheep-fold.
6. The flock will be nourished, taught, and prepared by His vivified church.
7. When the Lord breaks open the barriers of falsity, there will be a loud noise. Love and Wisdom will flow deeply into our thought. There will be an increase of revelation that will joyfully pierce the walls of falsity.
8. New gates will be seen. As they stand—wide open—we will be able to walk through and find new exciting ways. Openness, wide expanses, and boundless freedom await those who pass through the portals.
9. We will be armed with fighting truths that are emblazoned on our banners.
10. As we march forward, our king, Divine Truth, will pass by, and at the head of everything will be the Lord.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 2:12-13.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- How powerful was this section for you? Did it inspire you to strive to be of the Lord's New Church?
- The order of what the Lord promises He will do is impressive. How can we get ourselves into a state of preparation for these things?
- The order of regeneration is from externals to internals. Do we have to know the mechanism of this process, or do we allow the Lord to lead us through it, step by step?
- Was the "loud noise" teaching new to you? Can you "visualize" it? Hell has tried to block, insulate, and hold down the truths of the Lord. In the process, we have been unsure of what is true or false. Boom! The cap is blown off! How great is that?
- Were you clear on the many correspondences in this section? Which of them needs further study? Can you go to New Search for help?

Chapter Three

MICAH 3:1-3

“And I said: ‘Hear now, O heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel: is it not for you to know justice? You who hate good and love evil; who strip the skin from My people, and the flesh from their bones; who also eat the flesh of My people, flay their skin from them, break their bones, and chop them in pieces like meat for the pot, like flesh in the caldron.’”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “They have destroyed all truths and goods even to the last things of the church.”

AC 3812 [5]

- “...a ‘caldron’ signifies violence offered to good and truth...the ‘pieces, the good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder...’ are flesh, by which are meant goods...and also that these arcana can in no wise be known unless it is known what is signified in the internal sense by a ‘caldron’ or ‘pot,’ by ‘pieces,’ by ‘thigh and shoulder,’ by ‘choice bones,’...and by ‘boiling.’”

Derived Doctrine

“And I said...”

- We need to remind ourselves that this is the Lord speaking through Micah and not Micah speaking as of himself. We get opinions from others, which, at best, carry some objectivity, but with their opinion(s) will come preconceived “as-of-self prejudices.” When the Lord says, **“I said,”** there is not one scintilla of prejudice. Instead, good and truth are perfectly blended and balanced for eternal ends. We, then, are at our best when we seek to stay focused on the **“I said...”** of the Lord.

“Hear now, O heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel.”

- To **“hear”** signifies to obey. See *AE 14* and *443 [3]*. How soon should our obedience begin? **Now!** Hell always tries to get us to obey later on, urging us to “Live life while you’re young. Take up spiritual things when you are older.”

Now is the right time to hear the words of the Lord—the eternal “I said” and source of everlasting life.

- **“Head”** signifies intelligence and wisdom. See *AE 577*.
- **“Rulers”** over the house of Israel play an important part in the spiritual sense of this passage. *AE 513 [13]* explains what happens if **a poor “ruler”** takes over the leadership of one’s spiritual life. Such a **“ruler”** “makes man so natural that his knowledges are devoid of spiritual good [so that] both thoughts and affections are wandering and thus man is destitute of the intelligence that should lead and rule.”
- Note well that this passage speaks to both **Jacob** and **Israel**. Why? *AC 4286 [6-7]* can help us see why: “That ‘Jacob’ signifies one thing and ‘Israel’ another, is plainly evident from the Word, for in the historical parts and also in the prophetic, it is now said ‘Jacob’...and now ‘Israel’...But what ‘**Jacob**’ signifies...in general...is **what is external in the church**, and by ‘**Israel**’ **what is internal**” in the church. (Emphasis added.)
- Why is the Lord directing them, and us, to distinguish between the external and internal church? Read *AR 398*: The “internal [church] is with those who have studied its doctrines interiorly, and have confirmed them from the Word, and external with those who have not.”
- What we see and read in this section **will appear repetitious**. Repetition is a valuable learning tool. Let’s patiently consider repetition with some expectation that the Lord will give us clarity to hear and obey the call of our “I said” Lord.
- Jacob is addressed as **“heads of Jacob”** to represent external intelligence in the external church. Jacob’s head signifies a call for the external wisdom and intelligence to obey.
- Israel’s call from the “I said” is to the **“rulers of the house...”** *AC 3654* helps us focus on the meaning of **“rulers of the house”** as good in the church leading or ruling internal principles. So, understanding the specific call to Jacob and Israel is important if the church is to be vivified by the Lord. Obedience within the external and internal church is what the “I said” wants. The great conjugal principle endeavors to wed love and wisdom in the external (Jacob) and internal (Israel) church. To what end is obedience important as a tool of guidance for the external and internal church? Is the answer to this question in the next verse of our text?

“Is it not for you to know justice?”

- The word **“justice”** has a wide range of meaning and application. Let’s consider, in general, what meanings of the word **“justice”** we might focus on from Webster’s Dictionary: “Conforming to spiritual law; righteous; impartial; the maintenance or administration of that which is just; the principle of rectitude and just dealing of men with each other...”
- The Writings offer us some 159 passages to read regarding **justice**. I diligently tried to check all of them. One passage, *AC 6207*, appears to

beautifully fit into our topic of study regarding the external and internal church. “Conscience is twofold, interior and exterior. **Interior conscience** is of spiritual good and truth; **exterior conscience** is of justice and equity. At the present day, this latter conscience exists with many; but interior conscience with few. Nevertheless they who enjoy **exterior conscience** are saved in the other life; for they are of such a character that if they act contrary to what is good and true, or contrary to what is just and equitable, they are inwardly distressed and tormented; not because by so doing they suffer loss of honor, of gain, or of reputation; but because they have acted contrary to good and truth, or to justice and equity.” (Emphasis added.)

- The question “Is it not for you to know justice?” is a call to conform to spiritual justice as revealed to us in the Word of the Lord.

“You who hate good and love evil...”

- Who are the haters of good and the lovers of evil? They are the hellish spirits and all who join them in hating the Lord. When such hatred exists, it manifests itself in wanting to strip away the “skin” of the believers. Why the skin? What is represented in this act of spiritual destruction?
- Our physical skin is made up of multiple layers of tissue that guard underlying muscles and organs. The skin’s use is to protect and insulate what lies below it and to regulate body temperature. Our skin is a most important part of our body. Skin has been called the “largest organ of the body” because it covers all of our exterior human body and weighs more than any single internal organ. Consider now the representation of our spiritual skin.

“...who strip the skin from My people, and the flesh from their bones...”

- **“Skin”** “denotes the truth and good of the external man.” (AC 3540, 9960 [20]) Therefore, those who love hell want to strip the truth and good from the external church and the external mind of humanity. Stripping our spiritual being of its **“skin”** will destroy us because we are then robbed of that which would protect, insulate, and regulate our vital internal organs.
- **“Flesh”** “...in the supreme sense [signifies] the Lord’s Divine own [proprium], which is His Divine Human, thus the good of His love toward the universal human race.” (AC 8409) What we get from this number is the picture of hell stripping the **“flesh”** of the external man so that he loses any sense of the Lord’s compassion for the universal human race. “The Lord doesn’t care about you,” say those who **hate good** and **love evil**. “If there was a loving God, He would not permit atrocities to occur to people of all ages—especially to the innocent.”
- **Bones** serve an important function, too, in that they give a fairly hard and yet lightweight structure and support to the body. **Bones** come in a variety of shapes and have a complex internal and external structure. Studying **bones**

involves knowing about the function of marrow, nerves, blood vessels, and cartilage.

- Tearing the **“flesh”** from the **“bones”**—tearing away the Lord’s love for the universal human race—would expose our spiritual **“bones”** to infection and disease and would engender a dried up brittleness unable to support the external and internal rigors of our spiritual motion and uses.

“...who also eat the flesh of My people, flay their skin from them, break their bones...”

- Prior to our examination of the meaning of **“eat the flesh of My people,”** let us think of the meaning of “eating flesh” in the positive sense. In *John 6:52-56*, the Lord speaks of our need to eat of His flesh and to drink of His blood. Failure to do these things means “you have no life in you.”
- To eat the Lord’s flesh and to drink His blood means to appropriate to oneself Divine good and Divine truth, “...‘flesh,’ signifying the good of love, and blood signifying the good of truth.” (*AE 617 [24]*)
- Eating the flesh of My people, flaying their skin, and breaking their bones has its series of negative meanings. To love hell and to hate the Lord involves destructive consequences. Such intentions eat away at the good and truth of the external church. The external mind fails to see the Lord’s universal love for the human race; the skin of the church is removed, and the truth of the Lord will not protect, insulate, and regulate the essentials. Without the Lord, our spiritual bones collapse. They are crushed, and their form and substance crumbles in disorder.

“...and chop them in pieces like meat for the pot, like flesh in the caldron.”

- To **“chop them in pieces”** carries with it an ominous sense of how evil desires to bring about the extinction of good and truth. We use the expression “picking things to pieces.” Well, that is what hell loves to do to the Word. If *AC 9372 [9]* says that **“meat”** in the good sense represents spiritual nourishment, it makes sense that in the opposite sense, **“meat”** would represent spiritual malnutrition. To boil flesh in a holy place “means employing the truths of doctrine [as] seen in light received from the Lord [and] to make good ready for use in life...” (*AC 10105*)
- That is not what the literal sense teaches. It is just the opposite. Instead of making doctrine ready for use in life, to use a **“caldron”** signifies to offer violence to good and truth. Read *AC 3812 [5]* again because it covers much of the meaning of this verse.

Putting It All Together

P&P sums up this section with the words: “They have destroyed all truths and goods even to the last things of the church.”

Who are the “they”? The heads of Jacob: the rulers, the prophets, and the priests of the house of Israel are the “they.” Those who were in positions of leadership failed as examples, guides, and watchmen of the night. Instead of hearing, obeying, and following the Lord, they turned against Him and sought to “skin alive” the people of the church. They chopped and pulled things apart. They did not value the ways of the Lord. One can almost picture the hells mocking truth by trivializing and demeaning it. The Psalmist repeats for us the sarcastic thoughts of haters of truth and justice: “How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?” (*Psalm 73:11-12, emphasis added.*)

Psalm 22:7 portrays hell and its snarling reproach and despising of the Lord: “All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!”

That which should have been “meat” to maintain nourishment for the spiritual body was put into a boiling caldron so violence would be offered to good and truth. The ripping of flesh, the breaking of the bones graphically illustrate and testify to the things the rulers did to the Word of the Lord. The motivation for all this was to destroy the external and internal church—the external and internal truth—in every least thing of the Lord.

The great “I said” calls for everyone to hear His eternal pronouncements. The rulers and heads of the church haughtily and purposely misled His people. The Lord calls for repentance. How soon should the church renew and restore the ways of the Lord?

Now!

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 3:1-3.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Has anyone ever tried to skin you alive? Picking things apart for the purpose of exposing and endangering something you value—that is the goal of hell. How can we protect ourselves when we are being picked on? The Lord said in the Beatitudes, **“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake...Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad...for so they persecuted the prophets before you.”** (*Matthew 5:11-12*) Do these words of the Lord help us endure the attempt hell makes to “skin us alive”?
- Reflect on the purpose of our skin: to protect, to insulate, to regulate our temperature, and to care for our internal vital organs. This representative

function speaks well for the uses of good and truth. Can we see why hell wants to skin these things away?

- Bones are a fascinating study, too. Thinking about their spiritual variety, their hardness to give shape and support, their marrow, and blood vessels, provides a trip into the meaning of the Grand Man. Does anyone have a copy of *Physiological Correspondences* by the Rev. John Worcester? Does anyone have a set of notes from their “Human Body” courses at the Academy? If you do, would you be willing to review the chapters on skin and bones and share your findings if you are studying in a group?
- Those who hate the Lord also hate justice. In place of spiritual order and form, they want chaos to exist. Instead of equality, they want to dominate and crush the order and fairness of the Lord. In what ways can we strengthen and nourish the internal church and mind to “stand tall” for the Lord?
- How completely does hell want to destroy the spiritual church and mind? “To the last things of the church.” We need to say, “No way! As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!!!”

MICAH 3:4

“Then they will cry to the Lord, but He will not hear them; He will even hide His face from them, because they have been evil in their deeds.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Then they are not heard by the Lord.”

AC 5585 [6]

- “...‘hiding the faces’ denotes not being merciful. These things are predicated of Jehovah or the Lord, although He is never angry, and never turns away or hides His faces; but it is so said from the appearance with the man who is in evil; for the man who is in evil turns himself away, and hides from himself the Lord’s faces, that is, removes His mercy from himself. That it is the evils in man that do this, may also be seen from the Word, as in Micah...3:4.” (Emphasis added.)

AC 10579 [8]

- “...where Divine good is not in Divine truth, there the face of Jehovah is not; and it also follows that where there is evil in falsity, the Divine does not appear. This is meant by Jehovah ‘hiding and turning away His faces’ in the following passages...Micah 3:4.”

AR 939

- “In the opposite sense by the face of Jehovah is signified anger and aversion, for the reason that the evil man turns himself away from the Lord; and when he turns himself away, it appears to him as if the Lord turned Himself away and was angry...” *Micah 3:4* is cited as an example.

AE 412 [18]

- “It can be known...what ‘the face’ of Jehovah or the Lord signifies, namely, the Divine love, and all good in heaven and in the church therefrom; and from this it can be known what is signified by ‘hiding’ or ‘concealing the faces,’ in reference to Jehovah or the Lord, namely, that it is to leave man in what is his own [proprium] and thus in the evils and falsities that spring forth from what is his own [proprium]; for man viewed in himself is nothing but evil and falsity therefrom, and that he may be in good he is withheld from these by the Lord, which is effected by being elevated out of what is his own [proprium].” *Micah 3:4* is cited as an example.

Derived Doctrine

“Then they will cry to the Lord...”

- • To **“cry”** denotes “interior lamentations.” (*AC 10456*) To **“cry”** signifies the lamentable state of the interiors. (*AC 10457*) To **“cry”** is used in the prophets to signify “that goods and truths have been vastated; and a term is there made use of by which in the internal sense falsity is described...” (*AC 2240*) To **“cry”** signifies the destruction of their doctrinals. See *AE 514 [13]*.

“He will not hear them...”

- To **“hear”** means to obey and to perceive. (*AC 5477*) Turning away from the Lord harms obedience and perception. Therefore, it appears to the evil that the Lord does not see, hear, or know of their plight.

“...because they have been evil in their deeds.”

- “...it is evident what is meant by the deeds or works, according to which every one will be judged, namely, the will and understanding; consequently that by evil deeds are meant the deeds of an evil will...” (*CL 527*)
- “...evils done with deceit are the worst, because deceit is like a poison which infects and destroys with infernal venom, for it goes through the whole mind even to the interiors...he who is in deceit meditates evil, and feeds his understanding with it, and takes delight in it, and thus destroys everything therein that belongs to man...the good of faith and of charity.” (*AC 9013*)

Putting It All Together

The rulers, prophets, and priests, as the heads of Israel and Judah, did evil deeds in the temple of the Lord. They practiced malice and deceit. Poison existed throughout their hearts and minds, and being deceitful, they longed to destroy everything of faith and charity.

The Lord visited their inner world, and His presence disturbed and threatened them. They cried out because they knew that their ways could not continue in His presence. So they turned their backs to Him. They closed their eyes and wished for Him to be gone from their presence. In effect, they wanted Him to leave them alone so that they could continue in their deprived state. The Lord would not listen to their request. He would not listen to and obey them. Their lamentable state had to come to an end. Sin and evil cannot remain in the presence of the Lord. The things being said by evil and sin "...are not heard by the Lord." (*P&P*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 3:4.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Can you see why people believe the Lord gets angry, turns Himself away from His children, and is not merciful? The literal sense reflects what humanity does. Evil people want the Lord sent away from their sight. They do the turning and then blame the Lord for His absence. How can we tell others about the true story of the Lord's "rejection"?
- The Lord, not hearing evil requests, not complying with their cries, is a loving Lord. He must not ignore or refuse to see evil. He will call every disorder to accountability. Evil deeds must be thoroughly cleansed of their poisonous effects. What might happen if, for even the briefest of moments, the Lord ignored a sin and pretended it wasn't present? Wouldn't such a moment of the Lord's tolerance cause the destruction of heaven and earth?
- Look up the correspondences of rulers, prophets, and priests. Why? To really see and understand the crux of Israel's spiritual problems, we need the help of the spiritual sense. For instance, look at *AE 513 [13]*, where it says that to be without a ruler "signifies to make man *so natural* that his knowledges are *devoid* of spiritual good...[so that] both thoughts and affections are *wandering*, and thus man is *destitute* of the intelligence that should lead and rule." (Emphasis added.)
- What does a false prophet represent? What does a false priest represent? Putting together the effect of these false leaders, how dangerously low had Israel fallen?

MICAH 3:5-7

“Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who make My people stray; who chant ‘Peace’ while they chew with their teeth, but who prepare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths: therefore you shall have night without vision, and you shall have darkness without divination; the sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be dark for them. So the seers shall be ashamed, and the diviners abashed; indeed they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer from God.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Because they have perverted all things of the Word and of doctrine, they can no longer see and receive anything of truth and good.”

AC 2353 [2]

- “...in Micah...3:5, 6...‘Prophets’ here denote those who teach falsities; ‘night,’ the being ‘dark,’ the ‘going down of the sun,’ the ‘blackening day,’ denote falsities and evils.

AR 53

- “In these passages by ‘sun’ is not meant the sun of this world, but the sun of the angelic heaven, which is the Divine love and the Divine wisdom of the Lord; these are said to be ‘obscured,’ ‘darkened,’ ‘covered,’ and ‘blackened’ when there are evils and falsities with man. Hence it is evident, that similar things are meant by the Lord’s words, where He speaks of the consummation of the age, which is the last time of the church...” *Micah 3:5-6* is cited.

AE 401 [16]

- “In Micah...3:5, 6...What these words signify in the spiritual sense may be seen...This signifies that in the church, where the Word is from which it might be known what is good and true, there is nevertheless nothing but evil and falsity. ‘To cause the sun to set,’ and ‘to darken the earth,’ signify the evil of life, and the falsity of doctrine in the church; for ‘the rising of the sun’ signifies the good of love, which is the good of the life, and ‘the setting of the sun’ signifies the evil of love, which is the evil of the life; and ‘the darkening of the earth’ signifies the consequent falsity of doctrine, ‘darkness’ signifying falsities, and the ‘earth’ the church; ‘at noon,’ and ‘in the day of light,’ signify when there might be the knowledges of good and truth, because they have the Word, ‘noon’ signifying where there are the knowledges of good, and the ‘day of light’ where there are the knowledges of truth. Such knowledges as

are from the Word are meant, because it is the church where the Word is that is here treated of.”

AC 3693 [2]

- “In Micah...3:6...‘the sun shall go down upon the prophets’ signifies that they have no longer any truth and understanding of truth; ‘prophets’ denote those who teach the truths of doctrine...”

AR 8

- “It is evident...that the apostles and prophets would not alone exult at the Last Judgment, but all who have received the truths of doctrine, and have lived according to them. These, therefore, are meant by ‘apostles’ and ‘prophets.’” *Micah 3:6* is cited as an example passage.

AR 312

- “They who appear in the abominable kind of blackness are called devils, such holding truth in abomination...” *Micah 3:6* is one of the passages cited.

AE 372 [2]

- “That ‘black’ signifies what is not true is evident...from other passages in the Word, where it is mentioned. As in Micah...3:6...The ‘prophets’ here treated of signify those who are in the truths of doctrine, and in a sense abstracted from persons, the truths of doctrine; that those meant by ‘prophets’ would see evils and would divine falsities is signified by ‘it shall be night unto you for vision, and darkness shall arise to you for divination;’ that they would know neither good nor truth is signified by ‘the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall grow black over them;’ ‘sun’ signifying the good of love, and ‘day’ the truth of faith, and ‘to grow black’ signifying not seen or known.”

AE 624 [14]

- “In Micah...3:6...‘It shall be night unto you for vision’ signifies that there shall be the understanding of falsity instead of the understanding of truth; ‘darkness for divination’ signifies falsities instead of revealed truths; ‘the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day grow black over them,’ signifies that light shall no more flow in from the Lord out of heaven and enlighten, but thick darkness from the hells which shall darken the understanding.”

Derived Doctrine

"Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who make My people stray..."

- What did the prophets say or do that led the people astray? Did they purposely speak lies? Were they reprehensible and completely blameworthy? Or were they weak and unable to stand up against the disorderly wishes of the people? Did they say things to be crowd pleasers, conscious that if they said what was wanted, it would give them the approval and power to keep their office and authority?
- Being a wise parent means saying no to selfish lifestyles. It means following a higher view so that there is civil, moral, and spiritual accountability.
- *P&P* gives us a powerful insight into the results of "false prophets" misleading the people: "They **perverted all things of the Word and doctrine**; they can **no longer see and receive anything of truth**." (Emphasis added.)

"...who chant 'Peace' while they chew with their teeth..."

- *AE 448 [12]* explains "**to chant...**" in *Amos 6:5* as meaning: "...those who **counterfeit** good affections in externals, and **bring together for confirmation many things from the Word, and yet are interiorly evil...**" (Emphasis added.)
- The reference to chanting "**Peace**" is couched in such a way that we are to alertly notice that there is a calculated deception involved. *AC 1852* has this teaching that seems to apply. "...'peace' signifies [a promise] that **nothing of the goods and truths shall be harmed...**" *AC 3774* says "**peace**" signifies **affirmation**. *AC 6391* relates to us that "**peace**" signifies **the Lord, heaven, and the good which is from heaven**. So the counterfeit chanting had the right words, the right look, but the wrong motivation. It was all for self and nothing for the Lord.
- Chewing with the teeth, in the negative sense, signifies the exterior understanding, natural truth, **falsity wanting to destroy truth**. See *AC 9052 [1-2]*.
- We would do well to note the meaning of this teaching: it is counterfeited, external, good affections **deviously** promising no harm to spiritual good and truth while their "teeth," from hatred, **intend** to chew to shreds those things from the Lord, heaven, and the Word.

"...but who prepare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths..."

- We need to put this passage in such a context that the Lord can rationally lift us toward the spiritual sense. The light of the Word is exposing the intent of the false prophets. The Lord reveals that they (the prophets) spoke what the people wanted to hear—if they received something to "eat" in return. The prophets took bribes. But if the prophet's needs (bribes) were not met and

nothing was put into their “mouths,” they declared war on those who wouldn’t comply with their corporeal demands.

- **“War,”** in the positive sense, signifies the Lord spiritually fighting against “many kinds of cupidities of evil and of persuasions of falsity...” (AC 1663) In the opposite sense, **“war”** signifies those who insanely “seize on shadows instead of light, on fallacies instead of realities...” so as to “disperse the truths...” and do so with “the lust of attacking and destroying...truths.” (AC 9391 [16])
- In “the spiritual sense ‘the **mouth**’ means thought, because thought speaks by means of the **mouth**...” (Divine Providence (DP) 80) The **mouths** of the false prophets spoke the things of falsity from self-love and not truth from the understanding of the Word.

“...therefore you shall have night without vision, and you shall have darkness without divination...”

- The false prophets told so many lies (false reports) that they, and the people who believed them, were blindly unable to find the light, the truth, and the spiritual sense when looking for it.
- AC 9188 [8] explains that “‘diviners,’ ‘augers,’ ‘sorcerers,’ and the rest...in the internal sense [are] those who destroy the truths and goods of the church by means of memory-knowledges wrongly applied...from their own intelligence and through falsities from the love of self and the love of the world, consequently who learn and teach from the cupidity of profit and of honors, and not from any affection for the truth of faith and the good of life.”
- AE 624 [14] teaches that “...‘darkness for divination’ signifies falsities instead of revealed truths...”

“The sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be dark for them.”

- In the positive sense, the **“sun”** signifies the Lord and charity toward the neighbor. (AC 2495) Turning this to the opposite sense, **“sun”** would signify that the false prophets lost their love for the Lord and the neighbor.
- **“Day”** signifies a state (the full extent) of faith or truth. See AC 4175. The **“day”** darkening represents what happens when prophets turn their backs to the Lord: they lose their faith and truth, and it “shall be dark for them.”

“So the seers shall be ashamed, and the diviners abashed; indeed they shall all cover their lips...”

- **“Seers”** signify the intelligent. See AE 376 [32]. **“Seers”** “were formerly called ‘prophets,’ and that ‘prophets’ denote those who teach, and also the truths of doctrine...” (AC 3863 [8]) “Prophets signify those who teach truths, and are intelligent, and in the abstract sense, the doctrine of truth, and intelligence.” (AE 577 [7])

- To be shamed, or **“ashamed,”** indicates the presence of innocence. Did the Lord touch the remains of these seers to bring them into a state of reflective shame? Something like this must have happened to them; otherwise, they would not have had any inkling of the devious and hellish quality of their ways.
- The word **“abashed”** means “To destroy the self-possession or self-confidence...to confuse or confound.” (*Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*) In the presence of the Lord, the shams and pomposity of evil will fall apart, and there will be chaos.
- **“Lips”** signify doctrine. See *AE 279 [3]* and *AE 455*. **“Lips”** signify the doctrine of good and truth. See *AE 391 [8]*. *AE 580* adds that **“lips”** signify thought and affection or the understanding and the will. Therefore, in the presence of the Lord, the seers and diviners will cover their **“lips”** so that they will not speak the false things of the understanding and will. Their false doctrines will not openly offend or oppose the Lord. Why? Evil and sin in the Lord’s presence are simply speechless and muted by His magnificent perfection.

“..for there is no answer from God.”

- Did the Lord not have answers? Did He decide not to speak? Or was there no need to speak? The Lord’s good or love never has to fight. His good has no need to defend itself. Evil will be ashamed. Evil will be abashed. The evil, and not the Lord, bring harm to their falsities. They will no longer misappropriate anything from His Word to prove or justify their egregious errors.

Putting It All Together

When the Word of the Lord is perverted “in all things” of doctrine, what happens internally to false “prophets” who allow their actions to be swayed by flattery and sensually prudent dictates?

1. They put on the air of being peaceful messengers. “No harm, no foul” is the message they cry out for all to hear. They try to convince others that the words of their mouth are really sound and necessary to deal with the issues of the day. So they play to the crowd. Instead of speaking the truth of the Lord, they cater to those who “bribe” and flatter them. The false prophets know what to say in order to increase their stature and position of authority. In other words, they sell themselves out to the highest bidder.
2. To those who don’t flatter them, false prophets show a fierce side of their “prophetic” calling. They want to “chew” up those “who put nothing in their mouth.” Isn’t this a clear illustration of their deception? If anyone doesn’t bribe them, that person becomes the enemy who must be fought. So they prepare war against those who fail to honor them in the name of “peace.”
3. False prophets become spiritually blind. Their darkness is like a night where there is not the tiniest speck of truth to guide them: A “night without vision.” How clear an example is this for us? Their internal blindness bars any

message of hope from the Lord. “The sun shall go down on the prophets—the day shall be dark for them.”

4. The Lord speaks “hard words” to the false prophets. False prophets, He says, will be ashamed and abashed. They will cover their lips because, in the presence of the Lord, they really have nothing of worth to say. When it comes to what is real and true, they have “no answers from God.” All the peace they simulate to cover themselves is for naught. They are blind; they are lost in their own darkness; their lips have nothing of worth to speak; and they are without Divine answers to the issues of eternal regeneration. These are the words of the Lord and not of Micah. Micah might have been inspired to hear, see, and record them, but we do well to remind ourselves to say aloud, “This is the Lord telling us what will become of false prophets!”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 3:5-7.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- This section is a wonderful lesson for us to consider. We need to create an orderly balance between our needs for creature comfort and our search for the higher spiritual needs of our soul. The Lord does not want us to take the path that is wide and more traveled by the spiritually disinterested. We do much better when we travel the road that is narrow and approach the Lord for His lasting peace and insights. Looking for the Word to confirm our finite wishes is totally wrong and short-sighted. We end up like blind people groping in total darkness. Now, how can we take this lesson seriously so we will not listen to false prophets who counterfeit integrity by twisting the Word to confirm outright lies and falsity? Falsity and hatred of the Lord deliberately strive to destroy the Lord in our hearts. They wish to prepare war and chew up the truth. How strongly do you feel about the necessity to avoid listening to or cooperating with such false prophets?
- Doing what seems to be popular—tailoring the Word to fulfill our wishes—is a perilous mistake. How can we stay alert and not follow the dictates of our sensual convenience and hellish desires? One way is to read carefully and reflect on what the Lord’s Word teaches us in this prophecy of Micah.
- Have you ever been taken in by smooth talkers? Does popular opinion hold a higher significance in your life than genuine doctrine drawn from the Word? Popular opinion doesn’t require much “study.” It is the easier, wider path to follow. Our proprium likes the easy way. The easy way doesn’t require much internal amendment. The easy way rolls with the prevailing tide of human prudence. How much of “going along to get along” do you think we give in to?
- Did the message from the Lord about what happens to false prophets bolster your resolve to not put flattery in the mouths of the false prophets?

- Do we need to be aware that false prophets don't like us? They will conjure up ways to war against us. Being prepared for their attack seems to be a good thing. Is that how you feel, too, or does it come across as a hard teaching?

MICAH 3:8

"But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "The Lord in respect to the Word which He will declare unto them."

AC 4281

- "...in the Word 'Jacob' denotes not only Jacob, but also all his posterity, as is evident from many passages in the Word..." *Micah 3:8* is cited among many other passages.

AC 9818 [20]

- "That in these passages [*Micah 3:8*, among others] 'the Spirit of Jehovah' denotes the Divine truth, and through this the life of faith and of love, is evident; that it flows in immediately from the Lord and also mediately from Him through spirits and angels..."

AE 183 [12]

- "That the 'Spirit of God' is Divine truth, and thence spiritual life to the man who receives it, is further evident from...*Micah 3:8*..."

Derived Doctrine

"But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord..."

- Focus first on the words "**But truly...**" The word "**but**" brings to our attention that something is going to be stated differently, objected to, or clarified. Some exception is going to be brought forth. What exactly will be rectified? *Micah 3:5-7* tells us that the prophets in Israel strayed from their spiritual uses. They chanted "peace," but they were chewing up things with their teeth (representing the lowest natural things under the guise of justice; see *AC 4424 [3]*). The prophets were preparing war against anyone who didn't pamper them with praise and power. Because of their self-love, spiritual

darkness entered into the life of the church and the hearts of the people. The prophecy points to the shame that would come upon all false prophets. They would be abashed when the Lord's truth was restored. In the meantime, there would be no answers forthcoming from God. **BUT** those who listen to and follow the Lord in word and deed will be **FULL**. "**Full**," in the positive sense, represents a promise that the doctrines of the church will be restored and made powerfully full. See *AE 280 [10]*. To be "**full**" denotes being filled with spiritual food, that is, truth and good. See *AC 492 [2]*.

- To be "**full of power**" signifies the merit and righteousness belonging to the Lord's Divine Human and that from it is all Divine truth and Divine good and salvation. See *AE 287 and 293*.
- For the spiritually renewed person, who willingly receives the Lord's power, the Lord will provide a dramatic rescue and escape from the tyrannical influence of the false prophets. Instead of darkness and silence, the Lord will provide light to such people, and He will give them fulfilling (stabilizing/balanced) answers.

"...and [He will give them] of justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin."

- "**Jacob**" signifies "perception in the natural where memory-knowledges are, concerning the general truth of the church..." (*AC 6088*)
- "**Jacob's transgression**" "signifies evil against truth." (*AC 6563*)
- "...justice in the Word is said of the good of love..." (*AE 644 [15]*)
- "...'might' signifies that good...has its potency and truth has its first potency..." (*AE 434 [17]*) "'...might' signifies confidence; for knowledge (scientia) is of no avail if it does not serve the rational and the spiritual man..." (*AE 357 [27]*)
- "**Israel**" means "those who belong to the spiritual church." Put another way, "**Israel**" means "the interior church." (*AC 9404*)
- Putting this passage together, what we have revealed is that Jacob, representative of the external memory-knowledges that brought evil against truth, and Israel, representative of the internal/spiritual church, were going to be cleansed by the Lord among the faithful with His advent. Justice and might would once again be the cleansing/refreshing tools for salvation within the church.
- What is the goal of the "Spirit of the Lord"? *Isaiah 61:1-3* answers this question for us: "**The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord...to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn...to give them beauty for ashes...**"

Putting It All Together

Hell loves to talk and shout (scream) a lot. As a matter of fact, Hell loves to turn up the volume of its noise so that it can drown out the still, quiet voice of the Lord. Hell's grandiose verbosity desires to intimidate those who want to serve the Lord. Hellish spirits call forth popular opinions drawn from the consensus of human prudence. Using false logic and twisted human facts, they construct philosophical webs to ensnare those who are ignorant of the Lord's Word.

The Lord announces in this prophecy that their reign of terror will come to an end. They will be overturned and exposed once and forever. For a time, it will appear that Hell's tactics are working. But when the Word is rightly opened and its wondrous truths shine through the darkness and confusion of Hell, good things will happen.

What are the good things the Lord promises will happen? The full power of the Spirit of the Lord will freely flow immediately and mediately from Him and the angels of heaven. The hearts and minds of the faithful will be revitalized. His "justice and might" will eliminate the legion of false conclusions drawn from the pool of external natural memory-knowledges. "Justice and might" will restore power within the spiritual church to care for the souls of the faithful entrusted to it. *Psalm 51:12* captures for us what the prayer will be when the Divine rescue comes sweeping in: "Restore to me **the joy** of Your salvation." (Emphasis added.) Can we say those words over again? The joy of the Lord's salvation will be felt and will empower all within the spiritual church. How long has it been since we felt the joy of the Lord's salvation? It will come. It will bring with it justice and might. How do we know these things will happen? The Lord says so. Let His prophecy turn off the noise and rabble of Hell. We, with the Lord's help, can invite the power of His salvation to come inside and warm our souls with joy! These encouraging words are spoken by the Lord. "And let all the people say Amen." (*Psalm 106:48*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 3:8.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- The Word persistently declares, especially in the books of the prophets, that the Lord's advent will occur. Along with that message, we are assured that Hell will be totally defeated. The church will be restored. Joy will come in the morning. Why do we listen to Hell when it says that it is more powerful than the Lord? Why do we believe that it is easier to sin than to do what is good?
- The Lord's justice and might are at work now. Do we see any signs of them working?
- The prayer of the church is that we will see and feel the joy of the Lord's salvation. Why isn't this theme more forcefully included in our study and worship experiences? I don't remember hearing many of us sharing the

expression “joy of salvation.” Are we missing out on something vital? Are we neglecting to allow ourselves to experience the joy of salvation? Are we careful of using such expressions because they sound like something evangelical people would say?

MICAH 3:9-11

“Now hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity, who build up Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with iniquity: her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord, and say, ‘Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us.’”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “They falsify all the truths and goods of the Word, and yet they say that God is with them.”

AR 612

- “...by ‘Zion’ and ‘Jerusalem’ are signified the inmost things of the church; and as the church in the heavens makes one with the church on earth, therefore by ‘Zion’ and ‘Jerusalem’ is meant the church everywhere, but by ‘Zion’ the church as to love, and by ‘Jerusalem’ the church as to doctrine from love.”
Micah 3:10 is cited as one example.

AE 850 [18]

- “The devastation of the church by the Jewish nation, by this that they had falsified every Divine truth, is described throughout the Word by the vastation of Zion. As in... *Micah 3:10*...”

Derived Doctrine

“Now hear this...”

- These words call us to attention, to being alert. When? Right away—NOW!
- The Writings make it clear with numerous references that **hearing** signifies obedience. More precisely, in *AC 8361*, we are taught that **hearing** “signifies to perceive, to understand, and to have faith...hearing signifies **faith in the will and act, thus obedience.**” (Emphasis added.)

“...you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel...” (Emphasis added.)

- Are we to assume that by the **“heads of the house of Jacob”** are meant only the kings, queens, and princes of the royal family? Or does this apply to the political and religious heads of the house of Jacob as well?
- Why does the prophecy call our attention to the **“rulers of Israel”**? Is there a spiritual difference between the words “heads” and “rulers”?
- It is essential, in answering these questions, to go back and read the Derived Doctrine section for Micah 3:1-3. This section is too long to repeat here, but it is essential to review it because it will help us understand why the use of the words **“heads”** and **“rulers”** is important to denote correspondential differences applied to Judah and Israel.

“...who abhor justice and pervert all equity...”

- The meaning of these words is clear with little research. The heads and rulers of Jacob and Israel despised justice and equity. Each of these virtues was for sale to the highest bidder. They made a mockery of justice and equity and cared little for what the Word taught about the poor, oppressed, widowed, and orphaned. Love of self reigned over the love of the neighbor.

“...who build up Zion with bloodshed...”

- *AC 4818 [4]* gives us a clue about those who love **“bloodshed”**: “These are they spoken of in the Word who are said to be ‘in bloods,’ for they are in cruel rage against the whole human race which does not adore their articles of faith, and thus themselves, and does not offer its gifts upon their altars.”
- What is the group of blood-shedders aiming at? *AE 325 [26]* teaches that **“Zion”** signifies the conjunction of truth and good. *AE 326 [5]* teaches that **“Zion”** signifies “the church where the Lord is to be worshipped.” *AE 328 [10]* teaches that **“Zion”** “signifies the church which is in love to the Lord.” (Emphasis added.)
- Those intent on bloodshed want to build up Zion with their own values and care naught for the harmony of good and truth. They definitely wanted Zion to be a place that was not in love with the Lord.

“...and Jerusalem with iniquity...”

- **“Jerusalem”** signifies the church in relation to doctrine. Here are but a few references to check this teaching: *AE 253 [5]*, *AE 355 [5]*, and *AE 376 [23]*, which has this teaching: “Jerusalem signifies to draw the truths of the church from the Word.” Can we not see why the bloodshed occurred? Self-love does not hold the truths of Word with integrity. Self-love has a burning hatred for the church and for truth drawn from the Word.

“Her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money.” (Emphasis added.)

- Note the impropriety of the three classes (heads) mentioned, the judges, the priests, and the prophets. The judges took bribes, the priests took pay, and the prophets divined for money. The judges were making judicial pronouncements for bribes. The priests taught what their employers directed them to teach. The prophets were voices of magic and charlatanry. They heard not and served not the Lord “freely.” None of them came to the Lord for His revelation.

“Yet they lean on the Lord, and say, ‘Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us.’”

- How tragic these words are. The children of God thought they could do anything, say anything, and behave in any disorderly way and still be free from the consequences of their actions. Sadly, tragically, they believed that as God’s chosen, there was nothing that would remove them from the “favored nation” category.
- How could the children of Israel have come to this belief? Had they not learned over the course of their history that their wayward actions always had consequences? Had they forgotten their years of bondage and estrangement from family and Jerusalem? Was their arrogance and ignorance causing them to be spiritually destitute of reason and freedom in matters of their spiritual state? The Word shows us that they were helplessly caught in the eddy of falsity. They were figuratively going down the drain in a vortex of spiritual death. “Hear Now” is a message of great importance from the Lord because their words of “no harm can come upon us” were perilously empty and totally false.
- **“...yet they lean on the Lord...”** The picture we get of this “leaning” is not one of positive assurance and dependence on the leading of the Lord. Instead, it connotes a demanding traditional expectation, whereby they felt they were owed something because they were the chosen people. Like a spoiled child, they were saying, “You promised me. You said You would, so now You have got to give in.” This was the wrong attitude and a foolish leaning on the Lord’s justice and mercy.

Putting It All Together

When anyone falsifies the truths and goods of the Word, how can they possibly believe that the Lord will be with them, supporting their evil deeds? That is exactly what the children of Israel did and believed. Judges allowed their uses to be directed by bribery and not by order and fairness to all people. Their priests did not do the bidding of the Lord and His Word. Instead, they did what their employers asked. Their income meant more to them than humble obedience to the Word. Israel’s

prophets “divined” for riches as well. Instead of allowing themselves to be vessels or instruments of the Lord, they supplied pleasant “readings” to those who offered them riches.

Is any of this going on in the world and church today? Are there people (churches) who believe they are under a Divine protection and are especially blessed and chosen by the Lord? I know some who believe they are “right” because they can claim apostolic succession from Peter to the present. In their eyes, they are the true church. All other denominational faiths are not legitimately within the body of Christ. This is a strong statement which at times is questioned and denied, but in some quarters, it is believed fervently. Their faith teaches that sins can be absolved by the priesthood, and so confession is used as a way of excusing evils and sins. Confession is an easy out requiring little self-examination or making one’s self guilty and no supplication of the Lord’s help to work toward leading a new life.

Regeneration is a process of honesty with the Lord. It is offering up a broken spirit and a contrite heart. So twisting the Word, selling truth off to the highest (bribe) bidder will not be pleasing in the sight of the Lord. Isn’t this goal truly what we have laid before us in this prophecy from Micah? May we hear and comply with what the Lord says to us. Our mission is to read the Word of the Lord with a promise that we will let truth be truth. Our commitment to the Lord, and His Word, must be strong and resolute. Read with me the closing paragraphs of *CL 233*: “...to be able to confirm whatever one pleases is not the mark of an intelligent [person], but to be able to see that the truth is true and that the false is false, and to confirm it is the mark of an intelligent [person].” The prophecy of *Micah* challenges us to read, reflect, and apply the things of the Lord and to put aside our own flawed prudence, no matter how many surveys of popular opinion weigh in against the teachings of the Lord’s Word.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 3:9-11.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do we really need questions to stimulate our reflection? The teachings here are pretty straightforward. How could we not see that the demise of the church occurs when its leaders (priests and laypeople together) sell out their offices? How can we fail to see the application to the state we are in when smugness moves us to think we are a chosen church and our promise is secured no matter what we say or do?
- This section is clear and open. “Now hear this” is what the Lord says. I hope we stop, listen, and reflect on the meaning and application of this section to our lives. It is time to put away arrogance and ignorance and take on humility and attentiveness before the Lord. He can do so much more for us in this state.

- Have we taken bribes in our working with the world? What is meant by this question? We deal daily with a world of changing standards. What at one time is agreed upon and accepted by a majority of people can in time change drastically. Look at how the world's view of homosexuality has changed. What brought about those changes? Did we get "enlightenment"? Were our former views of homosexuality errant? Or did our views change because new popular opinions were generated by causes espoused by high-profile celebrities? Did we allow the Word to be "hushed up" because to cite the Word would bring charges of being antiquated or "homophobic"? Have we worked out compromises so that we "fit in" among members of the secular world? Probably many of us have let money do the talking in the sense that we acted in politically correct ways because our jobs required us to do so. Staying true to the Lord is not always easy. So we rationalize and fail to stand up for the teachings of the Lord. How can we be more principled in upholding the truths of the Lord so that we don't sell out to convenient or expedient logic?
- What points stand out most for you following a careful reading and reflection on these passages from *Micah*? Were you mentally and spiritually touched by their message? Look again at the list (and professions) of those who sold out for their own aggrandizement. It's kind of scary to think of the effect it had on the spiritual health of the church. Do you recall what *P&P* said about the church leaders? They falsified the things of the church, and yet they told themselves that "the Lord is with us." Do we hear a warning bell within our heart and conscience?

MICAH 3:12

"Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "Therefore the whole church will be destroyed."

AR 612

- "Hence by 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem' are signified the inmost things of the church; and as the church in the heavens makes one with the church on earth, therefore by 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem' is meant the church everywhere, but by 'Zion' the church as to love, and by 'Jerusalem' the church as to doctrine from love...That by 'mount Zion' is signified heaven and the church where the Lord alone is worshiped, may appear from the following passages..." *Micah 3:10, 12* are cited among many other passages.

AE 850 [18]

- “The devastation of the church by the Jewish nation, by this that they had falsified every Divine truth, is also described throughout the Word by the vastation of Zion.” *Micah 3:10, 12* are cited as examples of this doctrine.

AC 368

- A “...‘field’ signifies doctrine; ‘possessions’ and ‘treasures’ denote the spiritual riches of faith, or the things that belong to the doctrines of faith...It is declared concerning Zion, when destitute of the doctrine of faith, that she shall be ‘plowed like a field’...*Micah 3:12*...”

AC 5895

- “...in the opposite sense ‘plowing’ signifies the evil which blots out good, thus vastation; as in...*Micah 3:12*.”

Derived Doctrine

“Therefore because of you...”

- When any spiritual principles are purposely (and willingly) violated, it must be known who made the transgression. Why? Is it to give us a sense of low self-esteem? Does the Lord enjoy criticizing us? Spiritual failure lies in the hearts of the people and not in the Lord. This passage underscores the truth that the Lord always does His part. The people of the church failed to uphold the irrevocable laws of Divine Providence. Now the question lies before us: how can we make amends and get back on track with the Lord? Confession is the single-word answer. We are to own up to our mistakes without blaming others or the Lord. “I made the poor choices.” Next, we need to acknowledge, “I need to supplicate the Lord for help.” And lastly, “I need to choose the way of a new life, uprooting the errant first root of life called the proprium.” (These quotes sum up what we need to say to the Lord in a prayerful manner. The Writings indicate that these words are well-suited to preparing for and receiving the Holy Supper.)

“...Zion shall be plowed like a field...”

- In the positive sense, “**plowing**” denotes **the restorative work** of (love) good. “Thus ‘plowing’ is preparation by good for receiving truths...” (*AC 5895*)
- **Plowing** serves the purpose of turning over the hard or encrusted surface of the soil. It removes the worthless stubble of the old crop or the beginning growth of weeds. It uncovers rocks and stumps that would deter growth.

- There are more than 37 numbers in the Writings giving us the signification of **“Zion.”** Here are but three of them that seem to capture its spiritual meaning. *AE 294 [10]* teaches that “Zion signifies the church in respect to the Word, the internal or spiritual sense of the Word in respect to good...” *AE 326 [5]* explains that “Zion signifies the church where the Lord is to be worshiped...her ‘desolation’ signifies a lack of truth and good from an absence of truths...” *AE 375 [26]* notes that “Zion signifies **the conjunction** of truth and good...and Zion signifies the church where the good of love is...” (Emphasis added.)
- *AC 3766* explains the signification of a **“field”** this way: “In the Word the church is signified by ‘land,’ ‘ground,’ and ‘field,’ but with a difference. The reason why ‘field’ signifies the church, is that the church as a field receives the seeds of good and truth; for the church has the Word, from which come these seeds; and this is the reason why everything in a field signifies that which is of the church, such as sowing, reaping, standing corn, wheat, barley, and other things, and this also with a difference.”

“...Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins...”

- *AE 253 [5]* and *AE 355* teach that “Jerusalem signifies the church in respect to doctrine.” When we read the name **“Jerusalem,”** we are to think about the quality and health of a church in relation to the genuine doctrines of the Lord.
- Consider the importance of the above teaching when we read that “Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins.” What is implied? The Lord in *Matthew 15:9* summed up what was going on in the church: “...in vain they worship Me, **teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**” (Emphasis added.) All of these man-made teachings will be collected and placed in a pile of deadness. The Lord will rid (cleanse) His church of such uselessness.

“...and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest.”

- In the positive sense, a **“mountain”** represents love. See *AR 403*. In the opposite sense, a **“mountain”** represents the love of self and of the world. See *AC 1687*.
- Reflecting on the meaning of **“the mountain of the temple,”** we need to remind ourselves that the Lord regularly (moment by moment) performs an “exploration of the state of the church in general.” See *AE 903* and *909*. Within the temple, Divine truth is to perpetually shine forth. In the mountain temple, the priests are to keep the eternal light of the Divine Human burning brightly. No strange coals are to be added as a substitute fire. In the mountain temple, the holiness of worship is to come forth from a deep and abiding love of the Lord and not from a love of self and the world.
- What are we to make of the words **“like the bare hills of the forest”**? Did some blight cause deforestation? Did some other growth, like a wild grapevine, climb and cover the branches of the tree so as to choke or smother

its host? Did a crop of thorns and thistles win out over seedling trees in a competition for space, soil, and nourishment? “Bare hills” seem to indicate some kind of emptiness where growth and productiveness used to exist. What, then, is this passage teaching us on the spiritual level?

- *AE 388* teaches that a “forest signifies the sensual man, which is in absolute fallacies.” *AE 458* explains that a “forest signifies the natural...the natural separated from the spiritual.” In other words, the natural person with his absolute fallacies causes the bareness of the hills of the forest. When the natural mind breaks away and separates itself from the spiritual goals of the Lord, unproductiveness or barrenness appears on the mountain of the temple.

Putting It All Together

Our church, our internal church, needs to be alert and ready to fight against complacency and indifference to the ways of the Lord. To do less causes the words of *P&P* to ring true: “Therefore the whole church will be destroyed.” This may appear to be a one-on-one fight. The Lord fights with and for us. He wants to fight with us to wake us up, and at the same time, He fights for us so we can safely discover our spiritual potential. We can’t expect others to wage the fight for us. We may seek advice from friends and pastors, but it is our dedication that will carry the day in building our internal church.

I shudder to think of hearing the words of the Lord: “Therefore because of you...” My heart and prayer want to cry out, “No, no let it not be so. I don’t want any stubbornness or absolute fallacies to separate me from the love of the Lord. I’d rather have His restorative plowing turn over any hardness so the seeds of good can be planted and flourish. Lord, please assist me so I can get rid of the weeds, stumps, and rocks in my spiritual field. Heap the falsity in piles so I will see what ruination they wanted to bring about. As for those bare spots on the hills of the forest, I pray that the forest of my life will produce mighty trees like the magnificent cedars of Lebanon that Solomon specially ordered to be used in the building of the temple dedicated to the worship of the Lord.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 3:12.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- *New Church Life* (2006) printed a three-part article by Don Rose entitled “Uncovering a Conspiracy to Keep People from Reading the Writings.” Don speaks well of how hard Hell works to stir up problems within and without to keep us from reading the truths of the Lord. Hell wants to win. Hell seeks to discourage us from communicating with the Lord. Please read Don’s article.

What do you think about Hell's conspiracy? Is Hell working relentlessly to cause barrenness on the mountains?

- Do you welcome the “plowing” process of good (love) breaking up the soil of the mind? The Writings speak positively about this restoration that occurs so that seeds can be planted in a soil that welcomes them. Plowing might be hard for us if we have become comfortable with our ways. Change is sometimes difficult and unwanted. Do we pray, asking the Lord to fight with and for us?
- What do you think the people of Micah's time thought about this message? Did they hear it? Did they laugh it off? Did they launch a point-and-counterpoint rationalization defense?
- What tack do you think our times take with these teachings?
- How powerful were the words “Therefore because of you...” in your reflective time? Wouldn't we rather blame others—especially the Lord—for our problems?
- The work of repentance is easy. The process isn't hard, according to the Writings. The difficulty arises when we fail to, once or twice a month, root out the power of our proprium. Where did I get this teaching? Read number 97 of *Doctrine of Life*.

Chapter Four

MICAH 4:1-2

“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “A new church will be established by the Lord when He comes into the world, and it will be formed out of the nations.”

AC 6435 [5]

- “...the signification of ‘hills,’ is evident from the following passages...(Micah 4:1)...the ‘mountain of Jehovah,’ which is Zion, denotes the Lord’s celestial kingdom, thus the good of this kingdom, which is of love to the Lord; thus in the supreme sense it is the Lord Himself, for all the love and all the good in the celestial kingdom belong to the Lord.”

AC 10438 [3]

- “That ‘mountains’ signify the heaven where is the good of celestial love, is manifest from many passages in the Word, as from the following...Micah 4:1...”

AC 3305 [6-7]

- “...Israel will not be gathered together from wherever they have been dispersed, and will not be sanctified, and the sanctuary placed in the midst of them forever, as is said; but this is to be with those who in the representative sense are signified by ‘Israel;’ and who, as is known, are all of the faithful...In the supreme sense of all these passages by ‘Jacob’ and ‘Israel’ is meant the Lord; and in the representative sense the Lord’s spiritual kingdom, and the church which is a church from the doctrine of truth and the life of good. By ‘Jacob’ are meant those who are in the externals of this church; and by ‘Israel’ those who are in its internals...”

AE 405 [26]

- “Since ‘a mountain’ signified the good of love, and in the highest sense, the Divine good, and from the Divine good Divine truth proceeds, so Mount Zion was built up above Jerusalem, and in the Word ‘Mount Zion’ signifies the church that is in the good of love to the Lord, and ‘Jerusalem’ the church that is in truths from that good, or the church in respect to doctrine. For the same reason Jerusalem is called ‘the mountain of holiness,’ also ‘the hill;’ for ‘the mountain of holiness,’ likewise ‘hill’ signify spiritual good, which in essence is truth from good...”

Doctrine of the Lord 39

- “That the Lord is called ‘the God of Israel,’ and ‘the God of Jacob,’ is evident from the following passages...” *Micah 4:1, 2* are cited among many passages.

Derived Doctrine

“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days...”

- What shall come to pass in the **“latter days”**? The Lord’s advent. Why did He have to make His advent? *Doctrine of the Lord 3* teaches, “The Lord came into the world in the fullness of times, which was when He was no longer known by the Jews, and when, consequently, there was nothing of the church left; and unless He had then come into the world and revealed Himself, mankind would have perished in eternal death...The Lord came into the world in order to set up a new church which should acknowledge Him as the Redeemer and Saviour, and be redeemed and saved through love to Him and faith in Him.” N.B. there are six points in this number. I have given but two of them. Look over all six reasons for His advent.

“...that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills...”

- *AE 495 [26]* points out for us a very important doctrinal teaching in this verse. How so? Note first that the Lord’s house was to be established on top of the mountains. It was to be higher than the hills. Why did the Lord decree this? The answer is found by using the suggested doctrinal terms celestial good and spiritual good. What are their differences? Celestial good is the highest and purest form of love. It is the love of all loves. It is a love that comes only from the Lord. Angels and human beings make no contribution to the Lord’s Celestial good (love). It is above all other loves. Those who truly love the Lord and see Him as the highest good **are brought by the Lord to this celestial good by an internal way**. See *AC 4581*. Only the sincere and those who intend to keep the Lord in the highest position are gifted with

celestial good. Spiritual good, as represented by the hills, comes to a person by **external ways**. AC 5595 explains the difference this way: “Spiritual good is truth that has become good; for truth becomes good when the person lives according to it, for it then passes into the will, and from the will into act, and becomes of the life... Spiritual good is distinguished from celestial good in that celestial good is implanted in man’s will...” by the Lord alone, whereas spiritual good involves learning ways to love the neighbor through various forms of charity. Celestial good loves the Lord and willingly accords Him the highest place—yes, above the hills.

“...and peoples shall flow to it...”

- Let’s pause for a moment and consider the inclusiveness of the Lord’s words. Israel is not mentioned specifically as the chosen people. **“Peoples shall flow to it...”** The Lord, in *John 10:16*, said, “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.” Isn’t this a wonderful teaching? The Lord will draw all people unto Himself, and He will be their God.
- The words **“flow to”** have implications, too. Heaven flows into everyone’s mind, bringing enlightenment. Like the Wisemen, people will come arduously seeking the birthplace of the Messiah.

“Many nations shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob...”

- The word **“nation”** has a dual representation. In the negative sense, **“nation”** signifies the evils of love and life (see AC 139), and in the positive sense, **“nation”** signifies those who are in the good of love and of life (see AE 175 [2], AE 388 [28], AC 1159 [3], and AE 881). There are 35 other references we could cite, but the ones selected are quite representative of the others.
- I believe we can safely assume, then, that this verse is talking about the positive representation of **“nations”** because the **“nations”** are quite eager to draw near the Lord. They are seeking His counsel, inspiration, and direction. An evil life and evil good would not want to be in the presence of the Lord, nor would it want to be brought into the sphere of His enlightenment.
- The word **“come,”** as explained in AR 629, signifies “...the acknowledgment and confession that every truth of the Word...is from the Lord, according to which every man will be judged...” AC 5999 teaches that **“going up”** signifies elevation...[so that] the internal celestial [the Lord within a person’s soul] shall [be vivified]...”
- The **“mountain of the Lord”** draws our attention to love. Whose love? The Lord’s love (see AE 815 and AC 9420). The **“house of the God of Jacob”** signifies the Divine Itself, and the Divine Human, thus the Lord...” (AC 6838, *emphasis added.*) These teachings point out an important prophecy and promise by the Lord. That which had been lost and had become invisible to

humankind (the Lord) will once again become visible. This is the promise given in the books of the prophets, and it is heralded in the message of the New Church. Note in this next section how all of this shall come about.

“...He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.”

- *AC 9418* reminds us that it is self-evident that to **“teach”** denotes instruction. *TCR 308* adds the following: to **“...teach’** signifies to observe, study, and judge from the things that the Lord Jehovah created...” (Emphasis added.) In the context of this passage, our teaching (learning) will not be oriented toward ourselves; we will learn only that which is from the Lord. “The Lord’s ‘ways’ signify all the truths of heaven and the church.” (*AE 938*)
- **“...and we shall walk in His paths.”** *AR 167* explains what it means to walk with God. “...to walk’ signifies to live and ‘to walk with God’ signifies to live with Him’...” (Emphasis added.)

“For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

- **“Zion”** signifies “...the church in which there is celestial love.” (*AE 504 [8]*) **“Zion”** signifies the unity of the will and understanding, conjoined in perfect harmony, because such unity comes from the Lord alone.
- Celestial love from the Lord is the only origin from which the law can come forth. Human prudence on its own (secularizing) cannot match nor approximate the purity and equality of the laws of the Lord.
- **“Jerusalem,”** in the positive sense, signifies “...the doctrine of the New Church.” (*AE 194 [4]*) “Jerusalem signifies the church where there is genuine doctrine.” (*HH 187*) “...‘Jerusalem’ signifies the church as to worship, and therefore also the church as to doctrine.” (*AR 880*)
- These two things, the Lord’s law going forth from **“Zion”** and the Lord’s word from **“Jerusalem,”** illustrate what the Lord promises with His coming. He will rule (lead) from His Celestial Love, and His laws will provide us with genuine doctrines that will amend (cleanse) the church and the lives of all the followers of “His new church.”

Putting It All Together

P&P summed up the meaning of this section with these words: “A new church will be established by the Lord when He comes into the world, and it will be formed out of the nations.”

Match this teaching with Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 111:

“As without the Word there is no knowledge of the Lord, and therefore no salvation, it pleased the Lord that when the Word had been wholly falsified and adulterated among the Jewish nation and thus as it were brought to nothingness, that He should descend

from heaven and come into the world, and fulfill the Word, and thereby repair and restore it, and again give light to the earth's inhabitants..." (Emphasis added.)

Without the Word, there is no knowledge of the Lord and there is no salvation: Isn't that a gripping thought? Left to our own ways, we would have been hopelessly lost, confused, and in utter darkness. But the Lord would not permit this. It pleased Him to come into our world. It pleased Him to repair and restore the Word. It pleased Him to give light again.

Our enthusiasm can be expressed in this way:

1. Let's go to the mountain of the Lord. We need to encourage one another to go and see the spiritual things which the Lord is bringing to pass.
2. In the presence of the Lord, let's announce (profess) that we have come so that He will teach us His way.
3. We need to make it prayerfully known that we are asking for His enlightenment so we can walk in His path.
4. Our mission is to learn His laws and the things from His mouth.
5. It is His church and His doctrine. We have no proprietary rights or exclusive ownership of the New Church.
6. May the words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer!

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 4:1-2.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Have you ever taken notice (or notes) about how disorderly things got within the Jewish Church? How many mistakes can you recall them making? Were there any faithful souls left? Surely there was a faithful remnant set aside for the Lord to work with. I picture them quietly protected by the Lord so they could be of use in the restorative work of redemption.
- The quote from the *Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 111* is one to ponder. Even though it carries some bad news about the state of the church, there is within it a message of happiness. What are some of its uplifting words? It pleased the Lord; He came to repair and restore; He came to give light; He came to fulfill the Word among the inhabitants of the world. There are no words of anger or retribution. Can you hear, feel, His words of cheer and encouragement?
- The Lord's plan is to restore our vision of Him. No longer will He be hidden or invisible. He came that we might begin to worship Him in His Divine Human. How is this going for us? Is the great Nunc Licet giving you a view of Him that is real and satisfying?

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Falsities and evils will no longer be there, but truths and goods...”

AE 403 [12]

- “...in Micah 4:3, 4...And as [in the Lord’s kingdom] such have truths inscribed on their hearts, and therefore do not dispute about them, it is said that ‘nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more,’ which signifies that in that kingdom there shall be no disputation about truths...That through the truths and goods in which they are, they shall be safe from evils and falsities is signified by ‘they shall sit under their own vine and under their own fig-tree, and none shall make afraid.’”

AE 734 [2]

- “That ‘war’ signifies in the Word spiritual war, which is the war of falsity from evil against truth from good, and of truth from good against falsity from evil, or what is the same, which is carried on by those who are in falsities from evil against those who are in truths from good, is evident from many passages in the Word, of which the following only need be cited...Micah 4:3.”

TCR 304

- “Heavenly peace, which, in respect to the hells, is that evils and falsities shall not rise up from them and break forth, may be compared in many respects with natural peace; as with peace after war, when every one is secure from enemies and is safe in his own city and home and living in his own fields and garden. This is as the prophet said when he spoke naturally of heavenly peace...Micah 4:4...”

Derived Doctrine

“He shall judge between many peoples...”

- Let’s focus for a moment on the word **“judge.”** The Lord is the Divine judge. What is He seeking to do? *AC 7154* teaches us that to **“judge”** signifies “the Divine disposal.” The Lord wants to “dispose” the views of all the people. To “dispose” means to distribute and put things in their place; “dispose” means to arrange, to regulate, to adjust, to settle matters fairly.
- To say that the Lord **“shall judge between many peoples”** means He will cut through the man-made theories and the obfuscations of multiple conflicting views. His good and truth will unravel tradition and derived doctrines, and

will, “from another source,” settle fairly every singular and particular issue. (AC 8696) What is that other source? His infinite love, His infinite truth, and His infinite uses.

“...and rebuke strong nations afar off...”

- To **“rebuke”** “signifies the desolation of all truth...” (AE 342 [8]) **“Afar off”** signifies the Lord’s desire to “save them although they are far from salvation.” (AE 811 [23]) “From afar” signifies those who are “apart and remote from, also opposed to, goods and truths.” (AE 403 [13])
- A **“strong nation,”** in the positive sense, signifies “the potency of the powers of combating...” (AC 6416; AE 448 [6]) The opposite sense would seem to denote a weakness, a deficiency of powers. These **“strong nations”** imagined they had their own power to combat evil and falsity. Strength apart from the Lord is a useless and foolish fantasy of unity and preparedness.

“They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.”

- We need the internal sense of the Lord’s Word to set the meaning of this text in its proper context. Without the spiritual sense, wrong applications will be made in the external sense. For instance: Placards and car bumper stickers bearing this quote are used to urge the end of all earthly warfare. Peace advocates, called pacifists, indicate that these passages teach that the Lord is against war. As noble as this cause may appear, is that really what is being taught? *Isaiah 2:4* and *Micah 4:3* use the same wording about beating swords into ploughshares, but *Joel 3:10* instructs us to do just the opposite: “beat your plowshares into swords and...pruning hooks into spears.” Which is it? To draw a correct answer from the Word, let’s slowly and carefully turn to the Writings so we can rightly understand the difference between spiritual warfare and earthly warfare.
- AE 644 [20] notes that to **“beat”** means “the contentions and combats of truth from good with falsities from evil...”
- **“Swords”** “signify such things as belong to spiritual warfare...” (AE 671 [3]) (Emphasis added.) We read in AE 1145 [9] that **“swords”** “signify falsities destroying truths...” AE 315 [8] explains that “swords signify the destruction of truth by falsities...” Do we see a meaning emerging as to why we are instructed to beat our swords into ploughshares? The Lord is urging us to lay down our weapons of opposition and falsity that resist His truth. Putting down the sword and the spear—converting them into ploughshares and pruning-hooks—is explained in AE 734 [3], which states that **“ploughshares”** denote the church as to the good of life, and **“pruning hooks”** denote truths of doctrine. To help us focus, let’s highlight the meaning of **“ploughshares”** and **“pruning hooks”** once again: **the church following the good of life and the church following the truths of the Lord’s doctrine.** We are directed by

the Lord to surrender to Him our weapons of spiritual resistance and rebellious defiance.

- Now can we take this same doctrinal information and use it to understand why Joel's prophecy turned the wording around? I believe Joel's admonition is for us, as we regenerate, to take the good of life from the Lord and use it as a sword to fight against evil and falsity. He is also teaching us to take, and use, the doctrines of the Lord in the defense of the Lord's doctrinal causes.

"...nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore..."

- The words "**nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom**" are explained in the following passages. In *AC 1846*: "...the non-existence of charity is meant by 'nation being stirred against nation and kingdom against kingdom'..." In *AC 2120*: "...by 'nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom' nothing else is meant than evils against evils and falsities against falsities..." In *AE 48 [2]*: "...'nations against nation' is evil against good and 'kingdom against kingdom' is falsity against truth..."
- With the above passages, do we not see what is meant by "neither shall they learn war anymore"? When the Lord's new church is established, charity will be at its core; there will no longer be conflicting evils and falsities; truth will be free of hellish assaults and ridicule.

"But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree..."

- Our ability to penetrate the meaning and understanding of the spiritual sense of "**to sit**" depends on some reflection on passages such as *AE 687b*. "...the expressions 'to walk,' 'to stand,' and 'to sit,' are used as following one another, for 'to walk' pertains to the life of thought from intention, 'to stand' to the life of the intention from the will, and 'to sit' to the life of the will, thus it is life's being (esse)." In *AE 687 [14]*, we read that "...'to sit' signifies to be, and also to continue in one state and pertains to the will..."
- *AC 3552* states that "to 'sit' involves something of tranquility." And lastly, let's consider this quote from *AE 687 [17]*: "...'to sit' has reference to the being (esse) of man, which belongs to his will and love."
- The word "intention" refers to our will, our love, and our desire. These things make up our "being" or esse.
- "...to sit under his vine and under his fig tree'..." is explained in *AC 5113 [13]*: "...in the genuine sense a 'vine' signifies the good of the intellectual part, and a 'fig tree' the good of the exterior man..."

"...and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken."

- Falsity and evil will no longer rule. Truth and good will reign. *AE 403 [12]* sums up the meaning of this passage with these words: "...through the

truths and goods in which they are, they shall be safe from evils and falsities..." This is what is "signified by 'they shall sit under their own vine and under their own fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid.'"

Putting It All Together

The Lord is offering some powerful encouragement in these verses. He wants us to "stay the course" by trusting and following Him and His Word. Evil and falsity may loudly boast that they are stronger than the Lord, but *P&P* tells us differently: "*Falsities and evils will no longer be there....*" What will be there for us? Truths and goods! They will be inscribed on our hearts. When the Lord's new church comes to fruition, there will no longer be "disputation about truths." Read *AE 403 [12]*. We will be safe from evils and falsities. The Lord will come and judge between many peoples. He will dispose, arrange, adjust, settle, and regulate all of the conflicting and confusing man-made issues and concepts. His infinite love, wisdom, and use will settle all matters fairly. Those who defiantly and erringly lifted up their spiritual swords to oppose Him will beat their swords into ploughshares and turn their spears into pruning hooks. In other words, those disputing will need and want to make peace with our Lord.

When the Lord institutes His church, fear will be gone. We will sit under our vines and fig trees and have love within our **intellectual parts**, and we will have love in our very **external being**. Truth and good will reign supreme. Evil and falsity will be banished. We will no longer be afraid of the hells. We will "sit" before Him in a being (esse) and state of tranquility.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 4:3-4.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do you feel within you a sense of the coming victory over evil and falsity?
- The Lord as a judge will dispose, put into order, settle, and unravel things. Don't you feel a kind of longing for that to happen? So many issues tire us out. There are so many views of what is right and wrong. I can't wait for the Lord to settle things. When that happens, we will see through the clouds and darkness of human thought. His light will reach into every recess and dark place, and we will see the answer.
- Are we ready to beat our swords into ploughshares? Do we willingly come before the Lord to have our spears turned into pruning hooks? I can hear my heart saying "yes" to that question. How about you? Can we join hands and say with a loud voice, "Thy way and not my way O. Lord!"?
- The closing portion of this text says that no one shall know fear anymore. That is a message of tranquility that we can sit under with assurance. Why

don't we spend a few minutes basking in that promise from the Lord? It is especially comforting when the hells try to drown out this prophecy. We need not listen to them. Hell is weak and unable to withstand the Lord's disposing judgment. "Amen and Amen," said all of the people. Read *Deuteronomy 27* to gather the importance of saying "Amen" to all of the Lord's commandments.

MICAH 4:5-10

"For all people walk each in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever. 'In that day,' says the Lord, 'I will assemble the lame. I will gather the outcast and those whom I have afflicted; I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcast a strong nation; so the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on, even forever. And you, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, even the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.' Now why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in your midst? Has your counselor perished? For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor. Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in birth pangs. For now you shall go forth from the city, you shall dwell in the field, and to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered; there the Lord will redeem you from the hands of your enemies."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "...under the Lord, those who are in externals, and those who from ignorance are in things not true and good, will draw near. Truths and goods with them will grow. Falsities will not enter and destroy."

AC 4302 [4]

- "That 'to halt' denotes to be in good in which there are not yet genuine truths, but nevertheless general truths into which genuine truth can be insinuated, and such as do not disagree with genuine truths; and thus that the 'lame' are those who are in good, but not in genuine good because of their ignorance of truth (that is, in such good as are the Gentiles who live in mutual charity), may be seen from these passages in the Word where the 'lame' and the 'halt' are mentioned in a good sense. As in...Micah 4:6, 7..."

AE 405 [26]

- "...Jerusalem is called 'the mountain of holiness,' also 'the hill,' for 'the mountain of holiness,' likewise 'hill' signify spiritual good, which in essence is truth from good, as can be seen from the following passages..." *Micah 4:7* is cited among the many references.

AC 4599 [4]

- “In Micah 4:7, 8...the Lord’s celestial kingdom is described; its inmost which is love to the Lord, by ‘Mount Zion;’ its derivative which is mutual love, by ‘hill of the daughter of Zion,’ which love in the spiritual sense is called charity toward the neighbor; its interior truths of good by the ‘tower of the flock;’ that from this comes the spiritual of the celestial kingdom is signified by the ‘kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.”

AC 2362 [2]

- “...in the Word the ‘daughter of Zion,’ and also the ‘virgin daughter of Zion;’... constitutes the spiritual church, and is called in the Word the ‘daughter of Jerusalem.’” *Micah 4:8* is cited among other references.

AC 2362 [3]

- “That the celestial church, or the Lord’s celestial kingdom, is called the ‘daughter of Zion’ from the affection of good, that is, from love to the Lord Himself, may be seen further in...*Micah 4:10, 13...*”

AE 685 [3]

- “In Micah 4:8...‘the daughter of Zion’ signifies the celestial church, the essential of which is the good of love, ‘dominion’ is predicated of it, while ‘kingdom’ is predicated of ‘the daughter of Jerusalem’ because that signifies the spiritual church, the essential of which is the truth of doctrine.”

AE 721 [12]

- “...*Micah 4:8-10*...treats of the spiritual captivity in which the faithful are when they remain in a church in which there is no more truth and good; their lamentation that they are in that church is signified by ‘why doest thou shout in shouting?’ also by ‘that pangs take hold of thee as a woman in travail;’ when yet they have truths of doctrine and also the understanding of them, which is signified by ‘Is there no king in thee; hath thy counselor perished?’ ‘king’ signifying the truth of doctrine from the Word, and ‘counselor’ the understanding of it. That with those who are in the good of charity and thence in the truths of doctrine there will be a church is signified by ‘the daughter of Zion to whom the kingdom shall come,’ and by ‘the daughter of Jerusalem,’ ‘kingdom’ also signifying the church. The establishment of the church and reformation of those who are of the church is meant by ‘be in travail, bring forth, O daughter of Zion;’ ‘for now thou shalt go out from the city and shalt dwell in the field’ signifies that they will withdraw from a doctrine in which there is no longer any truth or good, and will abide where

these abound; 'city' meaning the doctrine from which they will withdraw; 'field' meaning where truths and goods abound, and 'to go out' meaning to withdraw, namely, from doctrine, and to be delivered from spiritual captivity."

AR 612

- "It is known, that by 'the land of Canaan' is signified the church, because the Word was there, and by it the Lord was known; also because in the midst of it was the city Zion, and under it the city Jerusalem, both upon a mountain. Hence by 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem' are signified the inmost things of the church; and as the church in the heavens makes one with the church on earth, therefore by 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem' is meant the church everywhere, but by 'Zion' the church as to love, and by 'Jerusalem' the church as to doctrine from love. It is called 'mount Zion' because by 'a mountain' is signified love. That by 'mount Zion' is signified heaven and the church where the Lord alone is worshiped, may appear from the following passages..." *Micah 4:7-8* are cited.

AE 850 [6]

- "In *Micah 4:1-3, 7, 8*...Any one can see that the coming of the Lord and of His kingdom in the heavens and in the earth are here described; therefore His kingdom, which is heaven and the church, is meant by 'the mountain of the house of Jehovah' that will then be established in the head of the mountains. And as 'Zion' means heaven and the church in which the Lord is to reign by His Divine truth, while 'Jerusalem' means heaven and the church as to doctrine from that Divine truth, it is said, 'from Zion shall go forth the law. And the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.' The instruction of all from the Lord is described by what then follows."

Derived Doctrine

We are quite fortunate in the study of these verses to have an expanse of direct teachings that will open for us the empowering understanding of the spiritual sense. Most notably, we need to read with care *AE 721 [12]* and *AR 612*. Like a wonderful puzzle, many of the essential spiritual parts are given to us. Now we need to lay them out on the table of our mind and patiently scrutinize and prayerfully learn how to put them together. Providence will protect those who humbly ask for help. He will help us so that we do not force the pieces together. Under His direction, let's assemble before the Word and watch the wonders of His good and truth take form. But before we begin the assembling process, it is prudent that we use some additional, helpful facts that were not covered in the direct teachings. A search and use of derived doctrine will be of great help, too.

"In that day, says the Lord..."

- In the positive sense, these words, "**in that day**," signify an acknowledgement of the Lord and of His Divine. See *AE 654 [9]*. *AE 422 [16]* and *AE 548 [6]* teach that the words "**in that day**" refer to the coming of the Lord.
- In the negative sense, the words "**in that day**" point to a day of judgment for those "who trust in falsities..." "...they shall [**in that day**] be without any truth." (*AE 355 [26]*) (Emphasis added.) In a passage from *AE 357 [22]*, we read that "...he who trusts in himself because of an ability to reason from falsities shall [**in that day**] be deprived of all truth." (Emphasis added.)
- What we get from these teachings is a sense of the Lord's cleansing and expunging from His church the decay and harm of self-love and the falsities of evil. As *P&P* stated, "falsities will not enter and destroy."

"I will assemble..."

- The word "**assemble**" signifies that the faithful should "...set themselves in order" because truths and goods cannot be assembled unless they are set in order. (*AC 6338*) In *AC 7556*, we read that the Lord places in safe-keeping goods and truths—"even within the evil." "For goodness and truth which have not been linked to evils and falsities are not laid waste but are stored away interiorly by the Lord and at a later time are brought out for use." Picture the Lord calling for those hidden goods and truths to come out from their hiding places. In this day, of the Lord, they can now be assembled for use and order.

"I will gather the outcast..."

- *AC 4802* describes an "**outcast**" as one whose "faith is devoid of the life of faith." What does this mean? *TCR 347* teaches that truths do not actually live *until they are in deeds*. *CL 160* reminds us that "love must *go forth and be efficient* or it will perish." The same is true of faith. Faith is not something wispy, fluffy, or ethereal. Faith is not a leap of blind trust. Faith is the eye of love. *TCR 347 [2]* defines faith "as a complex of truths shining in the mind... truths [teaching us] not only [what] to believe, but also in whom [we] ought to believe..." So the Lord's Word is teaching us that He wants our "**outcasts**" to be gathered and put in order so we might receive His shining complex of truths. No more limping or halting spiritual progress. He wants our faith to be a living part of our life by being practical, useful, and on the alert to see the things of spiritual reality.

"O tower of the flock..."

- *AE 922 [7]* defines a "**tower**" as signifying "interior truths from that good which looks to heaven."

- A **“flock”** signifies those who will be taught (guided) and instructed. To be called a **“flock”** is to receive a pledge from the Lord—He gives the **“flock”** His promise of conjunction. See *AC 4704*, *AC 6770*, and *AC 4863*.

“And to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered; there the Lord will redeem you.”

- **“Babylon”** signifies a tired external worship. (*AC 3708*) *Doctrine of the Lord* 65 describes **“Babylon”** as the “church corrupted by self love and the love of the world.” *AE 374 [6]* identifies **“Babylon”** as the “profanation of good and truth.” *AE 1021* pictures **“Babylon”** as the “love of ruling over heaven and earth through the holy things of the church.”
- We need to remember that the Lord says that He will deliver and redeem us from these Babylonian states.

Putting It All Together

Let’s return to *Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 111*. Remember we were taught that “... without the Word there is no knowledge of the Lord, and therefore no salvation...” *AC 5128 [5]* teaches us that there are two things “which not only close up the way of communication, but even deprive a man of the capacity of ever becoming rational—deceit and profanation. Deceit is like a subtle poison which infects the interiors, and profanation mixes falsities with truths and evils with goods...”

It appears that these issues of deceit and profanation were wreaking havoc in the Jewish church. Leaders and church officials were “selling” their offices. Bribes and not truth swayed decisions. The people in the faithful remnant were not able to find help from the church. They were crying out in pain and turmoil. They felt like cripples limping along.

Return for a moment to the quote from *Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 111*. We read there that it “pleased the Lord that when the Word had been wholly falsified and adulterated among the Jewish nation and thus as it were brought to nothingness, that He should descend from heaven and come into the world, and fulfill the Word, and thereby repair and restore it and again give light to the earth’s inhabitants...” (Emphasis added.) This is the message the Lord gave through Micah. When things were at the darkest point, when each person walked in the name of his (own) god, the Lord came to put an end to disorder, sin, and spiritual death.

There was no king in their midst! There was no counselor! Did their counselor perish? These were Divine observations and questions posed by the Lord to cause His faithful to reflect and to long to have Him as their King and Counselor.

In the midst of this travail, the Lord speaks to their hearts. He musters their remains. His voice calls forth the hidden good and truth and tells them all to assemble. He announces that evil and falsity will no longer trouble them. Falsity and evil will no longer be among them. Falsity will no longer have the ability to enter and destroy. The inmost things of the church and the church in the heavens will make a one.

Deceit and blasphemy will be gone, and communication with the Lord will be repaired and restored.

The tower of the flock will teach and instruct the faithful remnant about the ways wherein they should walk. The tower of the flock will show the way that conjunction will come about. The message ends with these words: "...you shall be delivered...the Lord will redeem you from the hands of your enemies."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 4:5-10.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

Consider the Lord's pointed statement to His people, and us, that "all people walk each in the name of their god." It gives us pause to ponder and ask, "What god do I walk after?"

- I like the next part of this verse, beginning with the word **but**. "...but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever." That is our prayer, isn't it? I can't imagine an eternity apart from the Lord. I even hope and pray that He might visit and touch me the way He did the little children brought to Him by their parents. What things do you hope to experience in the Lord's presence?
- "In that day" refers to the coming of the Lord. "In that day" refers to the eradication of falsity and evil. "In that day" will mark the end of terrorism from the hells. "In that day," truths and goods will grow and falsity will not enter and destroy. That sounds so peaceful and tranquil. Is hell trying at this moment to take this reality away by calling it a fantasy?
- The Lord calls our attention to the fact that we have experienced "lameness." He notes our "halting" (hesitant) nature. He recalls to us that we have known temptation and affliction. But then He assures us that as "outcasts," we will be called to assemble. He promises us that the "outcasts" will become a strong nation. Is this a happy message? Where is there any gloom and doom in this prophecy?
- The Lord reminds us that on our own we will have no king. He also tells us that our proprial counselor will perish. We need to turn from this false counsel as quickly as possible. Can we, in this moment of reflection, pause long enough to invite the Lord to be our King and our Counselor?
- The "tower of the flock" was an interesting study. A tower gives us height. A tower gives us an early warning system when an enemy approaches. A tower gets our eyes looking upward. As a flock, we need the Lord's steady promise that He will bring heaven and earth into conjunction. What do you see in the usage of the tower of the flock?
- Getting us out of Babylon—please do so, Lord, as quickly as possible. I long to rid myself of tired worship experiences. I long to allow spiritual things to be

my guiding light and not a means to flatter self-love. What does the Lord promise us? He will redeem us from the hands of our enemies. Talk about giving us a voice of confidence—the Lord has loaded us up with a pep talk that can motivate us to reach out and take His hand.

MICAH 4:11-13

“Now also many nations have gathered against you, who say, ‘let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion.’ But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord, nor do they understand His counsel; for He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor.

Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hooves bronze; you shall beat in pieces many peoples; I will consecrate their gain to the Lord, and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Falsities will be destroyed among them.”

AC 2362 [3]

- “That the celestial church, or the Lord’s celestial kingdom, is called the ‘daughter of Zion’ from the affection of good, that is, from love to the Lord Himself...” *Micah 4:10, 13* are cited.

AC 10303 [4]

- “...truths with man have been disposed into a series according to the angelic societies with the regenerate...The series into which truths have been disposed with the good, and the series into which falsities have been disposed with the evil, are signified in the Word by ‘sheaves’ and ‘bundles’...” *Micah 4:12* is cited.

AC 7729 [6]

- “In Micah 4:13...what these words mean no one can know without the internal sense, thus unless it is known what is meant by ‘threshing,’ by the ‘daughter of Zion,’ by the ‘horn which shall become as iron,’ by the ‘hoof which shall become as brass, with which many peoples shall be broken in pieces.’ The ‘daughter of Zion’ denotes the celestial church; the ‘horn’ denotes the power of truth from good; ‘iron’ denotes natural truth which shall avail to destroy falsities; ‘hoof’ denotes truth from good in the ultimate degree; ‘brass’ denotes natural good which shall avail against evils.”

AC 7770 [5]

- "...in Micah 4:13...'to break in pieces many peoples' denotes to devastate them; the 'gain which is devoted to Jehovah and to the Lord of the whole earth' denotes the knowledges of truth and good. That David sanctified to Jehovah the silver and the gold that he had taken from the nations which he had subdued, from the Syrians, from Moab, from the sons of Ammon, from the Philistines, from Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer...and that Solomon put the sanctified things of his father among the treasures of the house of Jehovah...involve the like."

AR 206

- "They, who believe from themselves and not from the Lord through the Word, also believe that they know and understand all things. The reason is, that their spiritual mind is shut, and their natural mind alone open; and this mind without spiritual light, sees no otherwise..." *Micah 4:13* is cited among other references.

AR 270

- "A horn' is frequently mentioned in the Word, and by it is everywhere signified power; therefore when 'a horn' is predicated of the Lord, it signifies omnipotence...That 'a horn' signifies power, and when applied to the Lord, omnipotence, may appear from the following passages..." *Micah 4:13* is among the numerous passages cited.

AE 176 [5]

- "In Micah 4:13...The 'daughter of Zion' is the celestial church; 'horn' is power in the natural man; 'hoofs' are the ultimates there, called sensual scientifics; hence it is evident what is signified by 'making the horn iron, and the hoofs brass.'...That 'horn' is the power of truth from good in the natural man...and that 'hoofs' are the knowledges of the sensual man, which are truths in the ultimate of order..."

AE 316 [12]

- "In Micah 4:13...'Rise and thresh, O daughter of Zion,' signifies the dispersion of evil with those who are of the church, 'to thresh' is to disperse, and 'daughter of Zion' is the church that is in the affection of good; 'I will make thy horn iron' signifies Divine truth mighty and powerful; 'I will make thy hoofs brass' has a like meaning, 'hoofs' meaning truths in ultimates; 'that thou mayest beat in pieces many peoples' signifies that thou mayest scatter

falsities, for ‘peoples’ are predicated of truths, and in the contrary sense, of falsities.”

Derived Doctrine

“Now also many nations have gathered against you, who say, let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion...”

- Don Rose wrote a series of articles for *New Church Life* wherein he focused on “the great conspiracy” of Hell to destroy the Lord’s New Church. I recommend his series. Hell can’t stand the conjugal principle; Hell can’t stand a scintilla of innocence; Hell can’t stand anyone studying the Word. The greater the purity of a person’s love, the greater the influx of the Lord’s celestial church, the more Hell burns with a desire to defile this love and all of its derivatives.
- Hell is a place where self-love seeks to overcome anyone or anything that opposes its ends. Each hellish spirit wants to be “king of the mountain.” They will push, shove, and intimidate one another so as to be the “supreme” object of worship. But when it comes to fighting the Lord, they put aside their individual agendas to gather their bags of sneaky tricks and insanities to oppose Him.

“...many nations have gathered against you...”

- *AE 304 [17]* explains that “nations signify the goods of the church, and in the contrary sense, its evils...” (Emphasis added.)
- Which sense is being used here? Are the goods of the church gathering against the corrupted Jewish church to expose falsity? Or are evils drawing near the Lord’s church to oppose its repentance, reformation, and regeneration? Let’s hold this question in mind as we read the next portion of the prophecy.

“...who say, ‘Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion.’”

- It appears we have an answer here. It is evil, in the contrary sense, that’s speaking. The goods of the church would not seek to defile and amend, change, rectify, or banish goods and truths. Nor would the good take delight in defiling.
- “...let our eye look upon Zion...” The “eye” signifies “the understanding of truth and the belief in it...but it is the reverse with the ‘evil eye,’...” (*AE 1081 [4]*) An “evil eye” is not seeking an understanding of truth. Instead, evil seeks to keep an eye out to find a way to believe in falsity. See *AE 1081 [4]*. The hells want to turn an “evil eye” on Zion because Zion signifies the church in which is celestial love. See *AE 504 [7]*. Why? The love, delight, and craving desire of evil is to attack celestial and spiritual love.

“But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord, nor do they understand His counsel...”

- Isn't the literal sense of this passage quite plain in its meaning? Hell doesn't know and hasn't a clue about the infinite thoughts of the Lord. His good and truth are far above any comprehension of the hells. **“Counsel”** represents being intelligent from truths that are from the good of love. See *AE 1100 [19]*.

“...for He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor.”

- In *AC 10303 [4]*, the meaning of **“sheaves”** is explained. “The series into which truths have been disposed with the good and the series into which falsities have been disposed with the evil are signified in the Word by ‘sheaves’...” (Emphasis added.)
- The **threshing floor** is a place, or basis, of separation or disposal. The chaff is separated from the wheat. In like manner, the **“threshing floor”** signifies the Lord bringing about the separation of falsity from truth. *AE 539 [12]* defines a “...threshing floor, by which are signified truths of good, and goods of truth...” The church must be shown what is good and true so it can be freed from evil and falsity. *AC 10303[4]* spoke of “series.” There is the series of good and the series of falsity. These series are like a bundle of sheaves that will be separated by the Lord.

“Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion...”

- **“Arise”** signifies “the elevation of the mind.” (*AC 2695*) “Arise signifies the union of the Divine and the Human of the Lord and His conjunction with heaven and the church...” (*AE 700 [10]*)
- **“...and thresh.”** as we noted above, has to do with the separation of good and truth from evil and falsity.
- “Daughter of Zion signifies the church which is in love to the Lord.” (*AE 328 [10]*) “Daughter of Zion signifies the spiritual affections for the Divine truth, which is the love of truth for the sake of truth...” (*AE 850 [18]*)

“For I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hooves bronze...”

- “...a horn signifies Divine truth about to be revealed out of heaven.” (*AE 55*)“... a horn signifies the influx of Divine truth and the revelation of it.” (*AE 611*)
- A **“horn”** being made into **“iron”** “signifies truth in ultimate order.” (*AR 847*)
- *AC 7729 [6]* was cited earlier and explains that “hoof denotes truth from good in the ultimate degree; ‘brass’ denotes natural good which shall avail against evils.”

“...you shall beat in pieces many peoples...”

- *AE 316 [12]* explains that the words **“beat in pieces”** signify that they (the remnant, called to serve the Lord’s New Church) will be given the power to disperse or “scatter falsities...” The work of the faithful under the efficient direction of the Lord will be thoroughly successful.

“I will consecrate their gain to the Lord, and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth.”

- **“Consecrate”** means to make or declare something sacred or holy.
- **“Consecrate”** means to set apart or to devote something to the service or worship of the Lord. In other words, the Lord’s remnant will not foolishly ascribe victory or success to self-merit. The threshing or beating into pieces of falsity is rightly the Lord’s doing. The Lord is the one who brings good out of each and every evil Hell has manufactured to foil our spiritual successes.
- **Substance**, or love, is not the creation of humanity. We can be filled with the Lord’s **substance** to use. His substance is necessary to overcome the falsity of hell. We need to consecrate all our power and substance to the Lord.
- What is meant by **“the whole earth”**? Simply, it means that we are to diligently endeavor to “beat in pieces” or “thresh” evil wherever it might be found in our heart and mind to facilitate the growth of the Lord’s New Church. See *AE 316 [16]*.

Putting It All Together

“Falsities will be destroyed...” (P&P)

Hell, in a state of delusion and illogical reasoning, thinks that it can gather together its many nations (thousands of devious tricks) to defile the intention the Lord has for His new church remnant. Hell casts an evil eye toward the “daughter of Zion,” the affection for good, and assumes it will be easy to conquer its intended victims. Hell, as usual, underestimates the eternal and dynamic power of the Lord. So the voice of the Lord reminds them, and us, that they haven’t a clue of what they are up against. “...they do not know the thoughts of the Lord, nor do they understand His counsel.” The Lord states that He will gather the faithful remnant together and help them thresh or dispose of Hell’s menacing evils.

The good news is given to the “daughter of Zion” that Divine truth with its accompanying good will come to the aid of the faithful so that they will have the power to disperse and scatter falsities. How thorough will this action be? Listen again to the words of the Lord: *“I will consecrate their gain...and their substance...”* (Emphasis added.) How extensive will it be? It will infiltrate and enliven *the whole earth*, or as the spiritual sense says, it will bring an end to evil wherever it seeks to hide to oppose the Lord.

These are not the words (or thoughts) of the prophet Micah. These are not the words and interpretation of this researcher. These are the words and the promise of the Lord. Therefore, what He says is true and eternal. Falsity will be destroyed. Hell will be conquered. The Lord's New Church will be forever and ever. Let the faithful feel and began to experience a sense of anticipatory excitement and happiness with the announcement of this news so they can cry out: "So may it be forever, O Lord."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 4:11-13.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do we, in any sense, see examples in history, or the present, of the illusions and complete insanity of Hell? Can we picture their belief that they are more powerful than the Lord? Can we see or imagine the evil eye they have toward anything good?
- The Lord teaches us that Hell has no idea of what it is up against when it imagines the Lord can be defeated. I want us to say that phrase over and over, again and again. I believe saying—and believing—this will give us power over Hell. The more we believe this, the more Hell's power to confuse and frustrate us will diminish. We need positive thinking working within our hearts and minds. What are your thoughts on this subject?
- The Lord makes some positive promises to His new church in this prophecy:
 - He will "consecrate" our gain over Hell.
 - He will inflow into our lives and give us "substance."
 - He will enliven the whole earth (our minds).
 - Every nook and corner where Hell hides and lurks will be cleansed.
 - The Lord will help us thrash the armies of Hell.

Mull over these promises. Let the power surge in and bolster our resolve to stand toe to toe with evil and fight with the resources of our doctrine. The Lord will win. Because of Him, we will win, too.

- Hell will try to remove this soundness from us, seeking to exert their insanity and illusions over our daily lives. Will we, as a church, put aside our personal agendas and band together under the Lord's providence and leadership? I believe we ought to seek moments when we can pledge our allegiance wholly to the Lord so we can draw strength from the Lord and, in charity, encourage our fellow worshipers to join hands. Will we do this? What little doubt has been planted by the Hells to tell us this is an impossible human goal to achieve?

Chapter Five

MICAH 5:1

“Now gather yourself in troops, O daughter of troops; he has laid siege against us; they will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “...however much they may infest...”

AC 9049 [8]

- “That...‘to smite the cheek’ denotes to destroy truths, is plain from passages in the Word where mention is made of ‘smiting the cheek.’ And because in the genuine sense this signifies the destruction of truth, therefore in the opposite sense it signifies the destruction of falsity...it occurs in these passages...” *Micah 5:1* is cited as an example.

AE 727 [7]

- “...in the spiritual sense...destroying the falsities of evil in the church...is signified by ‘smiting...’ *Micah 5:1* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

“Now gather yourself in troops, O daughter of troops...”

- To “**gather**” signifies “...that they [are to] receive the truths that are given by the Lord...” (*AE 294 [7]*)
- “The power of a faith formed from a multiplicity of truths, as opposed to falsities and evils, may be compared to...a **battalion [troops] formed**... where the soldiers stand side by side, and thus form and act as one force...” (*TCR 353 [2]*) (Emphasis added.)
- A “**daughter**” signifies “...the affection of internal good...” (*AC 6024 [6]*) A “**daughter**” signifies “...the affection of truth...” (*AE 195 [9]*) A “**daughter**” signifies the “...affection of interior truth...” (*AC 3774*) So if “**troops**” signify the multiplicity of truths, the Lord is instructing (calling for) those “**troops**” to be inspired, and united, by an internal affection for truths.

“...he has laid siege against us; they will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek.”

- “...to ‘lay siege to it’ signifies to distress the church by evils and falsities...” (AE 633 [3])
- “‘...to strike’ signifies to injure...” (AC 9065) To “**strike the judge**” has an interesting meaning to reflect on. AC 7154 mentions that a “**judge**” signifies the “Divine disposal.” AC 8723 teaches that a “judge signifies the appearance of some particular and singular things as from another source...” In other words, the Hells try to distract and call into question the disposal of the Lord’s good and truth by meddling with the facts in particular and singular things. They call into question the Divine and try to ascribe His love and wisdom to other sources. AC 6372 explains that a “judge denotes that [the Lord] acts from good. Hell strikes at this idea, trying to obfuscate the correctness of this truth.
- The “**rod**” signifies “that...doctrine, by the power of natural truth from the spiritual, will refute and convince those who are in falsities and evils...” (AE 723) Hell doesn’t want anyone to experience power from the literal sense. So they try to stir up our understanding and cause equivocations to surface. They offer nit-picking ratiocinations, blurring the literal sense to keep the spiritual sense from convincing us or refuting falsity and evil.
- “**...to smite the cheek**” with a rod, in a negative sense, denotes to destroy truths. (AC 9049) In the positive sense, “To smite the enemies upon the cheek” signifies “...to destroy interior falsities with those who are opposed to the goods and truths of the church...” (AE 556)

Putting It All Together

Notice how P&P phrased the meaning and summation of *Micah 5:1*. “...however much they infest...” Can you sense what the Divine ending of this sentence will be? Doesn’t this capture the futility of Hell? The Hells sensed a battle was coming their way. What do we say regarding an effective strategy of warfare? “The best defense is a good offense.”

Hearing the Lord call for the “troops” to assemble, hearing the call for the “daughter of troops,” Hell launches the first wave of its desired heartless carnage. They lay siege, hoping to cause distress, panic, and uncertainty in the church. The plan involves calling into question (criticizing) the particulars and singular teachings of the Word. Most notably, they pick on the rigid, stern, and gloomy stories of the literal sense. Who, they challenge, is responsible for the formation of the Word? “Didn’t people write the words? People are human and fallible.” Hell loves to call forth “apparent inconsistencies” in the Word.

The Lord calls for the forming of the troops. He calls the battalions to stand side by side, and to “thus form and act as one force...” (TCR 353 [2]) He promises the multiplicity of troops. The fighting corps will be inspired by an internal affection for

truths. Falsity and evil cannot and will not prevail in the presence of the Lord's holiness. Like a ball of wax, they will melt and disintegrate in the heat of Lord's love. Wave after wave of their attack will end in dismal failure. However much they attack, belittle, and question the Word of the Lord and want to infest the New Church, it will not happen.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 5:1.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

The theme of hope and triumph continues in our study of *Micah*. Isn't it great to read good news? One of the criticisms heard about the Word is that it is full of gloom and doom. Don't you want to shout out what we are reading? "Here is a great and optimistic message from the Lord. Let's join hands and form a solid line of confidence and take in the Lord's message of justice winning out over evil."

- Are you personally familiar with Hell's war on the literal sense of the Word? Nit-picking, finding fault, ridicule of the literal sense, obfuscation of the facts, all in an attempt to slap the Lord on the cheek with the rod of falsity. Again, don't you want to shout out the good news that Hell's efforts will not work?
- How would you complete this quote from *P&P* after reading the spiritual sense of *Micah 5:1*? "However much they [Hell] may infest..."

MICAH 5:2

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "The coming of the Lord who is the God of the church..."

AC 2135 [4]

- "They who abide in the literal sense, as do the Jews, know indeed from this passage that the Lord should be born there; but as they are expecting a leader and a king who will bring them back into the land of Canaan, they therefore explain the words found here according to the letter; that is, by the 'land of Judah' they understand the land of Canaan; by 'Israel' they understand Israel, although they know not where Israel now is; and by a 'Leader' they still

understand their Messiah; when yet other things are meant by 'Judah' and 'Israel;' namely, by 'Judah' those who are celestial, by 'Israel,' those who are spiritual, in heaven and on earth; and by the 'Leader' the Lord."

AC 4594 [4]

- "In Micah...5:2...from these prophecies it was known to the Jewish people that the Messiah or Christ would be born at Bethlehem..."

AC 9485

- "...'Ephrathah' is Bethlehem, where the Lord was born (Micah 5:2...)..."

AC 9594 [4]

- "...'Ephrathah' where He was to be found, is Bethlehem, where He was born... Micah 5:2..."

AC 10248 [8]

- "That 'an age' is predicated in general of every church, but specifically of the celestial church, is evident from the following passages...where by 'the days of an age' is meant the time of the Most Ancient Church, which was celestial. And in Micah...5:2...where the sense is the same."

Doctrine of the Lord 37 [3]

- "That the Lord existed before His advent into the world, is evident from the following passages...Micah 5:2..."

AR 47

- "...'the Ancient of Days' is the Lord...Micah 5:2..."

AR 291

- In the words found in *Micah 5:2*, "...'the Ancient of Days' is the Lord from eternity..."

TCR 845

- "When [the Jews are told] that the kingdom of the Messiah, because He is the Son of God, will not be on earth but in heaven, they reply that the land of Canaan will then be heaven. When told that they do not know where Bethlehem Ephrathah is, where the Messiah is to be born, according to the

prediction in Micah 5:2...they reply that the mother of the Messiah will nevertheless there give birth to Him; and some say that wherever she brings forth there is Bethlehem..."

Derived Doctrine

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah..."

- In order to extract and appreciate the deeper spiritual significance and meaning of "**Bethlehem**," we must turn to the Word and consider first the literal meaning of the word "**Bethlehem**." We need to recall that Rachel died in **Bethlehem** following the birth of her son Benjamin; therefore, Benjamin, Benoni, (son of sorrow), was born in **Bethlehem**. Also, David was born in **Bethlehem**.
- "**Bethlehem**" means "**House of Bread**," and "**Ephrath**" comes from a root meaning of **fruitful** or plentiful.
- A "**house**" "signifies the church, the mind of the man of the church (wherein are the things of the will and of the understanding, or of charity and faith) ..." (AC 710)
- "**Bread** signifies love and charity." (AC 4211, *emphasis added*.) "Bread signifies celestial things and refreshment from them." (AC 1727) "Bread signifies the appropriation of good from the Lord's Divine natural." (AC 4209)
- **Bethlehem** was the birthplace of Benjamin. It was also the place of his mother's death when she gave birth to him. Drawing on our correspondential derived doctrines, we get an insight that the power of truth can be gained through good when there is a series of "labors" and hard and painful struggles with the eventual death of our maternal inclination toward self-love.
- "'Bethlehem' signifies the Word in respect to its spiritual sense; and there He chose to be born because the Lord is the Word." (AE 700 [9])
- "[Things contained in the internal sense cannot be explained without adequate terms.]...In order therefore that those who desire to know may receive some idea of what the spiritual and celestial is...'Bethlehem'...I will briefly explain it. In the supreme sense the subject is...the glorification of the Lord's natural, and in the relative sense the regeneration of man as to his natural." (AC 4585 [4])
- "Ephrathah denotes...the spiritual celestial sense of the Word." (AC 9406 [4]) The spiritual signifies "such as are of faith" (understanding), and the celestial signifies "such as are of the will." (AC 1203) The spiritual celestial sense of the Word represents "truth conjoined with love." (AE 449)

"...though you are little among the thousands of Judah..."

- "**Little**" "signifies that there was little of truth...little in comparison to those who are in the affection of good." (AC 2429)

- “‘Thousands’ signifies primary truths which are in the first degree under the truth immediately from the Divine...” (AC 8696)
- **“Judah”** “signifies the Lord in respect to celestial love.” (AE 433 [3]) **“Judah”** “signifies those who are in the good of love, with whom the church was to be set up.” (AC 10,327)

“...yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel...”

- In spite of their spiritual limitations, or the “littleness” of their truth, the remnant will be used by the Lord to bring forth His mighty plan of salvation. Their weakness is utilized and bolstered to become His strength.
- AC 5489 [2] has a wonderful description of what the Lord does for those who desire and intend the Lord to be the One ruler and reign in their lives. His plan to **“come forth”** is as follows: “...with the regenerate the memory knowledges which are truths of the church...are stored up by the Lord...and therefore when the Lord insinuates into such persons a zeal for good, these truths show themselves in their order; and when He insinuates a zeal for truth, this good is present and [He] enkindles it.”

“...whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”

- Is this another way of calling our attention to the “Alpha and Omega” teaching? The Lord does not change. He has been the same from the beginning to the end. With Him, there is no “old.” He is everlasting, unchangeable, and cohesively true.

Putting It All Together

The Word is the Lord’s. The Word is from the Lord. The Word has “reference to the Lord, to His heaven, to the church, to religious belief, and to all things connected...” (AC 1)

Being that the Word is from the Lord, “it must of necessity contain within it such things as belong to heaven, to the church, and to religious belief, and that unless it did so it could not be called the Lord’s Word, nor could it be said to have any life in it.” (AC 2)

In AR 224, we are urged to “Read the Word and believe in the Lord, and you will see the truths which should constitute your faith and life...Everyone whose soul desires it is capable of seeing the truths of the Word in the light...”

The Word is indeed a Bethlehem—a house of bread. The Word is also Ephrathah, in that it is fruitful and plentiful. The Lord’s birth occurred in Bethlehem. As often as the Word is read and loved, His advent occurs again and again within the heart of the reader.

The Word has its literal sense, its spiritual sense, and its celestial sense. It has been carefully written by the Lord so as to tell us about His love for us. It is written to tell us how the Lord took on our human nature and fought to overcome inherited tendencies toward evil and falsity. He glorified His human and thoroughly (soundly) defeated the Hells. Every event of His life—even the least of things—is a significant detail in His redemptive plan. What He wants and seeks to implement for us is for us to give Him our hearts and minds. He wants us to diligently read His Word so that its spiritual celestial degrees can help us to “come forth” to Him so that He will be the “One Ruler” in our lives. The Lord promises to add a zeal for good; He promises to show us His truths in their heavenly order; and in the end, He promises to enkindle, emblazon, and enliven (refresh) our lives with His “House of Bread.”

Will His Word ever grow “old”? Never! It is a story that lasts. In the Lord’s plan, the Word is written to tell us of the past that will be relevant for the present, and it will apply to the things of the future. It will be read to eternity and never be exhausted. What other book could possibly match this eternal source? It is an everlasting love story that will always thrill our soul. The depth of His story will never be exhausted—nay, it is an eternal story we as angels will thrive on. The bread of heaven is plentiful, and it is spiritually satisfying.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 5:2.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Does this chapter challenge us regarding the absolute necessity of reading the Word? Are we ready to **put aside** our excuses for why we don’t read the Word daily?
- This is probably a long-standing debate in our hearts and minds. We try, but we can’t seem to get it together. We lapse in our effort. Well, will *AC 1&2* and *AR 224* provide us with answers of encouragement to help us stand up and bolster our fortitude to persevere? What methods have you used to read the Word?
- How about signing up to receive some daily inspiration? Use your computer to sign up for a free source. Type in www.newchurch.org. Then click on *News*, and you will see an opportunity to register to receive daily inspiration. Every morning, you will receive a thoughtful quote from the Writings. It is a short reading that one can meditate on. From there, you can slowly branch out to read other lessons from the Word. Something has to motivate us. Bottom line: Spiritually, we cannot afford to continue offering weak excuses. The Lord has written His Word in such a way that it will meet all levels of the mind. His Word has avenues that will open us to the fruitful and plentiful Bread of Heaven. There is a struggle involved in getting to use His truth—but what dividends it pays for the health of our soul! The Lord will enliven our effort.

He will add the zeal. Don't let Hell talk you into procrastinating another moment or another day.

- The House of Bread waits. It has a plentiful supply of love and wisdom. If you feel unsure that you will be successful in reading, why not get a friend to join you? Ask them to join you in a daily reading time. It is worth the effort. The Lord's Word is not "old" or stale; it is fresh news each and every day you go to it for help and inspiration. Give it a try 5 days a week. If you miss one day, do not berate yourself. Go right back and pick it up with a positive feeling. In no time, you will be so dedicated you will look forward to (and protect) the reading and reflection time.
- No more excuses! Let's be done with our wimpy, pitiful, whining ways! Instead, hold to your promise. Let the one-to-five minutes a day be as important as lesser mundane chores. Can we do it? Yes, we can!
- There was a song I sang enthusiastically as a child called "*Trust and Obey*." Do you recall the first lines of that song? "When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, what a glory He sheds on our way. As we do His good will, He abides with us still..." I passionately believe the words of this hymn. I still hum it today, recalling the positive message about the rewards one gets while reading the Word. What song or passage might inspire you to faithfully read the Word?
- Pause for a moment to reflect on the words of *Micah 5:2*. "Though thou art little...yet out of you shall come forth...One to be Ruler..." How often do we feel small or insignificant? Hell loves to tell us how futile our efforts are. Well, in the hands of the Lord, our little can become much. He is the ruler. He can bring to bear what is necessary to help us become an angel. We are little. In the Lord's plan of Providence, we can give birth to spiritual things that will let us reach upward to things eternal. The Lord's "goings forth are from of old—from everlasting."

MICAH 5:3-4

"Therefore He shall give them up, until that time that she who is in labor has given birth; then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel. And He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God; and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- The Lord "...will gather the church together and teach those who are in it."

AC 6674 [4 & 7]

- "...the Lord as to the Divine Human is the 'name' of Jehovah, or His whole quality; hence all Divine worship is from the Divine Human, and it is this which is to be worshiped...Micah 5:4..."

AC 9422 [2-3]

- "...'sitting' signifies remaining in a state; for movements from place to place signify changes of state of the interiors...Consequently 'sitting' signifies a permanent abiding in the state of the interiors...it unfolds in the following passages...Micah 5:4..."

AR 81

- "...in heaven no other names are given but what involve the quality of any one and the quality of God is all that by which He is worshiped. He who does not know this signification of 'name' in the Word, can only understand name; and in this alone there is nothing of worship and religion..." *Micah 5:4* is one of many passages cited as examples.

AE 687 [15]

- "In Micah...5:4...[it] is said of the Lord and of the doctrine of Divine truth from Him, which is meant by 'Then shall he stand and feed in the name of Jehovah;' that men of the church will be in that doctrine is signified by 'they shall sit;' and that the doctrine of Divine truth will endure to eternity is signified by 'he shall increase unto the ends of the earth.'"

Derived Doctrine

"Therefore He shall give them up..."

- To understand the meaning of "**give them up,**" we must look at the negative and positive usage of these words. In *AE 659 [23]*, we are taught that to "**give them up**" means to "release them to the devilish loves, and thence to evils and falsities which are from hell." In the positive sense, *AC 9642 [2]* teaches, "**to give them up**" means to not withhold them. It is akin to elevating them from the pit of ignorance and the oppression of the hells.
- Since it is the Lord (He) "giving them up," we can focus on the positive meaning because He is talking about the vital roll the remnant will play when He calls them to His new church.

“...until the time that she who is in labor has given birth.”

- The phrase **“until the time”** occurs in the Word more often than one might expect. Looking at the 34 citations given in the Writings, its usage seems to point to a period of spiritual latency with a glimpse, or mention, of the potency that will eventually bring about many corrective results. For instance, look at *CL 416*: “...the chick is latent in its seed...with every requisite **until the time** of hatching...” *AC 407* mentions that “There always remains some nucleus of a church [in]...a remnant...**until the time**...” *AE 632 [3]* illustrates the latency (potency) of the new church: “...the total destruction of the church by evils of life and falsities of doctrine **until the time**...signifies until evil is consummated...” Evil and falsity, for a time, may appear to have made the Lord and His church ineffective **until the time** when the Lord calls out and enlivens His remnant; His chicks; His overcoming the disorders of Hell. Thus, **“until the time”** is an announcement that spiritual recovery and restoration are now underway. (Emphasis added to all of the above quotes from the Writings.)
- **“...she who is in labor...”** *AC 4504* teaches that “‘she’ represents the affection for all truths, and so means the church itself...” *AC 9278 [3]* explains what **“labor”** and **“combat”** represent: “when a man is in external things he is in labor and combat...into which the hells flow from all sides, continually endeavoring to infest and even subjugate...but the Lord continually protects and sets him free.” *AR 531*, explaining the spiritual sense of *Revelation 12:1*, the story of the woman travailing to give birth, tells us that “It treats...of the New Church and its doctrine: by ‘the woman’ is here meant the New Church, and by ‘the offspring’ which she brought forth, its doctrine: and it also treats of those in the present church, who from doctrine believe in a Trinity of Persons, and in the duality of the Person of Christ, likewise in justification by faith alone; these are meant by ‘the dragon.’ Then it treats of the persecution of the New Church by these, on account of its doctrine, and its protection by the Lord, **until from a few it increases among many.**” (Emphasis added.)

“Then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel.”

- *AE 746 [2]* states: “That formerly all who were of one church called themselves **brethren** and that the Lord calls those **brethren** who are in love to Him and in charity towards the neighbor, can be seen from many passages in the Word...” (Emphasis added.) *Micah 5:3* is cited.
- With this quote and two other quotes from the *Arcana*, we are given a possible meaning of the words **“...the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel.”** *AC 7975* teaches us that the sons of Israel represent “genuine goods and truths which are of the spiritual church...” *AC 1443* explains that “...the entrance of the sons of Israel represents the entrance of the faithful into the Lord’s kingdom.”

- To **“return”** signifies to give up the things of self-love (evil and falsity), returning to a useful spiritual state, becoming orderly (getting right) with the Lord and His church.

“And He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God...”

- The word **“stand”** indicates a watchful, listening state in which one awaits further orders. Standing is a mental and physical attitude of attention and alertness. *AR 369* teaches that “‘to stand’ signifies to hear and do what He [the Lord] commands.” Our passage indicates it is the Lord who is standing. Are we to assume that the Lord is telling us about His ever-watchful, alert, listening care over His flock? Is He attuned to what we really need? Is He promising us that He “stands ready” to feed us in a prompt spiritual fashion?
- To **“feed”** signifies “to instruct in truths.” (*AE 482*) To **“feed”** signifies to instruct in the things of “doctrine.” (*AC 3787*)
- His **“flock”** signifies “those who are in the church...those who are in good...” (*AC 3767*)
- What is the **“strength of the Lord”**? It signifies His Divine truths fighting to free us and rescue us, with the arms of His salvation holding us. See *AC 9809 [4]*.
- What does **“majesty of the name of the Lord”** signify? Consider this passage in *AE 76*: “...man has two kinds of sight, one from cogitative faith, the other from love: when he has sight from cogitative faith only, his sight is unattended with awe before the Lord’s Divine majesty; but when this sight is from love, it is attended with awe at the Divine majesty: this is because man is then turned to the Lord, for love turns him, but cogitative faith apart from love does not [turn him in awe]...”
- **“...the name of the Lord His God...”** signifies all those things by which He is worshipped...” (*AE 295 [13]*) The name of the Lord “signifies all the quality of faith and love by which He is to be worshipped, and by which man is saved by Him...” (*AE 815 [12]*)

“...and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth.”

- What is implied in the words **“they shall abide”**? Love, wisdom, and use are forever conjoined (wed). They are the essentials of the Lord. Hell, from the beginning, has endeavored to separate them. We are taught they are not to be separated. They can be looked at one at a time, but ultimately, they must be put together. These words of the Lord assure us that, in Him, these essentials will abide forever. His church will endure because Love, Wisdom, and Use in Him are a one.
- The words **“He shall be great to the ends of the earth”** signify “to instruct in truths all those who belong to the church, and thereby to dissipate falsities.” (*AE 316 [23]*) *AE 569 [11]* says these words signify “the extension of

rational and spiritual things..." *AE 294 [8]* teaches us these words signify to "establish the church, thus to reform those who are therein."

Putting It All Together

P&P sums up this section with a powerful and positive statement: **The Lord "will gather the church together and [He will] teach those who are in it."** (Emphasis added.)

The Lord is in a standing position. He is alert. He is watching. He is listening. He is prepared to feed His flock. This feeding of the flock will not come about without some painful resistance. Hell has no intention of ceasing its tormenting of the church and the people within it. So the Lord tells us the church (she) will labor and will be in travail in the birthing process. The dragon will seek to devour the child about to be born, but the Lord will provide for its safety. "Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (*Luke 12:32*) The gift of the kingdom is a definite promise.

What are the key qualities involved in the successful gathering of the brethren? Love and dedication to the name of the Lord are one facet. Another is to be in "awe" of the Lord. How does that come about? When our sight comes from a deep and abiding love for the Lord, we are taught that love turns us in the right direction. Love opens our sight and gives to it an "awe" of His Divine majesty. Awe makes us appreciate the name of the Lord and all of the qualities of faith and love by which He is to be worshipped. This spirit of awe is not fear. Instead, it is a calming feeling of being special. We are brethren. We are His flock, and He stands ready to care for and feed us. We shall be great. We shall abide. The Lord will instruct us "to the ends of the earth." Hell and its disorders will be dissipated. These teachings are a bold and positive promise of the majestic name of the Lord.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 5:3-4.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- The word "awe" has many meanings: profound and reverent dread; veneration and solemn wonder; respect. What other words come to mind after reading the passage from *AE 76*? Awe comes when love turns our sight to see the majesty of the Lord. I don't hear fear and dread in these words. Instead, I hear healing, calm, spiritual power and the dissolution of evil and falsity. Awe also brings to our hearts and minds the qualities that are to be loved and worshipped within the Lord. Any other insights come to mind?
- I like the repetition of the Lord's promise that His flock will be gathered together as brethren. The Lord's New Church will provide unity of thought and purpose. Picturing the Lord in the standing position, ever watchful and

alert, is another important “touchstone” to carry with us. Hell loves to convince us of our estrangement from the Lord. Hell wants to separate all forms of love, wisdom, and use. But here, in this little prophecy of *Micah*, we are given a positive and bold promise of wholeness and success. How glad can we be with this prophecy? I hope it is a calming voice that tells and reminds us to “fear not, little flock.”

- Just a reminder: The theme of each Minor Prophet comprises a message of hope and restoration. I am willing to offer this observation: Hell doesn’t want any of us reading the prophets. The evil spirits would prefer that we be ignorant of the Lord’s prophecies. The conspiracy of Hell is to discourage us. The plan of the Lord is to feed us and call us all together into His church. Can we join hands as brethren and have our eyes “turned” by the Lord to see and love Him?

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “He [the Lord] will utterly destroy reasonings from falsities.”

AC 1186 [5]

- “‘Asshur’ here is reasoning concerning spiritual things...In Micah...5:5, 6 the subject here is Israel, or the spiritual church, of which it is said that ‘Asshur shall not enter in,’ that is, that reasoning shall not; ‘the land of Nimrod’ denotes such worship as is signified by Nimrod, in which the interiors are evil and false.”

AC 9659 [3]

- “What is full and in every way is also signified by ‘eight’ after ‘seven,’ in... (Micah 5:5, 6); ‘Asshur’ denotes reasoning about the goods and truths of the church from man’s own intelligence; total or complete deliverance from the falsity thence, is signified by the ‘eight princes of men who shall destroy;’ the ‘princes of men’ denote the primary truths of good.”

Derived Doctrine

“And this One shall be peace.”

- What is **peace**? *AE 365* develops a wonderful word picture of what **peace** is and what **peace** is not. Let’s begin with what peace is not: dissensions arising in the church when the “understanding of the Word is destroyed.” With the destruction of the Word, “good” becomes a casualty. When good is lost, no illustration from the Lord and heaven can be given when the Word is read. “So far as a person is in good, the Lord flows in and gives the affection of

truth, and thus understanding..." Unless there is good within the mind of a person, it cannot be opened, still less can it experience peace or conjunction with the Lord. **Peace**, on the other hand, is "in its first origin from the Lord; it is in Him...and by His conjunction with heaven and the church, and in particular from the conjunction of good and truth in each individual...'Peace,' in the highest sense, signifies the Lord..." In a word, **peace** is being in the "One" of the Lord's Love, Wisdom, and Use. **Peace** is adherence to the order and directions of the Lord's End, Cause, and Effect principle. To do otherwise causes **peace** to cease and dissension to enter the heart and mind of the church.

"When the Assyrian comes into our land, and when he treads in our palaces..."

- In *Hosea 12:1*, we read, "Ephraim...daily increases lies and desolation. Also they make a covenant with the Assyrians..." **Assyria's** association with Ephraim and their making a covenant with lies and desolation suggest that **"Assyria"** signifies something subtly destructive in the mind. *AE 304 [26]* refines for us that "Assyrian...signifies the reasonings from falsities against truth." *AE 962 [3]* teaches that "Assyrians...signify the rational perverted as to good and truth."
- The **"Assyrian"** coming "into our land" signifies reasonings of falsity entering into the church. See *AE 365 [14]*.
- That the "Assyrian...treads in our palaces" is a significant statement about the intent of **Assyria**. *AE 675 [14]* talks about the meaning of **"palaces"** in the negative sense. In this sense, a **"palace"** is a place where the proud live. It is a place of embellishment in the external form to appear magnificent.

"...then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princely men."

- "...seven signifies what is holy..." (*AC 716*) **"Seven"** signifies the holy things of the Word. (*AR 738*) **"Shepherds"** signify all the goods of the church. (*AE 601 [15]*) **"Shepherds"** signify those who by truths lead to good. (*AE 388 [17]*)
- **"Eight"** signifies the beginning of a new state. See *AC 2866*. **"Princes"** signify primary truths. See *AC 5044 [5]*.
- Putting these pieces of derived doctrine together, we get a picture of the holiest things of the Word drawn together. Drawing them together to rise up against Assyria requires the guidance of the Lord's "holy" shepherds leading to the good of life. The Lord also brings His eight (new state) primary truths to the fore to enlighten the state so the people can see past the embellishments of the false reasonings and lies of the Assyrians.

“They shall waste with the sword the land of Assyria, and the land of Nimrod at its entrances...”

- In the story of Joseph saving Egypt in the time of the great famine, the Word (*Genesis 42: 13-26*) describes a series of things that were **laid to waste**. The people’s *money* ran out (was laid to waste), and they came to Joseph for bread. In exchange for seed and bread, the Egyptians gave him their *cattle*. When their supply ran out, they gave Joseph their *land* in exchange for seed and food. The Word remarks that **the land was laid to waste**. The spiritual explanation for Joseph’s saving series of exchanges and for the things **laid to waste** is quite positive: “...‘the ground be not laid waste,’ signifies that the mind must be cultivated with the memory-knowledges of the church; ‘and Joseph bought all the ground of Egypt for Pharaoh,’ signifies that the internal appropriated to itself the whole natural mind where memory-knowledges are, and placed it under general auspices...[the] subjection of all things which are of service to the church...”
- Is it a stretch, then, to view the **“sword”** as the “truth of faith combating” falsity (*AC 2799 [2]*), laying waste to all of the lies, desolation, and reasonings of Assyria and Nimrod that threatened the mind of the church? This passage illustrates the work of the Lord. He was saving the people during the famine times of the church. The Lord was emptying out the memory-knowledges of the desolated church and providing the basis for restoration and nurturing.
- Where did the **sword** do its work? “...at its **entrances**...” The **wasting** of the spiritual lies and evil and falsity was cut off right at the source. Check this reference to the meaning of **“entrances”** in *AE 540 [9]*: “...entrance means sensual knowledge, through which there is entrance into the natural man; it is by this that falsifications are made.”

“...thus He shall deliver us from the Assyrian, when he comes into our land and when he treads within our borders.”

- Can we not see the meaning of these words? The Lord, with His sharp two-edged sword, will lay to waste the twisted lies of Assyria. He will cut off the very source of their lies. The Lord knows when the enemy comes near our borders. He knows when Assyria wants to tread on the church. **Treading** is described in *AE 697 [5]*: “...to devour, to tread down...signifies to utterly destroy the church...[treading] is some evil and diabolical love...” directed toward the church.

Putting It All Together

P&P sums up this section with these words: “He [the Lord] will utterly destroy reasonings from falsities.”

How will the Lord do all of the above? He will do it featuring His many forms of unity—completeness. His “Oneness” will reflect the harmony of Love, Wisdom, and Use.

He will act from the orderliness of His End, Cause, and Effect. With such a powerful, awe-inspiring alignment, the lies and false reasoning of the Assyrian and Nimrod nations will crumble and be laid to waste. How? The Lord outlines His plan with the mention of the seven shepherds and the eight princely men. The seven shepherds are the holiest things from the Word. Guiding principles, like caring and faithful shepherds, will lead to the “good of life.” These seven shepherds will stand in stark contrast to the fickle and self-serving lies of the evil and falsity Assyria and Nimrod offered. The eight princely men represent the beginning of a new state—new and fresh opportunities to serve the Lord under His Kingly leadership. We are His children. We, under His Royal leadership, will become princely heirs in the kingdom of heaven.

The sword of the Lord will waste (utterly destroy) the lies and false fronts of hell. He will cut them off at the very source of their attempted entrance into our minds. Our part in this wonderful plan is to actively long for the riddance of evil and falsity. We need to honestly confess our sins and make ourselves guilty for any evil and falsity we might have chosen to follow, and then we need to supplicate the Lord for His help while desiring to be made new. Atonement means to be at-one-moment with the Lord. He is the One, and He wants to draw us unto Himself. His plan of salvation is certain: He will keep the Assyrians and Nimrods away from our borders, and He will keep our enemies from treading on the holy things of the church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 5:5-6.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- When you take the time to look at the teachings of the Lord, do you feel a sense of enlightenment happening? By that I mean that each word, each verse, and each paragraph opens new vistas for our understanding. Do what were once mere words become personal messages that are uplifting and practical? I guess I’m asking you, as a faithful student of *Micah*, what insights are you getting from this study?
- What makes for peace? What makes for that which is not peace? Peace ceases when dissensions regarding the Word remove “good.” When good is removed from the person reading the Word, sad things happen. The Lord sees the absence of good, and “no illustration from the Lord and heaven can be given.” How can we remind ourselves to get into a peaceful state prior to and during our reflection time with the Word?
- When we reflect on the Oneness of the Lord, do we remind ourselves of the oneness of His Love, Wisdom, and Use? How about the unity of His End, Cause, and Effect? *DLW 187* reminds us that we must seek truth in its proper sequential order. Looking from effects to causes to ends is the wrong approach. Peace and illustration come when love stimulates wisdom and

wisdom inspires use. Reversing this process brings one falsity after another and multiples them in harmful ways. Can we see why this is so?

- Do we have a strong belief in the spiritual meaning of “seven shepherds”? What is your understanding of the spiritual meaning of the “eight princely men”?
- The Lord’s announcement that He will totally destroy the evil and falsity must strike terror in the hearts of Hell. If we believe this message, the Writings teach that it causes the hells to flee from our presence. Do we utilize this teaching enough? If we say this often, with good in our hearts, we can be effective members of the Lord’s New Church. Can we, in a united way, begin practicing this teaching? Doing so puts Hell back into its place of squalor and maniacal disorder.

MICAH 5:7

“Then the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples, like dew from the Lord, like showers on the grass, that tarry for no man nor wait for the sons of men.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Then there will be salvation in that church...”

AC 468 [1-3]

- “...every church...in course of time...decreases, and at last remains among a few...for unless remains were preserved by the Lord in every one, he must needs perish eternally, since spiritual and celestial life are in remains...Of remains as existing in each individual as well as in the church in general, much is said in the Prophets; as in...Micah...5:7...”

AC 3579 [5]

- “...‘dew’ signifies the truth which is from good, or what is the same, the spiritual which is from the celestial, therefore also in the Word spiritual truth is compared to ‘dew;’ for things which signify serve also for comparison with the same thing, as in...Micah 5:7...where ‘dew’ denotes the multiplication of truth from good, and the fructification of good through truth; and as the dew is that which every morning renders the field and vineyard fruitful...”

AE 278 [5]

- “In Micah...5:7...The ‘remnant of Jacob’ signifies the truths and goods of the church; ‘dew from Jehovah’ signifies spiritual truth; ‘drops upon the herb’ natural truth...”

Derived Doctrine

“Then the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples...”

- In the simplest terms, the spiritual meaning of this passage is the Lord telling us that He always protects (saves) a remnant in which the basic goods and truths are preserved and that He will ensure that information will be in the midst of **“many peoples”**. AC 9174 [5] speaks of the great abundance of good and truth stored away. “Many peoples’ denotes to abound in the goods of intelligence and wisdom, and to communicate them to others out of this abundance.”

“...like dew from the Lord, like showers on the grass, that tarry for no man nor wait for the sons of men.”

- AC 3579 [4] states, “In the genuine sense ‘dew’ is the truth of good which is from a state of innocence and peace...” AC 8455 is almost poetical in its description of the meaning of **“dew”**: “‘Dew’ signifies the truth of peace because in the morning it comes down from heaven and appears upon the herbage like fine rain, and has also stored up in it something of sweetness or delight more than rain has, whereby the grass and crops of the field are gladdened...” The words **“from the Lord”** signify “the Divine wisdom and Divine love...” (AR 240) In other words, the **“dew from the Lord”** signifies Divine truth and Divine love clothed in innocence and peace, gladdening the hearts and minds of His remnant.
- The showers on the **“grass”** signify “spiritual nourishment” for the “good affections of the natural man.” (AE 405 [30]) **“Grass”** “signifies the truths of the natural man...” (AE 650 [10]) Can we picture the meaning of these words? The Lord gently lets His dew (love and wisdom) fall on man’s natural mind so that it gets refreshed and nourished after a long period of “spiritual draught” in the church, caused by evil and falsity.
- These things will happen according the Lord’s timing (Providence). He will not “tarry” to meet man’s directive timetable. Doesn’t this sound like the teaching in the *Doctrine of the Lord 3*? “In the fullness of times...unless He had then come...and revealed Himself...mankind would have perished...” The Lord didn’t tarry. If He had, we would have died spiritually. The Lord knows precisely when to provide the dew and to bring His innocence and peace to the minds of His people. He does all things with a wonderful timing. Just

when the grass and fields were about to lose their fruitfulness, He provided the dew to nourish and strengthen us spiritually.

- The “**sons of man**” signify those who are “intelligent in truths...” (AE 684 [14]) The “**sons of man**” signify the “truths of doctrine and of the church.” (AE 750 [17])

Putting It All Together

P&P sets the course of our thinking and understanding of this passage. “...there will be salvation in that church...”

In what church? It will be the Lord’s New Church. How will He do it? His love and wisdom will come like refreshing morning dew. His innocence and peace will pervade the very core of the church’s existence. He will call forth the abundance of all the good and truth stored away in the “remains” of His people. His “dew” will bring gladness, refreshment, and nourishment to the minds of His people. The doctrines will virtually sparkle in the light of His sunshine. The Word will be enlivened in the worship services. The people will be redeemed and saved from the wiles of Hell.

All of this will happen according to the Lord’s plan. Human prudence will not influence when and how it will occur. The Lord will tarry for no man, nor will He wait for the sons of men. The angels of heaven and the forces of Hell will not aid or thwart the implementation of His plan. The words “...there will be salvation in that church...” have a powerful Divine ring to them. The Lord alone will bring all things to pass, and He will work through the hearts and minds of all who are willing to obey and follow His way. The plan is set. The “timing” of it is sure. Although it is not stated explicitly, the text contains a question: Will we come and obey the call of the Lord?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 5:7.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Isn’t it wonderful to picture the Lord in total control of the things in His spiritual church? Boards, meetings, votes, and popular opinion will have no power over His decisions for our salvation.
- Did the Derived Doctrine section help you picture the wonderful meaning of “dew”? Could you see the morning dew glistening on the field of your mind? How about the gentle, refreshing, and enriching quality of the Lord’s innocence and peace?
- People often ask for positive teachings from the Word. They complain about the harshness of the lessons from the Word. Does this one verse present yet another “happy” theme? *Micah* has given us quite a few. Maybe we need to

begin writing them down in a special file or notebook so we can share them with others. What do you think?

- Last question: Did *P&P's* summary catch your attention? There is no chance of missing its definite and positive statement from the Lord. Let's not let Hell take this one away from us!

MICAH 5:8

"And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among flocks of sheep, who, if he passes through, both treads down and tears in pieces, and none can deliver."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "...but in the church in the Jewish nation there will be nothing but falsities of evil."

AE 278 [5]

- "In Micah...(Micah 5:7-9). The 'remnant of Jacob' signifies the truths and goods of the church...'a lion among the beasts of the forest,' and 'a young lion among the flocks of sheep,' and 'treading down and tearing, and none delivering,' signify power over evils and falsities..."

AC 5897 [6]

- "In Micah...5:8...are described remains in respect to their quality, and it is known that this quality never belonged to the people called 'Israel.' From this also it is manifest that by 'remains' are meant other things; and that these are goods and truths is clear, because these are what do no perversity, nor speak a lie, neither is a tongue of deceit found in their mouth."

AC 6367 [7-8]

- "In Micah 5:8, 9...where the 'lion' and 'young lion' denote celestial truth, which are the 'remains of Jacob.'...That in the opposite sense a 'lion' signifies the evil of the love of self in its power..."

AC 7051 [2]

- This passage is a rather important one in that it cites *Micah 5:7-8* to remind us that Israel and "even Christians believe that that nation will again be chosen and will be brought into the land of Canaan...this expectation is vain,

and that the kingdom of the Messiah or Christ is not of this world, and thus that the land of Canaan, into which the Messiah will bring men, is heaven.” (Emphasis added.)

Derived Doctrine

“And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many peoples...”

- “...‘remains’ are not the remains of any people or nation...in the Word, especially the prophetic Word, by ‘Israel’ was not meant Israel, nor by ‘Jacob’ Jacob, but by both the church and what is of the church. And this being the case, by the ‘remains’ are not meant the remains of Israel and Jacob, but the truths and goods which belong to the church...That it has been unknown, and appears strange...[is because] the literal sense, especially where it is historical, withdraws and forcibly withholds from thinking things like these.” (AC 5897 [3])
- “...Gentiles...denote those who are in evils.” (AC 4169) Therefore, when the Word says that **“remains”** shall be among, or in the midst, of the **“Gentiles,”** we are to understand that at the beginning of the rebirth of the church, its goods and truths are surrounded by the enemies of the Lord’s church.
- Coupled with the threat of Gentiles (those who are in evils) is that of “many peoples.” What do **“peoples”** denote? AC 6692 teaches that, in the negative sense, “people denote memory-knowledges [that] are opposed to the truths of the church.”

“...like a lion among the beasts of the forest...”

- AR 241 teaches that “a lion signifies truth in its power...the Divine truth of the Word...lions in the spiritual world...are images representative of the power of Divine truth...”
- The **“beasts of the forest”** can have both a positive and a negative meaning. Consider both meanings as we examine the words **“beasts of the forest.”** AC 775 explains that “The origin of all things (rerum) is in this wise: all things, both in general and in particular, are from the Lord; from Him is the celestial; from Him through the celestial comes forth the spiritual; through the spiritual the natural; through the natural the corporeal and the sensuous. And as they all come forth from the Lord in this way, so also do they subsist from Him, for as is well known, subsistence is a perpetual coming into existence. **They who have a different conception of the coming into existence and the rise of things, like those who worship nature and deduce from her the origins of things, are in principles so deadly that the phantasies of the wild beasts of the forest may be called far more sane.**” (Emphasis added.)

“...like a young lion among flocks of sheep...”

- “...the omnipotence of Divine good is compared to a ‘lion,’ and the omnipotence of the Divine truth thence derived is compared to a ‘young lion’...” (AC 6367 [3]) In the opposite sense, “a ‘lion’ signifies the evil of the love of self in its power.” (AC 6367 [2])
- “...in general a flock signifies all those who are in good, thus who belong to the Lord’s church in the universal world.” (AC 3767) “...sheep signify those who are in love towards the neighbor, which love is charity.” (AE 314 [5])
- How do we draw the above doctrines to a point of useful application? The Lord is comforting those who are in His church with this promise: He will be in the midst of all who are in good. His Divine truth (the young lion) will assist the good (the flock) by showing them how the neighbor can be prudently loved so that true charity can rule in their hearts. This is, of course, the positive meaning. Hell has another plan. Hell’s lion wants to foster, encourage, and empower the love of self to reign over the neighbor (flock).

“...who, if he passes through, both treads down and tears in pieces, and none can deliver.”

- How are we to understand the words and meaning of this passage? Is it a message of futility? “None can deliver” sounds hopelessly foreboding. Treading down and tearing to pieces sound scary and destructive. Fortunately, we have the helpful assistance of AE 278 [5] to clear up this misconception. What really is being taught here is the truth that the Lord alone has the power to tread down and tear to pieces evil and falsity. Man’s prudence and “as of self” strength can’t independently defeat evil and falsity. On the other hand, this is a positive Divine message of deliverance and rescue. It is an encouraging word from the Lord to those who place their hope, trust, and confidence in Him; because of Him alone, we shall succeed in our eternal endeavors.

Putting It All Together

There are countless truths in the Lord’s Word. Recall the church teaching that tells us the Word can be studied to eternity and it will never be exhausted. So when we say there are three basic themes to this section, we need to be mindful that as we study and grow spiritually, other points will come to view, too.

The first theme we glean from P&P: “...the church in the Jewish nation [was in]... nothing but falsities of evil.” This is not a new statement in *Micah*. We have been reading this over and over. The priests of the church were “selling out” their office to the highest bidder. They were more interested in grandeur, pompous dignity, and their individual power than in caring for the people. As often as the Lord called them to repent and return to their uses as pastoral shepherds, they did not heed His call. As they ignored this call, the church languished in vitality and spiritual resources.

The second theme is found in the quote from *AC 7051 [2]*. Israel is not and was not a favored nation to the extent they believed. Israel, and many Christians, believed that eventually the Lord would call Israel out of their falsities to inherit the promised land of Canaan. In other words, Israel's belief resulted in an almost arrogant assumption that no matter what they did, they would still be, and would always be, the Lord's favorite people and nation.

The third theme expounds the truth that no nation, or any peoples, can find salvation through their own merit. The Lord's new church and His salvation carries "...for no man nor [will it] wait for the sons of men." (*Micah 5:7*) In verse 8, the Lord uses three words to teach us about His eternal sovereignty: "none can deliver." These words remind all that the work of salvation is strictly His doing. You and I gain all of the gifts of the Lord when we humbly follow and live out the truths of His Word.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 5:8.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do we pray (work) hard enough to ask the Lord to keep our church free from falsities? Are we earnest in our prayers that the priesthood be guided and led by the Lord in the performance of their uses? Do we pray that the laity will stay involved and interested in the teachings of the Word?
- Do we, in subtle ways, fall into thinking that the external New Church is somehow "favored" among all of the other churches? I understand the terms "old church" and "new church," but do we ever use these terms in a harmful (snobby) way?
- How can we bolster the "as of self" while still keeping it humble and mindful of the Lord's ways? Not one of us can "go it alone" without acknowledgement that it is the Lord alone who overcomes the power and falsity of the Hells. Without Him, we are nothing. Salvation belongs to the Lord alone.

MICAH 5:9

"Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries, and all your enemies shall be cut off."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "...this church will have no power over the Lord's church."

Scripture Confirmations IX.5

- “Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries; all thine enemies shall be cut off. It shall come to pass in that day that I will cut off the horses, I will destroy the chariots, I will cut off the cities, also juggling tricks from thine hand, graven images, statues, groves, and cities. And I will execute vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations, who have not obeyed (Micah 5: 9-14). He who is from Bethlehem Ephratah will do this, etc. (vers. 1-7).”

Derived Doctrine

“Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries...”

- We must put this verse in its proper spiritual context. Israel had been taught that it must not put its trust in its army or any other imagined self-derived power. They were taught to follow the commands and ways of the Lord. The Lord provided them with the leadership of judges and prophets. Instead of appreciating their divinely inspired leadership, they chose to wander off, trusting in their own prudence. They followed the worship of Baal and the gods of neighboring nations. The consequences of these decisions were devastating. Their nation was plundered, their temple destroyed and desecrated, their families separated and carried off in servitude. It was time now for the Lord to put things straight. The remnant, under the Lord’s leadership, would be given spiritual values and tools so they could lift up their **“hand”** against the deceiving spiritual adversaries in their midst. A **“hand”** signifies power. The power of their understanding would be **“lifted”** up. Do we recall Moses having his arms and hands held up and supported in order to defeat Israel’s enemies? Something similar is represented here as well. The adversaries of falsity and evil will be met and conquered. How thoroughly will the adversary be dealt with in this spiritual “hand-to-hand” combat? Let’s find the answer to this question in the remaining portion of this verse.

“...and all your enemies shall be cut off.”

- Is there any question, when the Lord is in charge, what the results will be when evil and falsity are faced? The enemy—evil and falsity—will be **“cut off.”** What does **“cut off”** signify? *AE 433 [11]* teaches that **“cut off”** signifies “...that evil shall be no more...” *AE 684 [38]* says that **“cut off”** signifies “that [the evil will] fall away from the Lord...”

Putting It All Together

P&P sums up this section with these words: “...this church [the spiritually lost church] will have no power over the Lord’s church.” Those who worship evil and

falsity will try to resist and oppose the truths of the Lord, but they cannot and will not prevail. In the presence of the Lord, they will be “cut off.” They will fall back. Their life of falsity will not be able to stand in the presence of the Lord. Only the Lord has power, and all else is powerless and cannot lift a finger to hurt the good and truth of His order.

We need to hear messages like this from the Lord’s Word. Hell seeks to convince all that its power is unstoppable. Among its bag of tricks is the art of obfuscation. Evil spirits twist and turn things their way to convince the faint-hearted that the Lord’s church is neither substantial nor enduring. But for all of their deviousness and boastfulness, they will not prevail. The Lord’s church is unstoppable. His mighty truths will enable His strong and steady hands to defeat any and all of His adversaries. The desires of evil and falsity are delusional fantasies.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 5:9.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Have you found a way to “turn off” the obstinate boasts of the hells? Would you be willing to share these methods with others? What kind of faith system do you have in place to trust in the ways of the Lord?
- The messages of the Prophets are consistent—the Lord will allow evil and falsity to run their game plan for just so long. He will expose their vulnerability, and they will all fall back and will be cut off. Our prayer needs to be for patience and trust. The Lord will not leave or abandon us.

MICAH 5:10-15

“And it shall be in that day”, says the Lord, “that I will cut off your horses from your midst and destroy your chariots. I will cut off the cities of your land and throw down all your strongholds. I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and you shall have no soothsayers. Your carved images I will also cut off, and your sacred pillars from your midst; you shall no more worship the work of your hands; I will pluck your wooden images from your midst; thus I will destroy your cities. And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury on nations that have not heard.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “...and it will perish with all its falsities and evils.”

AC 7297 [3]

- “In Micah...5:10-12...From these passages it is evident that by ‘sorceries’ are signified the arts of presenting truths as falsities, and falsities as truths; for by ‘the horses that were to be cut off’ are signified intellectual things...by ‘the chariots that were to be destroyed’ are signified doctrinal things of truth...by ‘the cities of the land that were also to be cut off’ are signified the truths of the church (that ‘cities’ are truths, see 2268, 2451, 2712, 2943, 4492, 4493; and that ‘land’ is the church, 662, 1067, 1262, 1733, 1850, 2117, 2118, 3355, 4447, 4535, 5577); by ‘strongholds’ are signified truths in so far as they defend goods. From all this then it can be known what is signified by the ‘sorceries that were to be cut off from the land,’ namely, the arts of presenting truths as falsities, and falsities as truths; these arts also correspond to the phantasies whereby the evil in the other life present before the eyes beautiful things as ugly, and ugly things as beautiful; which phantasies are a species of sorceries, for they also are abuses and perversions of Divine order.”

AC 9188 [5-6]

- “That ‘sorceries’ denote...falsities, is also plain in Micah...5:11,12; ‘the cities of the land’ denote the false doctrinal things of their church, which are called ‘sorceries’ because they destroy the truths of faith...‘sorcerers’ who have been taught by themselves, and trust in themselves alone to the extent of loving themselves and desiring to be worshiped as deities...”

AR 459

- “...the material of which idols were made, their forms, and their garments, among the ancients, represented the falsities of religion, from which was their worship: ‘idols of gold’ signified falsities concerning Divine things; ‘idols of silver,’ falsities concerning spiritual things; ‘idols of brass,’ falsities concerning charity; ‘idols of stone,’ falsities concerning faith; and ‘idols of wood,’ falsities concerning good works. All these falsities exist in those who do not do the work of repentance, that is, shun evils as sins against God. These things are signified in the spiritual sense by idols which were graven images and molten images, in the following passages...” *Micah 5:13* is cited among many other references.

AE 587 [15-16]

- “...the destruction of the church by the falsities of doctrine...signifies the falsification of truth by applications to favor the loves of self and of the world. ‘Graven images,’ ‘molten images,’ and ‘idols,’ have a similar signification in the following passages. In...*Micah 5:10, 13...*”

AC 2722 [4]

- “That the brazen serpent was holy in the time of Moses is evident; but when the external was worshiped it became profane, and was broken in pieces, for the same reason that worship on mountains and in groves was forbidden. These things are still more evident in the Prophets...In Micah...5:13, 14...”

AC 10643 [4]

- “...when these representatives began to be idolatrously worshiped, it was then commanded that such things should be overturned and broken...And as the Israelitish nation was at heart idolatrous, therefore lest they should set up pillars upon mountains and hills, and in groves, and should worship them idolatrously, they were forbidden to set up pillars and to plant groves, although among the ancients such things were holy things of worship. That this was forbidden to that nation is evident in...Micah 5:13, 14...”

Derived Doctrine

“And it shall be in that day, says the Lord...”

- The words **“in that day”** signify “the coming of the Lord.” (AE 548 [6]) **“In that day”** points to the day of spiritual accountability or a day of spiritual reality. Those who trust in their own prudence when reasoning will find themselves naked (exposed) because they will lose their ability to reason and cover up their blatant falsities, and they will be deprived of any semblance of truth. See AE 357 [22]. “...in that day’ signifies the acknowledgement of the Lord and of His Divine...” (AE 654 [9]) In other words, **“in that day”** is the moment when all the games and insanity and pretenses of the hells will end. It’s over for them. They will become naked and exposed for what they really are. And who says this will happen? Is it Micah? No way! The Lord says so!

“...I will cut off your horses from your midst and destroy your chariots...”

- In the positive sense, **“horses”** signify understanding the Word as to its interiors. See AR 437 and *White Horse 1*. In the negative sense, **“horses”** signify “the understanding perverted and destroyed.” (AE 573)
- **“Chariots,”** in the positive sense, signify the truths of doctrine. (AC 3708 [11]) “...chariots signify doctrine from the Word.” (AE 355 [15]) In the negative sense, **“chariots”** signify understanding doctrine in a perverted way, thus destroying the positive uses of human understanding. See AE 573.
- From the above, we get the message that the Lord and His new church will correct the perverted sense of the Word and any adhering doctrines of falsity that human prudence might have attached to the Word through tradition and finite mistakes.

- Please note the words **“cut off.”** They occur four times in this section. Is that repetition by happenstance, or some poetical writing style, or is the repetition a vital key to unfolding and understanding the spiritual significance of the Lord’s prophecy? We know the answer to this question. Every jot and tittle (every dot, comma) in the Word is of inestimable spiritual importance.
- **“Cut off”** signifies that evil shall be no more. (AE 433 [11]) Whereas **“four”** signifies what is in conjunction (see AC 9103); **“four”** signifies goods and the derivative truths that will support any conjunction (see AC 9740). **“Four”** signifies “union” (see AC 1686). Do we get the picture? Evil and falsity try to form a coalition. Hell believes it has a cohesive union with its “facts,” a union that is invincible, strong enough to defeat the Lord. Not so, says the Infinite and all-knowing God of heaven and earth.

“I will cut off the cities of your land and throw down all your strongholds...”

- “...the signification of ‘cities’ as being the interiors of the natural mind. In the universal sense ‘cities’ signify the doctrinal things of the church...but in an individual sense they signify the interiors of man where doctrinal things are, or rather where truths are conjoined with good...The signification of a ‘city’ is circumstanced as is that of a ‘house.’ In the universal sense a ‘house’...with its apartments, out-buildings, and courts, is a city in the least form.” (AC 5287)
- Remember that **“cut off”** signifies that evil shall be no more. (AE 433 [11]) Therefore, we are being taught that the false doctrinal things of the church—the interiors of man’s mind, where falsity was conjoined with evil loves—would be thrown down.
- “‘...stronghold’ signifies doctrine from the Word defending; and ‘it is devastated’ signifies that there is no perception of it and thence no truth; for the same doctrinals from the Word apart from spiritual perception are not truths, for they are falsified by incorrect ideas respecting them.” (AE 514 [5])

“I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and you shall have no soothsayers.”

- “‘Sorcery’ has nearly the same signification in the Word as ‘enchantment,’ and ‘enchantment’ signifies such persuasion as causes a man to have no other perception than that a thing is so. Certain spirits possess a power of persuasion that closes up, as it were the understanding of another, and suffocates the ability to perceive; and as the well-disposed...are compelled and persuaded to believe and to do whatever...it is here said that ‘they have been seduced by their sorcery.’ (AE 1191)
- About **“soothsayers”**: “By ‘diviners,’ ‘augurs,’ ‘sorcerers,’ and the rest...are meant in the internal sense those who destroy the truths and goods of the church by means of memory-knowledges wrongly applied; thus who do so from their own intelligence and through falsities from the evils of the love of self and the love of the world, consequently who learn and teach from the

cupidity of profit and of honors, and not from any affection for the truth of faith and the good of life." (AC 9188 [8], *emphasis added.*)

- It is the Lord who promises to cut off evil. He will restore humankind's perception and will lead His people through freedom. He will destroy the people represented by the "hand," those who are motivated by desire for power and self-gain to confuse and persuade others to believe whatever they say. Their hands will lose power, and their words will fail to hold any meaning or enchantment.

"Your carved images I will also cut off, and your sacred pillars from your midst..."

- "...the reason why 'pillars' were representative of worship, was that it was in use among the ancients to set up pillars and anoint them with oil and thus sanctify them...The pillars that were set up there signified Divine truth; for the pillars were stones, and a stone signifies truth. Therefore in respect to Divine truth the Lord is called in the Word 'the stone of Israel.'...But when the representatives of the church...began to be turned partly into idolatry and partly into magic, then such things were abrogated...Hence it is that by 'pillars' is signified idolatrous worship from falsities. This is the case with all worship when man becomes external, as when he regards himself and the world as the end, and the Divine things of the church as the means..." (AC 10643 [1-2], *emphasis added.*)
- "They who are in works alone and in no truths are like those who act and do not understand, and deeds without understanding are inanimate. They appear before angels like images carved out of wood; and they who have placed merit in their works, appear like those carved images, naked, without covering...inanimate and naked." (AR 107, *emphasis added.*)
- Once again, we must focus on the words "I will...cut off..." The Lord is announcing His intention to end showy merit and stop the heartless, loveless enactment of "religion" in place of worship of the Lord.

"You shall no more worship the work of your hands; I will pluck your wooden images from your midst; thus I will destroy your cities."

- "The work and doing of the hands' means in the nearest sense their molten images and idols; but in the spiritual sense the 'work of the hands' signifies all the evil and falsity that are from self-love and self-intelligence." (AE 585 [4])
- To "**pluck**" has a positive sense and a negative sense. AE 799 [18] explains the negative sense of plucking as being "expelled from all the good of the church..." In other words, the Lord will see to it that the evil will be separated (removed) and prevented from doing harm to the good of the church. AC 2701 explains what the Lord meant when He taught "If thy right eye causeth thee to stumble...pluck it out..." This means that "the affection is to be subdued if it causes stumbling..."

- **“Wood”** corresponds, in the positive sense, “...to good, and in the contrary sense to evil...” (AE 1145 [3]) In AC 3720 [2], we get a further clue in regards to the pernicious misuse and meaning of **“wood.”** “...those who place merit in good works appear to themselves to cut wood...in that they have believed themselves to have been better acquainted with truth than others, and yet have lived evilly...” Thus, the Lord will “pluck” their wooden image of false thinking.
- The phrase **“destroy your cities”** in the literal sense makes the Lord appear vindictive and harsh. The spiritual sense softens and illuminates the meaning. The cities represent the natural mind and the quality of doctrinal things in the mind of the church. For the Lord’s New Church to become established and vital, all evil, falsity, self-love, and self-intelligence must be removed. **“Destroyed,”** we are taught, represents the removal of all reasonings from falsities. (AE 650 [56]) That makes sense, doesn’t it? The new, the living, and the vital require false reasoning to be destroyed (surgically/spiritually removed) so the New Church can be healthy and useful, not held back by the deadness of the self-serving natural proprium.

“And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury on the nations that have not heard.”

- There are three words we need to clarify before we can be enlightened regarding this prophecy: **“Vengeance,” “anger,”** and **“fury.”**
- **“Vengeance”** signifies “a state of damnation.” (AC 488) How does a state of damnation come about? AC 7039 [2] explains that “as soon as the things of faith or of truth are taken away [from those who reject the Lord]...they soon sink down like weights into hell.” In AC 8165, we read, “when truths and goods are rejected and falsities and evils are confirmed...such come into a state of damnation...” AC 7955 explains that a state of damnation occurs when a person falls into “...a state of nothing but falsity arising from evil...”
- The word **“anger”** is an interesting study. I suggest you start with CL 363-368, where we are shown the differences, and yet similarities, between **“anger”** and “zeal” (jealous and zealous). The Lord always has zeal to protect and further the conjugal principle, the zeal to effect the conjunction and marriage of love and wisdom. The quality described by the word **“anger”** is not something the Lord has within His Being. Instead, He has the “Zeal of Love.” “...the zeal of good love, in its internals, conceals love and friendship; but...the zeal of evil love in its internals conceals hatred and vindictiveness.”
- Hell has a clever motivational subterfuge. Evil spirits try to blame the Lord for behavior that actually reflects what is in their own hearts. AE 727 [16] reveals that their hearts are full of a desire to rule over all with maniacal infernal falsity. Therefore, when the Lord breaks their yoke, they feel His powerful presence and persuasion to compel to obedience. There is no way Hell wants to comply with His call for obedience. So they project their own feelings on Him and try to convince others that the Lord has a vindictive pattern, or nature, of “fury.” We need to see and understand what the true

dynamics are when the restoration of the Lord's church takes place. The Lord's motives are to clean up, restore, and return spiritual health to the church.

- **"...nations that have not heard"** gives the impression that certain nations hadn't had the opportunity to hear the Lord's Word. Why would the Lord "execute vengeance in anger and fury" on them? Is that what is meant, or is the meaning closer to what the Lord said about the Scribes and Pharisees in the Gospels? "Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand." (*Matthew 13:13*) Consider these teachings as well: "...it follows that 'not hearing' means non-acceptance..." (*AC 5471*) "...not hearing [means] not to receive..." (*AC 7223*) To not hear "...means disobedience..." (*AC 7314*) Not hearing signifies "...to reject the truths of faith and the goods of charity..." (*AC 7418*)
- **"Nations"** signify "the goods of the church and in the contrary sense its evils..." (*AE 304 [17]*) "Nations'...does not mean nations, but the evils of life and the falsities of doctrine." (*AE 388 [15]*)

Putting It All Together

Pulling all of these verses together necessitates the use of patience and mental alertness to methodically apply the doctrine of correspondences. Otherwise, we might rush to judgment about the spiritual meaning and order of this message from the Lord. The spiritual sense keeps the meaning alive and fresh for all earthly generations and the eternity of the angelic heavens. We must not tie, or limit, these truths to a time-line of antiquity. So let's review and apply the essentials.

- "...in that day..." when the Lord makes His advent, the Lord promises that He will come to bring about a cleansing and revitalizing of His church. He promises to expose and eradicate the falsities and evils hidden within the veneer of the prudence of finite respectability. The mish-mash self-serving ideas and concepts of the church will be brought to an end. *P&P* clearly states that the falsities and evils of the church will "perish."
- The words "cut off" are used four times. Why? The number four corresponds to that which appears to have a "union" of solidarity. See *AC 1686*. "Four" signifies "conjunction." (*AC 9103*) "Four" signifies the goods and derivative truths that seem to support "the conjunction." (*AC 9740*) Therefore, when we read that the Lord will "cut off" various things, we need to mentally picture the Lord disconnecting, unplugging, and dismantling the evil and falsity within the heart and mind of the false and dangerously lost church. He announces that Hell's unions and conjunctions will cease with His coming. The strongholds, the sorceries, the soothsayers, carved images, sacred pillars, the wooden images, the work of their hands, and the destruction of the cities are all symbols of what will happen to the machinations of evil and falsity. The pride of self-love and its swaggering and pompous ego will not endure in the Lord's presence. Let's read again a portion of *AC 7297 [3]*: Hell has a propensity to follow the "art of presenting truths as falsities, and falsities as

truths, these arts also correspond to the phantasies whereby the evil... present before the eyes beautiful things as ugly, and ugly things as beautiful..." Those "arts" will come to an end. Anyone seeking to be faithful in the ways of the Lord must read and ardently believe this important and accurate prophecy.

"...and [Hell] will perish with all its falsities and evils." (*P&P*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 5:10-15.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Repetition is a necessary tool in the learning process of life. But how often must we repeat things before significant and positive change takes place? "How many times must I tell you?" When will we learn from our mistakes? History records the impression that we don't seem to learn well from past lessons. War, pillage, prejudice, murder, rape, and cheating go on and on. In the face of these things, can we remain optimistic and hopeful for the success and enjoyment of the kingdom of heaven?
- Let's turn the above questions to the verses we just studied. Hell works hard at convincing us of the futility of living the good life. Hell tries to win us over to the side that says the Lord is ineffectual in balancing things so that everything is "fair and equitable" for the people of this world. But wait! Is all of this true?
- So far, this writer has completed workbooks about ten of the twelve Minor Prophets. Guess what the theme has been for all ten of these Books of the Word? The coming of the Lord will bring an end to the reign of terror of Hell. When the Lord comes, He will "melt," "cut off," "make naked," and "utterly destroy" all of the evil machinations of the Hells. This theme is repeated over and over throughout the Word. When will we hear this message? When will we learn that the Lord, not Hell, is completely in charge? The *Doctrine of the Lord* teaches us that "in the fullness of time," when it was almost over for humankind, the Lord came to rescue us.
- So now back to the question: "When will we learn this truth?" How many times must the Lord repeat and tell us this eternal truth?

Chapter Six

MICAH 6:1-4

“Hear now what the Lord says: ‘Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, O you mountains the Lord’s complaint and you strong foundations of the earth; for the Lord has a complaint against His people, and He will contend with Israel. O My people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Testify against Me. For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I redeemed you from the house of bondage; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “The Lord offered every good to them.”

AC 6435 [14]

- “Because idolatrous worship took place upon mountains and hills, by them are signified in the opposite sense the evils that belong to the love of self; as in...Micah...6:1...”

AC 9024 [3]

- “In Micah 6:1...‘to dispute with the mountains’ denotes to contend and defend against the exalted ones, and also against the evils of the love of self; ‘the hills which are to hear His voice’ denote the humble, and those who are in charity.”

AR 336

- “...‘mountains’ and ‘hills’ in the Word signify heaven and the church, where there exists love to the Lord and love to the neighbor, and in the opposite sense, hell, where there exists self love and the love of the world.” *Micah 6:1-2* is cited as the source of this teaching.

AR 589

- “By ‘the foundation of the world’ is not here meant the creation of the world, but the establishment of the church...” *Micah 6:1-2* is cited among many other verses from the Word.

AE 405 [40]

- “In Micah...6:1, 2...This...was said of the spiritual church, which was represented by the Israelites when separated from the Jews; and ‘mountains’ mean the goods of charity, and ‘hills’ the goods of faith; but here, the evils and falsities that are the opposites of these goods; therefore, it is said, ‘strive thou with the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice;’ ‘the strong foundations of the earth’ mean the principles of falsity in that church, ‘the earth’ meaning the church, and ‘foundations’ the principles upon which the other things are founded. It is said, ‘with His people,’ ‘with Israel,’ because ‘people’ means those who are in truths, or those who are in falsities; and ‘Israel’ those who are in goods, or those who are in evils.”

AR 902

- “The church...is founded upon doctrine, for doctrine teaches how we are to believe, and how we are to live, and doctrine is to be drawn from no other source than the Word...In the Word ‘foundations of the earth’ are sometimes named, and by them are not meant the foundations of the earth, but the foundations of the church, for ‘the earth’ signifies the church, and the foundations of the church are no other than what are from the Word, and are called doctrinals...” *Micah 6:1* is cited as an example.

AE 1057 [5]

- “...‘the founding of the world’ signifies the establishment of the church. For the ‘world’ has a similar meaning as ‘heaven and earth;’ and the expression ‘to found the earth’ is used because the ‘earth’ signifies the church on earth, and upon this heaven as to its holy things is founded. This also makes clear the signification of ‘the foundations of the earth’ in the following passages...” *Micah 6:2* is cited.

AR 503

- “‘Egypt signifies the natural man in conjunction with the spiritual, and thus the affection of truth and thus science and intelligence; but in the opposite sense, it signifies the natural man separated from the spiritual, and then the pride of one’s own intelligence, and thence insanity in spiritual things...and whence it is that Egypt is called ‘the land of bondage’ (*Micah 6:4*)...”

AE 328 [18]

- “And in Micah...(Micah 6:4)...in the sense of the letter that they [the children of Israel]...were led by Divine power out of Egypt, where they had been made bondsmen; but in the spiritual sense no such thing is meant, but it means that

those who are of the church, that is, those that are reformed by the Lord by means of truths and a life according to them, are delivered and freed from evils and from the falsities thence, for these are the things that make man a bondsman; this is the spiritual sense of these words, and in this sense are the angels when man is in the sense of the letter.”

AE 654 [75]

- The Word “...describes how the natural man is vastated, which takes place when he casts away from himself all the truths and goods of the church, and imbibes falsities and evils, until there is no longer any truth or good of the church remaining...”

Derived Doctrine

“Hear now what the Lord says...”

- Could the meaning of these words be any clearer? The Lord is advising us to make a choice: tune out, or down, the noisy and demanding finite schedules, ideas, and beliefs of human prudence and commit yourselves to the priorities of the Lord. To **“hear”** signifies a state of obedience. We are to prayerfully and willingly focus our attention on the words of the Lord. Influx from the Lord is directly proportional to the efflux from our hearts and minds. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. The Lord promises to fill us with the bread of heaven and to give us His living waters. Those who believe in the Lord will be given a heart out of which “will flow rivers of living water.” (*John 7:38*) We will have the hunger and thirst of our hearts and minds (our souls) satisfied.

“Arise, plead your case before the mountains and let the hills hear your voice.”

- To **“arise”** signifies “the elevation of the mind.” (*AC 2695*)
- To **“plead”** your case, or **“implore”** your case, typifies people “who are in humiliation of heart,” who are willing to implore or plead to the Lord for mercy. (*AC 598 [2]*) Pleading our case does not mean we are backing down from the hells or throwing in the towel. Instead, it means developing a plan to find restorative strategic help from the Lord. He is our spiritual counsel.
- How does one go about preparing and pleading a spiritual **“case”**? Who will hear our pleading case? The answer lies within our hearts. The Lord sits on His throne, and He adjudicates everything. His “courtroom” is the zenith of Divine justice, where, eventually, fairness, healing, and the restoration of order will reign.
- I’m not a lawyer, but here are some of the things I was able to glean while researching what it means to prepare and “plead a strong case” in the natural courts, and I tried to apply the same principles to our consideration of the

spiritual court. First, pleading does not mean falling all over oneself crying out “mea culpa” or engaging in self-deprecation before the taunting and belittling voices of the hells. Running oneself down or making inordinate excuses is not going to work in our development of a “strong case.” To build a strong case, we should work carefully on the logical presentation of relevant doctrinal facts as drawn from the Word. We should reflect carefully and gather provable spiritual data that will substantiate our case, and we should line up creditable witnesses from the Word to testify on our behalf. Are there any tested spiritual precedents that can be cited? In presenting a strong case, it will be necessary to mount an insightful cross-examination of any witnesses who have falsely testified against the facts of the Lord. And lastly, there is to be a prayerful request to the Lord, and the mercy of His court, for His Divine relief and vindication from the lies that hell has leveled against the timely and providential leading of the Lord. Mind you, we are to do all of these things while being totally honest before the Lord so as to not misrepresent the facts and validity of the Lord’s purity and all-knowing love and wisdom. This seems to be the way we are to plead our case. Note now the spiritual state we are to be in when we plead our case.

“...before the mountains and let the hills hear your voice.”

- The “**mountains**” represent being in the presence of the goods of charity, heaven, and the love of the Lord. The “**hills**” represent being in the presence of the goods of faith, the church, and the love of the neighbor. See *AE 405 [40]*. Letting the mountains and the hills “**hear our voice**” signifies speaking in a state of humbleness and charity. See *AC 9024 [3]*.

“Hear, O you mountains, ‘the Lord’s complaint...”

- What “**complaint**” do the mountains need to hear from the Lord? Two quotes from the *Arcana* might help us see and understand the loving nature of His complaint. First, let’s look at *AC 1780*: “The Lord’s complaint respecting the church was that it was in externals only...” Secondly, *AC 1795* teaches that “The church is to serve as stewards or overseers...,” but a time came “when no internal dimension of the church exists, only in the external...” For this state, “...the Lord made complaint...”

“...and you strong foundations of the earth...”

- When a church (or individual) strays from following the internals of the Lord’s teachings, the people begin to construct ideas of falsity that multiply darkness and hide the light of the Lord’s Word. *AE 405 [40]* teaches us that “‘strong foundations of the earth’ mean the principles of falsity...upon which other things are founded.” This passage calls us to consider what are the beginning principles of our foundations. Hearing the complaints of the Lord is a good starting point.

"...the Lord has a complaint against His people, and He will contend with Israel..."

- The word **"people"** can have a positive and a negative signification. In the positive sense, **"people"** signify "those in the church who are in truths." (AE 863 [6]) "...people signify those who are of the church in which is the doctrine of genuine truth from the Word." (AE 768 [19]) "...by people and nations are meant those who are in truths and goods..." (AE 331 [9]) In the negative sense, "...**'people'** signify the falsities of religion in which they trust, and from which they fight against the truths of the church..." (AE 734 [11], *emphasis added.*) In the context of this verse, it would appear the Lord wanted to lodge His complaint against those who turned and twisted the goods and truths of the church to fight against Him.
- Our most direct teaching regarding the meanings of **"people"** and **"Israel"** comes from AE 405 [40]: "...people means those who are in **truths**, or those who are in falsities...and Israel those who are in **goods**, or those who are in evils..." (Emphasis added.)
- Do we need to ponder why the Lord **complains** about the falsities of truth while He **contends** with those who are in love of evil? Is one of these more serious than the other?

"O my people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Testify against Me."

- Divine questions are for us to reflect on. The Lord knew perfectly the answers to these questions. He doesn't need our enlightenment to help Him see anything. No, His questions are for our sake, so let's enter into this dialogue with Him by reflecting on the three things mentioned. First, **what have we done to the Lord?** Second, **How have we wearied the Lord?** And third, we need to ask the Lord **to testify against us.**

"For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I redeemed you from the house of bondage, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam."

- AR 503 explains what is meant by being brought up and redeemed from the bondage of Egypt. It means becoming spiritual and not natural. It means being rescued from the pride of one's own intelligence and being released from the insanity of such a life. How does the Lord do this? **"Moses"** signifies the "doctrine thence from the Divine" (AC 7052) and "instruction about the law Divine." (AC 7185) He also signifies how things were to be done "according to the Word of the Lord." (AC 7406, 7450) **"Aaron"** signifies getting priestly "instruction anew from the law Divine." (AC 7214); receiving and sharing of priestly "influx and communication" (AC 7287); and "the influx of the internal law into the external law" (AC 7379 and 7410). **"Miriam"** denotes the "good of faith which proceeds mediately from the Lord." (AC 8337)

Putting It All Together

Two disciples on the road to Emmaus were deeply engrossed in a conversation, reasoning about the dramatic (horrific) events in Jerusalem. Jesus drew near them and asked them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" (*Luke 24:17*) Incredulously, they turned on Him and asked, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem..." They explained that their Savior had been killed. Their dreams and aspirations seemed to be coming to an end.

While all of this was going on, the Scriptures tell us, the disciples' "eyes were restrained so they did not know Him..." (*Luke 24:16*) Why were their eyes restrained? Could it have been they were so busy talking, worrying, and complaining about the end of their dream that they just couldn't see that the Savior was with them? They were talking fast, taking in the words of the Stranger, letting the meaning or significance of what He was saying and teaching slip by.

Isn't that just like us? We often talk and talk, assuming that we know the **effect** of things before having our eyes opened to see **the end**. We, too, can become morose and assume that the Lord is dead and overcome by the hells.

Our lesson tells us the first step out of this habit is to "Hear now what the Lord says..." Then *P&P* adds to this: "The Lord offered every good to them..." In other words, what looked bleak and empty was just the opposite. **He was doing that which was good and full.** What looks like an end to us may in fact be a significant beginning for the Lord.

Next, our lesson tells us that it is important to listen to what the Lord's complaint is about the church. The Lord does not want external superficiality within His church. He wants us to have internals that are strong and healthy flowing into our externals. Read again the words from *AR 902*. A healthy church "is founded upon doctrine, for doctrine teaches us how we are to believe, and how we are to live..." (Emphasis added.)

Instead of complaining about what the Lord should have or could have done, we need to turn our whole conversation around to "What have I done to You? And how have I wearied You?" These questions are not meant to lay a guilt trip on us. Instead, they are offered so that our eyes will not be restrained to prevent us from seeing the Master as He walks with us along our spiritual journey.

Lastly, this section presents a powerful reminder that we are to build and plead a "strong case" in the court of the Lord. Hell will, without a doubt, be there to discourage and attempt to defeat us in our spiritual efforts. But the Lord reminds us that if we come in humility and in love to Him and the neighbor, we will be survivors. His mercy will bring the Word to us and will cause us to remark, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" (*Luke 24:32*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 6:1-4.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- How well do we listen to the “still, small voice” of the Lord?
- Do we consider how much we need to “plead” our case before the mountains and the hills?
- What about the Lord’s complaint against our church? Do we give consideration to the strength of our internals? Doctrine needs brushing up so that it is real and vital in teaching how we are to believe and how we are to live.
- The Lord never is frustrated or weary with us. But can we picture how we might cause these feelings in Him with our stubborn nature?
- Do we talk and talk about things—so concerned and wrapped up with our effects that we miss the ends of the Lord?

MICAH 6:5

“O My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab counseled, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, from Acacia Grove to Gilgal, that you may know the righteousness of the Lord.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “He protects them.”

Derived Doctrine

“O My people, remember now...”

- These words, “**O My people,**” when thought of as being directed affectionately to Israel only will lead us down a wrong path. Such thinking fosters the idea that Israel was and is the chosen people or favored nation. But when we look from the spiritual sense, we get a more inclusive idea of what the Lord is saying. “...‘...people’ signify the intelligent and in an abstract sense the understanding of truth and good...” (*AE 412 [26]*) “**People**” signify “the truths and goods of the church.” (*AE 417 [11]*) “...people signify those who are of the church in which is the doctrine of genuine truth from the

Word.” (AE 768 [19]) **“People”** represent “those in whom simple good is present.” (AC 4968)

- To **“remember now”** signifies “...what is [to be] perpetual in thought... remembering...must not in any wise be forgotten...”
- The Lord, then, is directing all who read and love His Word to hold or remember perpetually His good and truth; to remember the genuine truths of the Word; and to remember to keep simple (plain) love present in the heart and mind.

“...what Balak king of Moab counseled, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, from Acacia Grove to Gilgal, that you may know the righteousness of the Lord.”

- AC 1888 [3] reminds us that when a passage contains “nothing but names, from which no sense would appear unless all the names signified actual things; and if the mind were to abide in the names, this would never be acknowledged to be the Word of the Lord. But who will believe that in the internal sense they all contain arcana of heaven...?”
- **“Balak”** represents those who desire and long for the people of Israel to fail. Look again at the above meaning of the people of Israel. **“Balak”** represents those who want “to destroy the people of Israel by craft...leading them away from worship of the Lord to the worship of Baal-peor...” (AE 140 [2]) **“Balak”** represents those who want “to cast stumbling blocks...” (AR 114) **“Balak”** the king pictures for us an evil **ruling love**.
- **“Moab”** “denotes those who are **easily led astray**...and adulterate goods...” (AC 3242 [3], *emphasis added*.)
- Balaam is an interesting study. He had certain divination skills, honed from the remnant of knowledges from the Ancient Church. Balaam had conversations with the Lord. The Lord warned him not to aid or assist Balak in his wish to be a stumbling block to Israel. Balaam heard the Lord say “Thou shalt not curse the people...” And yet, the lure of wealth clouded his judgment and tarnished his ancient skills. The Word, noting for us that Balaam came from the land of Beor, gives us a possible insight into why he allowed himself to participate in the adulteration of good and truth. The name “Beor” in Hebrew means a “burning.” The offer of wealth and position must have **burned** in his heart and mind because he turned away from the directions and warnings of the Lord and proceeded with his plan to adulterate all that was good and true.
- Balaam answering Balak from the “Acacia Grove to Gilgal” offers us an interesting series of meanings. **Acacia** was a place where the groves of Shittim wood were plentiful to harvest. Shittim wood was used in the construction of the **Ark of the Covenant**. Shittim wood represents “the good of merit from the Lord’s Divine Human.” (AC 9633) Shittim wood signifies “the good of righteousness and consequent power...” (AC 9713) Shittim wood represents “the good of righteousness or of merit which belongs to the Lord alone.” See AE 391 [22] and AC 9462. What did the ark contain? It held the

stones, or tablets, of the Ten Commandments, a golden jar with some of the manna in it, and Aaron's budding rod.

- **“Gilgal”** signifies “the doctrine of natural truth which is serviceable for introduction into the church...” (*AE 700 [14]*) **“Gilgal”** means “rolling off” the “reproach of Egypt from all of you...” (*AC 2039 [8]*)
- Can we see, from the above information, the range of Balaam's intent to harm Israel? He was part of the conspiracy to destroy everything from celestial and spiritual things to introductory things. Balaam wanted to “roll off” the protection of the Lord and thus destroy the Israelites. How low and self-centered were his motives?
- The Lord wanted Israel to reflect on and remember these plans of Balak and Balaam so that they **“may know the righteousness of the Lord.”** (*Micah 6:5, emphasis added.*)

Putting It All Together

Once again, we have a wonderful story of the exposing of hell's intent to destroy both things most holy and the introductory things that lead one to the church. But the Lord will not be thwarted. He knows the “burning” desire of self-love and its lust for riches and power. He will expose hell, and He will defend His church from such chicanery. As *P&P* says, “He protected them.” What a wonderful message to have and to remember perpetually. It must not be forgotten. Why? Because the Lord tells us so!

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 6:5.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- How did you do with the list of names in this verse and their meaning and spiritual representations? Did you use paper to trace the applications and meaning for your life? It is amazing how doing something like this opens and enhances our spiritual horizons.
- Balaam “burned” to do what Balak wanted, in spite of all of the Lord's warnings. Why do you think Balaam chose to ignore the Lord and listen to Balak? Are there any examples that come to mind when something similar happened in the life of someone you know?
- The name “Moab” signifies those “who are easily led.” Are we easily led by some Moab states?
- The Lord will save us from the wiles of hell. Is this a “remembrance” that will be kept perpetually in your mind?

MICAH 6:6-8

“With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “The Lord is not approached by externals of worship, but by internals, which are of truth and good.”

AC 922 [3]

- “It is by internal things, namely, charity and the faith therefrom, that He who is represented is to be seen and acknowledged and believed, as is clearly evident in the Prophets...What is meant by ‘hearkening to the voice’ may be seen in Micah...6:6-8...this is what is signified by ‘burnt-offerings and sacrifices of clean beasts and birds.’”

AC 2180 [4-6]

- “As regards sacrifices in general, they were indeed enjoined through Moses on the people of Israel, but the Most Ancient Church, that existed before the flood, knew nothing whatever about sacrifices; nor did it even come into their minds to worship the Lord by slaughtering animals. The Ancient Church, that existed after the flood, was likewise unacquainted with sacrifices...sacrifices were first instituted in the...church...called the Hebrew Church, and from this spread to the nations, and from the same source they came to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and thus to the descendants of Jacob...the worship of sacrifices had become idolatrous with them, as it had with the Gentiles, and from this worship they could not be withdrawn...For what has once been implanted from infancy as holy, especially if by fathers, and thus inrooted, the Lord never breaks, but bends...This is the reason why it was directed that sacrifices should be instituted in the way described in the books of Moses. That sacrifices were by no means acceptable to Jehovah, thus were merely permitted and tolerated...is very evident in the Prophets...” *Micah 6:6-8* is cited.

AC 10143 [6]

- “That external worship without...internal is not worship, is also signified by what is said of burnt-offerings and sacrifices in these passages...” *Micah 6:6-8* is cited.

AR 287

- “By ‘number,’ in the natural sense, is meant that which has relation to measure or weight, but by ‘number,’ in the spiritual sense, that which has relation to quality; and here their quality is described by their being ‘myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands.’ For ‘a myriad’ is predicated of truths, and ‘a thousand’ of goods. The reason why ‘a myriad’ is predicated of truths, and ‘a thousand’ of goods, is because a myriad is the greater number, and a thousand a less, and truths are manifold, but goods are simple...Since these two numbers have such a signification they are mentioned also in other places, as in...*Micah 6:7*...”

AE 336 [8]

- “In *Micah*...6:7...‘rams’ signify spiritual goods, and ‘rivers of oil’ truths proceeding from good, ‘myriads’ are predicated of the latter, and ‘thousands’ of the former...‘rams’ signify spiritual goods...and as ‘oil’ signifies the good of love, ‘rivers’ of it signify what proceeds from it, namely, truths.”

AC 519 [1-2]

- “To ‘walk’...signifies to live...which has relation to truth, consequently to faith, or the doctrine of faith...In *Micah*...6:8...where to ‘walk with God’ signifies to live according to the things here indicated...to ‘walk with God’ is to teach and live according to the doctrine of faith...”

Derived Doctrine

“With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the High God?”

- Please note that we will begin reviewing a series of questions. The questions have been inspired by the Lord to show that He never wanted sacrifices. He never wanted gory or grotesque forms of external worship. From the beginning, He has always wanted spiritual internal values and offerings from His children. So our text asks question after question, and then an answer is given that points to what is really wanted: humility, affection, and dedication of the soul, heart, and mind.
- To bow oneself down to Jehovah “signifies gladness and joy...” Bending “and bowing down are gestures of humiliation, that is, they are humiliation in

act..." (AC 3118) "...bending the knees signifies acknowledgement, thanksgiving, and adoration from spiritual good and delight in the natural." (AE 455 [14])

- Does it seem to you that we have answered the question "with what shall I come before the Lord?" We are to bow with joy and gladness, with humility, acknowledging the Lord with thankfulness and adoration. These qualities provide the essence of internal worship that will vivify our external worship.

"Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings..."

- "Burnt offerings signify the glorification of the Lord's Human..." (AC 10042 [6]) In essence, this number also tells us, beasts signify goods and evils and also truths and falsities. The sacrifice of animals represents asking for atonement for the evils and falsities so that good and truths might remain and grow to help cleanse internal and external worship so that the worshippers might more ardently adore the Divine Human.

"...with calves a year old?"

- Why is a one-year-old calf mentioned? Let's begin with the meaning of a "**year.**" AC 2906 [2] states "That a 'year' signifies the entire time of a state of the church from beginning to end, or what is the same, an entire period...in Isaiah 61: 1, 2...it is said of the Lord's advent...the 'year of Jehovah's good pleasure' [which] denotes the time of a new church."
- Why are "**calves**" mentioned first and not rams? AC 8937 and AE 453 [9] teach that "rams...signify interior goods and truths, which are spiritual goods and truths...calves...signify exterior goods and truths, which are natural truths and goods." Are we to draw from this that the natural must first be examined and corrected (cleansed) before the internal is cleansed? The second law of Divine Providence certainly supports this idea. "It is a law of the Divine Providence that man should, as from himself, remove evils as sins in the external man; and thus, but not otherwise, the Lord can remove evils in the internal man, and then at the same time in the external." (DP 100.2, *emphasis added.*)

"Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil?"

- "...in the Word a 'thousand' signifies much and countless, and when predicated of the Lord what is infinite...[in our common speech] where a 'thousand times' denotes numberless, as in which also a 'thousand' is used for many; as when it is said that a thing has been said a thousand times, or done in a thousand ways." (AC 2575 [2-3]) The implied question here seems to be "Will I forever have to sacrifice rams—spiritual goods and truths—to please the Lord?"

- We need to be careful when working with the meanings of numbers in the Word. To focus strictly on the “numerical count” and not on the representation will cause us to miss the spiritual signification. For instance, consider this passage: “...a ‘hundred’ denotes all, much, and what is full... because ‘a hundred’ has the same signification as ‘ten,’ ‘a thousand,’ and ‘ten thousand’...” (AC 9745)
- **“...rivers of oil”**—“ten thousand rivers of oil” signify “...truths proceeding from good...” (AE 336 [8]) Does the Lord want us to offer sacrifices for the purpose of “producing” truths from good? At the end of a day, can we gather specific truths and goods and produce a tangible object to put on display? Will we crawl up a set number of stairs on bloodied knees to meet a requirement of penance? Can we, at any age, say, “I have worked all my life for the Lord and now I can retire because I have paid my dues”? That sounds like working for merit or recognition. The Lord doesn’t want us to sacrificially show off. Instead, He prefers love or good to flow out of our heart spontaneously. AC 4031 points out the value and necessity of the growing warmth and ardor of spontaneous affection: “...everything spontaneous or free is of affection or love.” The gifts or sacrifices from this kind of internal worship are priceless and numberless. They are the substance, or fruits, of the heart that are wanted by the Lord.

“Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

- The words **“shall I give”** denote to make a promise. See AC 8055.
- In the positive sense, **“my firstborn”** in “the genuine sense...denotes the faith which is of charity,” but “in the opposite sense the ‘firstborn’ denotes faith without charity.” (AC 7871) Faith, the Writings teach, “is the eye of love.” (AC 3863 [12]) In other words, charity/love needs to be our firstborn desire to see the Lord. Hell wants to slay the firstborn so as to extinguish our “faith without charity and the consequent devastation of truth.” (AC 7022) Does the Lord want us to give, or promise, our firstborn? If our firstborn is a faith without charity, yes. If our firstborn is a faith with charity, no.
- The **“fruit of my body”** denotes what comes from the natural life. Fruit “signifies the good of life.” (CL 135) Is this question asking the Lord if we have to wear a horse-hair shirt? Do we have to find a cave and shun all modern amenities? Should we take a vow of silence and live in cloisters? Is that what we must do to atone for the sins of our soul? HH 528 answers these questions beautifully with this heading: “It is not so difficult to live the life that leads to heaven as is believed.” Shunning life and escaping from living in the world produce a sorrowful state that “is not receptive of heavenly joy...”

“He [the Lord] has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

- Prior to this verse, there were four questions directed to the Lord. The Lord’s response is beautiful and concise. He says “I have shown you, O man what is good...” Really? Where? Moses said in *Deuteronomy 6:5* that the people needed to love the Lord God with “all your heart, with all your soul, and all your strength.” Samuel told King Saul that obedience “is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.” (*1 Samuel 15:22*) There are many other references from the Word that could be cited. The point is that the Lord did tell His people “what is good.” They (like us) often chose not to hear, obey, and follow instructions. Modesty pays attention to the Lord, but the proud tend to listen only to themselves. They succumb to the lure of their own voice. To shake them out of their daze, He ends by asking three Divine questions. This is an important point to note because as many times as I have heard this passage read, it is often read as a statement and not as questions. The Lord asks questions so that we might do the restorative work of reflection. **Question one:** are we willing to observe and serve “*justly*”? The Lord is the only One who is completely fair, equitable, and just. He has no favorites, no behind-closed-doors wheeling and dealing for personal gain. Are we committed to following Him and His system of justice? **Question two:** are we willing to observe and serve “*mercy*”? The Writings define mercy as “a perception of the influx of love” (*AC 3117*), the Lord’s Love. “Mercy signifies to do good to the needy from love.” (*AE 295 [4]*) Mercy “signifies...to make a covenant of conjunction...” with the Lord. (*AE 365 [24]*) **Question three:** are we willing “*to walk humbly with your God*”? Humility and faithfulness mean caring enough about the Lord that we will have a “healthy fear” of doing anything that would hurt Him or dishonor His Word. *Psalm 1* reminds us of the blessedness that comes to the person who walks with Him. Like Peter, who was sinking rapidly in the tempestuous waters, may we reach out and let the Lord take our hand and rescue us.

Putting It All Together

P&P gives us this summation: “The Lord is not approached by externals of worship, but by internals, which are truth and good.” Isn’t that what these verses are about? The Lord never wanted the children of Israel to offer sacrifices. He was not interested in the killing and shedding of animal blood. *Isaiah 65:1-5* is worth a read in this summation. The Lord tells the children of Israel what He thinks about their rebellious ways. He explains that their sacrifices and burning incense (the smoke of their incense) are offensive “in My nostrils...” Instead, the Lord seeks humility, justice, mercy, and people who are willing to walk humbly with Him. External deeds are not preferred. Internal deeds are received and enriched and rewarded by the Lord.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 6: 6-8.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- This section of our study has a series of questions. Four are addressed to the Lord, and three are addressed to us. Would it be useful to write them out and then take time to get the issues clarified? Certainly, the last three questions should get a major portion of our attention because they are directed to us.
- Look back at the section called **Passages from the Writings**: there is a passage from *AC 2180 [4-6]* that gives us a history of how sacrifices came into the lives of the children of Israel. At one point, there was a hint that other nations picked up this practice from Israel. Why didn't the Lord put an end to it right away? Why did the Lord accommodate this practice to worship services?
- Looking at many passages in the Word (with hindsight and instruction), we can see that the Lord consistently told Israel that He didn't want their sacrifices and that they were repugnant to Him. Again, why didn't the message get heard and implemented in the temples? The worship of Baal frequently entered into Israel's religious preference, and human sacrifices (children) were part of that religion. Didn't something speak to their hearts about the horror and injustice of killing the innocent?
- After reading and considering the notes, didn't the lesson from *P&P* make more sense as a powerful summary? External worship is not acceptable. Internal worship with its loyalty to good and truth is what the Lord wants.

MICAH 6:9-11

"The Lord's voice cries to the city – wisdom shall see Your name: hear the rod! Who has appointed it? Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the short measure that is an abomination? Shall I count pure those with the wicked scales, and with the bag of deceitful weights?"

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "The life of truth and good should be loved, and not the life of falsity and evil."

AE 373 [5]

- "As a just estimation and exploration of good and truth are signified in the Word by 'measures,' it was commanded that the measures should be just,

with no fraud about them...So justice, where it means the estimation and exploration of men in accordance with the quality of good and truth in them, is everywhere in the Word expressed by scales and balances of various kinds, and by 'ephahs,' 'omers,' 'homers,' 'seas,' 'hins'...and injustice is expressed by 'scales and balances of fraud and deceit' as in...Micah 6:11."

Derived Doctrine

"The Lord's voice cries to the city – wisdom shall see Your name..."

- "To know and hear the Lord's voice signifies to do His commandments." (AE 864 [4]) "Everyone who hears the Lord's voice and freely follows is brought by the Lord into conjugal love and into all its joys and happiness." (CL 444 [3]) To hear "the Lord's voice [is to be in] the truths of the Word, of doctrine, and of faith...thus [His] precepts." (AE 249 [2])
- To "cry signifies grief..." (AE 393) "I will hear his cry signifies that they will be aided." (AC 9195) "...to cry signifies interior affection." (AE 459)
- Wisdom seeing **the Lord's name** signifies comprehending in one complex "all things by which He is worshiped, thus all things of love and faith." (AE 295 [13])

"Hear the rod! Who has appointed it?"

- "...to hear' signifies both to understand truth and to will or obey it..." (AR 356)
- A "**rod**" signifies "the power of the Lord's Divine Human..." (AC 6942) "...a rod' signifies the power which belongs to truth..." (AC 9028)
- Interpreting "**Who has appointed it?**" requires some reflection. Is the Lord asking us this question so that we will look back to see who has the authority and right to the "rod"? Does He want us to acclaim and accede to that authority? If so, we can say with confidence and joy that the Lord has the right and authority to hold the rod. Such acknowledgement puts fear and trepidation into the heart of hell. In light of what follows, it makes sense to reflect on this very necessary beginning point.

"Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked...?"

- The word "**treasure,**" in a positive sense, "signifies the Divine truth that is in the Word." See AE 840 [10] and AE 622 [3]. Therefore, in the negative sense, "the treasures of wickedness" represent the twisting and profanation of the Lord's Word. We all know how easy it is to take several verses out of context to make the Word justify false and wicked concepts.
- AC 3542 explains what it means to "smite the head out of the house of the wicked." It denotes destroying "the principles of falsity." So, putting this back

in the context of what is said above, the Lord was exposing the church's practice of abusing and using the Lord's Word with the principles of falsity.

"...and the short measure that is an abomination? Shall I count pure those with the wicked scales, and with the bag of deceitful weights?"

- This is not the first time the church or the people have been called "short" for using dishonest scales to cheat. *Amos 8:5* talked about people making the bushel smaller and cheating others with dishonest scales to make themselves rich. The prophecy of *Micah* uses stronger words to expose this practice: a short measure that is an abomination, wicked scales presented as being pure, and a bag of deceitful weights.
- To **"measure"** signifies "to explore the quality of a thing and to designate it..." (*AE 629 [3]*) To **"measure"** signifies "to know and scrutinize the quality of a state..." (*AR 486*) To **"measure"** signifies "the quality of a thing in respect to truth and good." See *AE 130 [7]* and *AC 9603 [2]*.
- "...abomination' signifies to be turned into infernal evil..." (*AE 827 [5]*)
- Let's pull the message together. Apparently, the church was not honestly exploring, analyzing, and measuring the quality of states in the light of the Word. They were not interested in deeper truths. They cut corners and satisfied themselves with quick and convenient answers. The people of the church were being cheated. Spiritual things fell into a state of abomination.
- The "abominated" scales of truth and justice were shamelessly being presented as pure, impartial, and honorable. In fact, decisions were handed out to the highest bidder and not according to spiritual laws or the equality of the Word. The Lord asks, "Shall I count pure those with the wicked scales...?"
- The voice of the Lord, accusing the church of using a bag of deceitful weights, carries with it a clear message of what He saw His people doing. But let's add a couple of quotes from the Writings that will aid and enlarge that understanding. "Forms of good and truth that originate in the self and not the Lord are meant by...'a bag.'" (*AC 9942 [12]*) "...those who despise the Word and worship nature instead of God...fling faith and charity, as it were, into 'a bag' on their back..." (*TCR 146*) The heart and mind that are not with the Lord will pull out of their "bag" deceptive weighted arguments and facts to tip the scale in their favor, cheating the natural mind from seeing and loving spiritual goods.

Putting It All Together

The Lord wants integrity from His church. He requires "pure balances" that will not rob the heart and mind of spiritual goods. His church should be a studying church that explores and scrutinizes the Word respecting truth and good. These things are to be done with affection and application to life. Uses are to be dynamic, alive, and vital as opposed to the repetitive, boring, and tired acting-out tradition of "flinging good and truth in a bag on our back." *P&P* explains these verses with this

admonition: “The life of truth and good should be loved, and not the life of falsity and evil.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 6:9-11.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- My first inclination is to think about, and ask whether there are abominable scales that exist in the church today. Can I name any of the fake weights or scales? I am not sure how I can do that. Is there anything that comes to mind that you would like to cite?
- My concern lies in pondering whether we are a careful and faithful studying church. Do we explore the Word, scrutinizing it to find the internal sense in order to enliven our uses to the Lord and the neighbor? Attendance at Friday doctrinal classes is decreasing. How do we read this trend? Is it a sign that the classes are not interestingly prepared and presented? Or is it a sign that other things have increased in importance and we are being pulled away by “lesser things”? The Writings make a case that the Word provides us with doctrine. This doctrine is there from the Lord so that we might know what to think, how to live, and how to use it in service to the Lord and neighbor.
- The values of the world are telling us what to think and apply. I’m not sure that is good for us if we don’t have the values of the Word balancing things out. So if we are not studying the Word regularly, we will follow the thoughts of the natural world, “flinging” the good and truth of the Lord in a bag on our back.
- We need to reflect on things: examine, explore, and scrutinize without becoming morose and bitter. Any ideas come to mind of how we can do (or are doing) this?
- Hearing, remembering, the voice of the Lord and considering His corrective and protecting “rod” seems important. “Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.” (*Psalm 23:4*) Praying is necessary. **What kind of prayers should we offer?** We need to pray for the church; we need to pray for our priests; we need to pray for our laity. We ought to pray that our treasures will not be of wickedness, that our houses (the church and home) will not be found houses of wickedness. Our prayer needs to be that we will give full measure and purity with our scales, and we need to pray that we will not carry bags of deceitful weights.

MICAH 6:12-13

“For her rich men are full of violence, her inhabitants have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. Therefore I will also make you sick by striking you, by making you desolate because of your sins.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “There is falsification of truth with them. They could not be brought back by punishments...”

AR 206

- “By the ‘rich’...are meant those who were in the possession of the knowledges of truth and good because they had the Word...as in Micah 6:13...”

AR 624

- “By a ‘lie’ in the Word, is signified falsity and false speaking; by ‘deceit’ is signified both from design; as in the following passages...” *Micah 6:12* is cited.

TCR 322

- “In the Word this kind of falsehood [bearing false witness] is called a ‘lie’ and the intent is called ‘deceit,’ as in the following passages...*Micah 6:12*...”

AE 866 [4]

- “‘...to speak a lie’ signifies to teach falsely from ignorance of truth; but ‘deceit’ signifies falsity that is not from ignorance of truth, but from deliberation, thus from the purpose of deceiving, as is the case with the wicked.” *Micah 6:12* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

“For her rich men are full of violence, her inhabitants have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.”

- We need to begin this study by paying attention to the choice of words: “**her** rich men” and “**her** inhabitants.” A **woman** (her) signifies “the church as regards the affection of truth, thus the affection of the truth of the church...” (*AE 555 [2]*) Further, we read that, in the spiritual sense, **males and females** signify “truth and good.” (*AE 725 [3]*) Hence, the Lord was telling His

people about their purposeful (intentional) violence to the good, or love, of His Word. It is one thing to do violence to the Word while in a state of ignorance and another to do violence to the Word from a hateful heart. A hateful heart wishes to extinguish the presence and positive life-giving influence of the Lord.

- What made this such a sad case was the fact that the people and the church had much understanding and wisdom and were “rich” in potential. Why? They had the Word of the Lord. But the people, the inhabitants, were deliberately “lying” and doing “full” violence to the words and order of the Lord’s Word. Instead of loving the ways of the Lord, they preferred the aberrations, or titillation, of their hellish choices. The statement that “their tongue is deceitful in their mouth” indicates that their lies were not accidental. Consider this teaching regarding the meaning of **“mouth.”** A “mouth signifies thoughts and reasonings that have most power with them.” (AE 565) From this, we see that the words of their mouth arose from the selfish intention and desire to destroy the holiness of Scripture and the “presence” of the Lord in their hearts and minds.

“Therefore I will also make you sick by striking you, by making you desolate because of your sins.”

- Why did the Lord say He would make people sick? Was He announcing that He was going to involve Himself in revenge, payback, or retaliation? The words **“by striking you”** seem to indicate a form of Divine retaliation. We know better than that, don’t we? The Lord is not driven by anger and retaliation. These words signify a totally different message when the spiritual sense is unfolded. The Lord desires to heal sicknesses. We are taught in AC 10360 that “healing sickness means the purification of a person from evils and the falsities of evil.” AC 9042 explains that **“striking”** means “the formation of good and truth” to oppose evil and falsity. AC 9081 teaches that “to strike the peoples denotes to destroy falsities by means of truths.” So, really, the Lord was announcing that He would not allow evil to run amok. He would form up His truths to expose the blatant lies and the boastful deceit of the hells.
- Making the people **“desolate”** because of their sins denotes how impotent hell, falsity, and the proprium will be in the presence of His love and wisdom. None of this comes about by anger and retaliation. It is just an eternal fact: **Hell is not. The Lord IS.** Hell is desolate. The Lord is perpetually creating new beginnings and continually productive lives. So, this lesson is not about the Lord’s anger. It is about His healing zeal. True zeal is about love. True zeal wants to protect and preserve the integrity of truth so that His people might remain free from the bondage of hell. We need to recall the words of the Lord: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32)

Putting It All Together

P&P points us to the heart of the problem. The church and the people within the church were involved in the “falsification of the truth.” The falsification was not due to ignorance or a lack of understanding. The Lord said they were “rich.” They had the Word. They had the means to see and find truth. Instead of valuing truth, they pursued the great lie of self-love. Instead of protecting the Lord’s truth, they covered the Word in “deceit.” *AR 624* exposes the purpose of deceit. Read this passage again. Deceit comes about by “design.” The “lie” teaches falsity and brings about ignorance of truth. The goal of deceit is to deceive and enslave the hearts and minds of the people. *P&P* tells us that the people were so caught up in this pursuit that “they could not be brought back by punishment...” So the Lord marshaled His goods and truths to “strike” them. He had to minister to the sickness of the people and the church. In the end, the Lord’s good and truth will win. Evil and falsity cannot bear up under the presentation of His loving good and truth. When Hell purports that it is stronger than the Lord, we need to recall this lesson. Then we can stand tall and believe that the Lord will provide us with His truth and that truth will set us free.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 6:12-13.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

Can you think of a situation in which an individual or a church purposely became involved in “lying” and “deceit” so as to rob and make others poor?

- Can you recall a “rich” person making themselves poor because of their purposeful resistance to the Lord’s Word?
- Can we, or do we, take comfort in the fact that the Lord says He will marshal His truths to overcome the lies and deceit of the enemies of the New Church?
- Are there any instances in your memory wherein you can see the Lord “striking” the lying mouths of the Hells?
- I see a prayer in this lesson. We need to supplicate the Lord often to heal our inclination to lie and practice deceit. We need to be diligent in asking the Lord to heal our “sicknesses.”
- We have abundant riches. The three-fold Word is a precious gift from the Lord. Given its healing potential, we need to share it within and without our life. What keeps us from doing more of this sharing? Our reticence to speak up? Our insecurity about saying the right things? Our fear of being called odd or a cult? Or is it all about the abandonment of our calling because other things have crowded the mission out?
- Hold the answers to some of these questions for our next verses. See what happens when the heart and mind are resistive to, and in hatred toward, the Lord’s Word.

MICAH 6:14-16

"You shall eat, but not be satisfied; hunger shall be in your midst. You may carry some away, but shall not save them; and what you do rescue I will give over to the sword. You shall sow, but not reap; you shall tread the olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil; and make sweet wine, but not drink wine. For the statutes of Omri are kept; all the works of Ahab's house are done; and you walk in their counsels, that I may make you a desolation, and your inhabitants a hissing. Therefore you shall bear the reproach of My people."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "...therefore it must needs be that this church, having been overthrown, should perish."

AC 886 [2]

- "That the 'olive' signifies the good of charity, is evident from the signification in the Word not only of an 'olive,' but also of 'oil.' It was with olive oil, together with spices, that the priests and kings were anointed, and it was with olive oil that the lamps were trimmed...The reason olive oil was used for anointing and for lamps was that it represented all that is celestial, and therefore all the good of love and of charity; for the oil is the very essence of the tree, and is as it were its soul, just as the celestial, or the good of love and of charity, is the very essence or the very soul of faith; hence oil has this representation...this may be confirmed from many passages of the Word..." *Micah 6:15* is cited.

AC 9272 [5]

- "In Micah...6:13, 15...'sowing and not reaping' denotes to be instructed in the truths of faith, but without profit; 'treading the olive, but not anointing one's self' denotes to be instructed about the good of life, but still not to live in it; 'treading the must, but not drinking the wine' denotes to be instructed about the truths which are from good, but still not to appropriate them to one's self. That such things of the church or of heaven are signified by these words is plain from those which precede, namely, that they were to be laid waste in this manner 'because of their sins;' for the wicked and sinful man receives instruction, but merely stores it up among memory-knowledges, which he brings forth from his memory in order to get reputation, fame, honors, and wealth, thus to serve an evil use and end. From this the truths and the goods in which he has been instructed lose the life of heaven, and become dead, and finally deadly."

AC 9277 [2]

- “‘Olive-trees...’ denote the goods of celestial love which are from the Lord through the Word in the whole church...like in Micah 6:15...”

AR 316

- “‘Oil’ signifies the good of love, and ‘wine’ truth from that good, therefore ‘oil’ signifies holy good, and ‘wine’ holy truth...That ‘oil’ signifies the good of love, will be seen...” *Micah 6:15* is cited as an example.

AR 779

- “...priests, the kings, and all other things of the church were anointed, and when anointed were called holy; not that they were holy in themselves, but because they thereby represented the Lord as to the Divine Human. Hence it was sacrilege to harm a king, because he was ‘the anointed of Jehovah’...” *Micah 6:15* is one passage cited among others from the Word.

AE 375 [23]

- “That it was a commonly received custom to anoint themselves and others with oil, to testify gladness of mind and good will, is evident from the following passages...” *Micah 6:15* is cited.

AE 638 [20]

- “In Micah...6:15...‘olive trees’ [signify] the goods of the church...”

Derived Doctrine

“You shall eat, but not be satisfied; hunger shall be in your midst.”

- In the positive sense, to “**eat**” signifies “...to appropriate, because as natural food when it is eaten is appropriated to the life of the [person’s] body, so spiritual food when it is received is appropriated to the life of [one’s] soul.” (*AR 89*) In another place, we read that to “eat signifies to be communicated, to be conjoined, and to be appropriated.” (*AC 3813 [2]*)
- However, our text indicates something was amiss with their “eating.” Words, truths, insights were not satisfying their souls. Was it the fault of the Word? Was the soul rejecting the spiritual food of the Lord? No! The dissatisfaction was within the hearts and minds of those who practiced lying and deceit. They heard and went through the motions of saying things, but they had no wish to appropriate what they heard and be conjoined to the Lord.

- The “**hunger**” in their midst “signifies that they were expiring from a lack of delight and of good.” (AC 8402)

“You may carry some away, but [you] shall not save them; and what you do rescue I will give over to the sword.”

- In AC 1471, 1472, and 1474, we find an explanation of what is meant by the words “**carry away**.” Summarizing all three of these numbers is relatively easy. “**Carry away**” signifies having **no interest in celestial things**. In place of celestial things, such people choose knowledges and memory-knowledges or cognitions.
- You “**shall not save them**” supports a well-known teaching of the church. Useless memory-knowledges, not loved or applied, are sloughed away. “Idle” memory-knowledges will not find a permanent grounding in a person’s “remains” and, therefore, are removed.
- The meaning of being given “**over to the sword**” can best be understood by a full reading of AC 2799. We are taught that a “**sword**” signifies one, truth combating; two, the “vastation of truth; and, three, in the opposite sense falsity combating, and the punishment of falsity.” AR 52 reminds us that swords are often mentioned in the Word to testify that a “**sword**” represents “truth fighting against falsities and destroying them...” Also, it is said that a “sharp two-edged sword” goes out from the mouth of the Lord. This signifies that the Word of the Lord will penetrate “the heart and soul” of evil and falsity and thus accomplish “the dispersion of falsities by the Word from the Lord...” NB: please read all of AR 52. It’s worth the read and very helpful in understanding the meaning and use of the word “**sword**” in the Word.

“You shall sow, but not reap...”

- To “**sow**” signifies, in the positive sense, the process of the “good of charity and the truth of faith” being spiritually implanted. (AC 6154)
- Sowing and not reaping is explained in the direct teachings section above. AC 9272 has a full explanation of what sowing and not reaping means and how it applies to life.

“You shall tread the olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil...”

- AC 9272 tells us that treading the olive and not anointing oneself represents being “instructed about the good of life, but not living by that instruction.” (Emphasis added.)

“...make sweet wine, but not drink wine.”

- This represents “to be instructed about the truths which are from good, but still not to appropriate them to one’s self.” (AC 9272 [5], *emphasis added*.) This

is not repetition. Note that the prior verse talked about instruction that led to the good of life and the next teaching talks about instruction about truths from good (love). The sweet wine that comes from a sincere worship of the Lord He finds pleasant and acceptable. Read AC 924 and AC 925.

“For the statutes of Omri are kept; all the works of Ahab’s house are done; and you walk in their counsels...”

- Who was Omri? He was one of the “bad” kings of the Northern Tribe of Israel. Omri came to power by way of a bloody and brutal ascent. He reigned from 885 to 874 BC. Omri was the father of Ahab. Ahab was another “bad” king of the Northern Tribe, and he reigned from 874 to 853 BC. Between the two, that amounts to about 34 years of bad leadership. *I Kings 16:25* describes Omri this way: **“Omri did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all who were before him.”** Together, Omri and Ahab did evil in the sight of the Lord for 34 years.
- We need to pay attention to a hidden or implied contrast in our text between the statutes of Omri and all the works of Ahab’s house and the statutes of the Lord. The statutes of the Lord were given so that all things of the church would be ordered and the people would willingly and lovingly serve and worship the Lord. The statutes of Omri were given that he might rule over the people and that they might serve him. Israel apparently acquiesced to Omri and Ahab’s (and Jezebel’s) decrees and wants and forgot or ignored what the Lord decreed for the spiritual health of His people.

“...that I may make you a desolation and your inhabitants a hissing...you shall bear the reproach of My people.”

- What is signified by **“a reproach”**? *AE 654 [66]* gives us an insight: a “reproach signifies all things belonging to damnation...that nothing of the church shall be in them any longer.”
- What does the Word mean when it says the Lord will make the inhabitants **“a hissing”**? *AC 10409 [6]* gives us a possible answer to the meaning of **“hissing”** that we can reflect on. Those who loved “machinations and cunning devices communicate with hell. Their speech falls between the teeth like a kind of hissing...the light of their understanding is there obscured even to foolishness. I have seen some cast in there who in the world had been accounted very superior in intellect.”
- They, the hissers, will bear the reproach of the Lord’s new church. This is not a mean-spirited reproach but a reproach meant to give an example of what not to do. The choice of the hissers needs to be shunned. Following their machinations and cunning devices will cause an emptying out of the eternal things of the Lord.

Putting It All Together

“...it must be that this church...should perish.” (*P&P, emphasis added.*)

What kind of “this church” is the Lord telling us must perish? The answer: it’s a church that sows and doesn’t reap; it’s a church that has been instructed in the truths of faith but has made no effort to return a profit from that instruction; it’s a church that has been made aware of its need to seek the good of life but doesn’t care enough to seek it; it’s a church that doesn’t bother to appropriate the goods (love) of the Lord; it’s a church that stores up things in ostentatious memory-knowledges, seeks reputation, honor, and wealth for selfish reasons and pledges these assets to evil uses and ends; and lastly, it’s a church that prefers to follow the statutes of Omri and Ahab instead of following the statutes of the Lord.

In a moment of spiritual reflection, we can understand why the deficiencies of the above churches should cause them to “perish.” They were superficial, artificial, and completely self-centered entities. When these conditions are present within the heart and mind of a church, it will not welcome nor make room for the Lord. Its members make the sound of “hissers,” and where there is a void of the things dedicated to the Lord, there is no extension to eternity. *DP 46-69* gives us a valuable “rule of thumb” to consider and adopt: everything in the Lord is Infinite and Eternal. In turn, when the Infinite and Eternal looks to the finite, It looks for uses that are “reflective” of infinite and eternal values thriving within the being of the finite. If a person or church rejects infinite and eternal things, there are no “reflective” qualities in them. In a way, they are transparent, empty and dead. They have not wanted or tried to make life into an act of love for the Lord and the neighbor. *CL 160* reminds us that “love must go forth and be efficient or it will perish.” (Emphasis added.)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 6:14-16.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Whenever we hear the question “why do we have to study the Word and learn doctrine?” maybe this lesson ought to come to mind. This question has a poignant answer. A church, that altar and holy center in all of us, requires study of the Word. We need to sow and reap; we need to be instructed in matters of faith and work toward a state of useful profitability. The need to find the good of life is not theoretical. We need to ask the Lord to show us the way wherein we are to walk in service to Him and the neighbor. Our study and reflection should not be an act of rote memorization. We are to use everything we can to come to love the ways of the Lord. Here’s our first question: can we commit to these things so that the Lord will commend the work of our individual church? How encouraging it would be if, as we

struggle to bring relevance to our spirituality, we could hear the Lord say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Wouldn't that be special?

- Hissers—do we want to be one who talks with a spiritual hiss?
- Omri and Ahab were two evil kings of Israel. Omri traveled a horrible trail of murder and deceit to the throne. He was power-hungry and ruthless. Who would want to follow his statutes? Ahab was a weak "henpecked" husband who turned his back on the way of the Lord and allowed the worship of Baal to flourish. Who would want to follow his statutes? And yet, the Word says that the people and the church followed them to the exclusion of the Lord. Why? Are we as guilty as they? If so, can we see why the Lord says "this church" must perish?
- Love to the Lord and His Word must live. We must seek after infinite and eternal things so that we can reflect them and extend these things into eternity. How did Joshua say it? "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Can we resolutely commit our spiritual intentions to a similar pledge?
- Would you be willing to read *DP 46-69* and *CL 106* in a weekly devotional study? I believe it will strengthen our resolve to work for the Lord and His New Church.

Chapter Seven

MICAH 7:1-4

“Woe is me! For I am like those who gather summer fruits, like those who glean vintage grapes; there is no cluster to eat of the first-ripe fruit which my soul desires. The ‘faithful’ man has perished from the earth, and there is no upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood; every man hunts his brother with a net. That they may successfully do evil with both hands—the prince asks for gifts, the judge seeks a bribe, and the great man utters his evil desire; so they scheme together. The best of them is like a brier; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge; the day of your watchman and your punishment comes; now shall be their perplexity.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “There is no longer any truth or good in the church: therefore the last time has come upon it.”

AR 623

- “...‘the first-fruits’ signified that which is born first, and afterwards grows, as an infant grows up to a man, or as a young plant grows up to a tree, and hence they signified all the subsequent stages even to the completion of the thing, for all that is to follow exists in the first, as the man in the infant, and the tree in the tender shoot: and as this first exists before its successions, in like manner in heaven and in the church, therefore ‘the first-fruits’ were holy unto the Lord, and ‘the feast of the first-fruits’ were celebrated.” *Micah 7:1* is cited.

AE 919 [5]

- “In Micah...7:1...‘as the gatherings of the vintage, there is no cluster to eat,’ signifies such devastation of the church that there is no longer any good or truth.”

AC 1071 [2]

- “That ‘grapes’ in the Word signify charity and what is of charity, and that ‘wine’ signifies the faith thence derived and the things that belong to it, is evident from the following passages...In Micah...7:1...‘cluster’ denotes charity, or what is holy; ‘first-ripe fig’ faith, or what is right.”

AC 5117 [6]

- “In Micah...7:1...the ‘cluster to eat’ denotes the good of charity in its beginning; ‘the first-ripe,’ the truth of faith also at that time.”

AC 9223 [3]

- “...‘grain’ denotes the good of faith, and ‘wine’ the truth of faith...that the first fruits were to be given to Jehovah, signified that it is the first of the church to ascribe all the goods and truths of faith to the Lord, and not to self. To ascribe to the Lord is to know, to acknowledge, and to believe that these things are from the Lord, and nothing of them from self...everything of faith is from the Lord. The ‘first fruits’ have this signification because they were offerings and gifts, which were thanksgivings for the produce of the earth, and an acknowledgment of blessings from Jehovah...and in the internal sense, an acknowledgment of the goods and truths of faith...” *Micah 7:1-2* is given as an example of this teaching.

AR 649

- “...the Lord’s operation from the good of His love by the Divine truth of His Word...that ‘grapes’ and ‘clusters’ signify the goods and works of charity, may appear from the following passages...” *Micah 7:1-2* is cited.

AE 918 [5]

- “In Micah...7:1, 2...grief because of the vastation of good and of truth therefrom in the church is meant and described by ‘Woe is me, I am become as the gatherings of the summer, as the gleanings of the vintage.’ That there is no longer any spiritual good or natural good from which the Lord is worshiped is signified by ‘there is no cluster to eat; my soul desireth the first-ripe fruit;’ that there is no longer any spiritual or natural truth is signified by ‘the holy one has perished, and the upright one among men;’ that the truths and goods of the Word and thus of the church are destroyed by falsities and evils is signified by ‘all lie in wait for bloods.’”

AE 746 [6]

- In *Micah 7:2*, “...in the spiritual sense ‘man’ signifies any one who is in truths, then also any one who is in falsities; ‘brother’ signifies any one who is in the good of charity, and in an abstract sense that good itself, and ‘companion’ any one who is in truth from that good, and in an abstract sense that truth itself; and in the contrary sense these signify the evil opposite to the good of charity and the falsity opposite to the truth from that good. Both terms, ‘brother’ and ‘companion,’ are used because there are two things, namely, charity and faith,

that constitute the church, as there are two things that make up the life of man, will and understanding; so there are two parts that act as one..."

AC 1178 [3]

- "In Micah...7: 2, 3...what is meant by 'hunting' is...to lie in wait for the sake of self, or to call the false true, and utter perversity, and distort, and thereby to persuade."

AC 4843 [3]

- "In Micah 7: 3, 4, 6...the subject treated of is the falsity from evil in which the church is in the last time, when vastated, and in the proximate sense that in which the Jewish Church was."

AC 2242 [5]

- "In Micah 7:4...it denotes the vastation of charity..."

Derived Doctrine

"Woe is me!"

- *AE 918 [5]* explains that the words "**Woe is me**" represent the grief the Lord feels when anyone vastates, empties out, wastes, and depreciates His good and truth. How does that come about? When people inwardly hate and ignore the Lord's love and wisdom, they invite great spiritual harm to come to them. Those who desire and choose hell are void of infinite and eternal values. They have chosen lesser, self-serving, finite love and wisdom. As a loving and perfect Father, the Lord grieves over that choice. The Lord offers heaven to everyone. He actively strives with us to help us choose the higher pathway leading to salvation. But if we purposely ignore His efforts, He truly feels sorry for us. "**Woe is me**" represents a chance for everyone to reflect on the Divine grief that exists when anyone chooses to empty out the Lord's good and truth. "**Woe is me**" are words of love and sorrow.

"For I am like those who gather summer fruits..."

- *AC 679* explains that the meaning of "**gather**" "...is predicated of the things that are in [a person's] memory, where they are gathered together. And the expression further implies that both goods and truths should be gathered in [a person] before they are regenerated; for without goods and truths gathered together, through which as means the Lord may operate, a [person] can never be regenerated..."

- **“Summer fruits”** indicate what the Lord desires from everyone cooperating with His gentle providence. *AC 4180 [3]* helps us to understand the spiritual meaning of **“summer fruits”** with these words: “If a [person] is like spring or summer, [they receive] the good of love and charity, and produce fruits; but if [they are] like autumn and winter, [they do not receive nor produce the fruits of] the good of love and charity...” The Lord comes to everyone wanting to find and receive **“summer fruits.”** I almost used the words **“expecting to find the fruits of summer.”** Isn’t that what is implied in His Word? Those who keep their souls in a spring and summer state will produce fruits. What we need to watch out for is a prolonged and comfortable stay in an autumn and winter state. In *Matthew 24:20*, the Lord advises us to “Pray that your flight be not in the winter...” We see the meaning of this, don’t we? Regeneration is to produce succulent and healthy fruits. Fruits thrive best in the spring and summer state of regeneration.

“...like those who glean vintage grapes...”

- Is there a spiritual difference in the meanings of the words **“gather”** and **“glean”**? To **“gather,”** we were taught, represents the **gathering of memory-knowledges**. It is the gathering of goods and truths **in the memory**. Gleaning, on the other hand, has an important distinction. Let’s examine the definitions Webster’s 1913 dictionary offers us. First, to **“glean”** is “to gather grain that was left behind by reapers. Gleaning is to collect the scattered or fragmentary from parcels, as the grain left behind by a reaper, or grapes left after the gathering.” Lastly we are told that **“gleaning** means to collect with patient and minute labor; to pick out; to obtain.” Gleaning and “remains” seem to go together. Remains are defined in *AC 661 [2]* as “...all things of innocence, all things of charity, all things of mercy, and all things of the truth of faith, which from his infancy a man has had from the Lord, and has learned.” The Lord alone stores up our remains. Only the Lord knows where scattered remains are hidden. Love hides and protects remains. What we need to picture here is not the gathering of memory-knowledges in the mind but the gleaning by the Lord of remains **within the heart** of each person. Piece by piece, the Lord conducts a patient and minute labor of gleaning the remains we forgot, overlooked, or missed as being valuable in our spiritual assessment of harvesting. The Lord gathers and gleans the whole spiritual story of what we loved and kept active in our mind and heart.

“...there is no cluster to eat of the first-ripe fruit which my soul desires.”

- “...‘to gather the vintage’ [in the positive sense] signifies to collect for uses those things that will be serviceable to the understanding and which will give intelligence and wisdom.” (*AE 919*) Our text, however, tells of a sad assessment. **“...there is no cluster to eat”** because there was a devastation of good and truth in the church. (*AE 919 [5]*)

- How important is the gathering of the vintage? The Lord wants us to **“eat of the first-ripe fruit which my soul desires.”** The soul asks not for temporal things. The soul asks for infinite and eternal sustenance.

“The ‘faithful’ man has perished from the earth, and there is no upright among men.”

- TCR 145 teaches that a **“faithful man”** is one who has “faithful thoughts and intentions...” AE 1068 teaches that **“faithful”** signifies those “who are in love to the Lord, in love toward the neighbor, and in the faith of charity.”
- The faithful man perishing from the earth signifies, or gives us a picture, of what was going on in the church regarding the Lord, the neighbor, and charity. We are taught that the word **“earth”** signifies the church. See AE 1047. But AC 625 gives us a fuller story of what was going on spiritually in the church. When the flesh, the sensual natural person, gains control over the life and decisions of a church, there is no doubt about it: corruption will occur. “... the corporeal nature of man” will destroy all the understanding of truth. Decay and death are the end results of a corporeal mind that is out of control and out of touch with truth and love for the church, the Lord, the neighbor, and charity. With the demise of these essentials, no upright people will be found.

“They all lie in wait for blood; every man hunts his brother with a net.”

- Listen to and consider the meaning of **lying in wait**. To **“lie in wait”** signifies “to call the false true, and utter perversity and distort, and thereby to persuade.” (AC 1178) To **“lie in wait”** signifies to slyly seek to prevent any truth from coming forth and being received. See AE 730 [18]. To **“lie in wait”** signifies intent to suppress and destroy “truths and goods of the Word and thus of the church...” by a presentation of falsities and evils. And, lastly, to **“lie in wait”** signifies that the evil will “try to worm their way into a person’s inward thoughts and affection.” (AC 1983) This last reference indicates that they put on a front that looks gentle, helpful, and cordial. It is a façade because they intend no such charitable things. They do so to win over a person’s trust and confidence so that they might warp and destroy his or her understanding of the Lord’s Word.
- **“Brother”** has a wonderful positive meaning. It means feeling conjoined with the Lord in a union of the will and understanding. (AC 1594) But that is not what is being said here in the spiritual sense. Instead, it is a negative meaning, an evil that seeks disunion, discord, and separation. Hell wants the external man “to recede from celestial love...” (AC 1591)
- How will evil bring about this separation and discord of union? A **“net”** is constructed of a system of interwoven strings. Each string, in the negative sense, is a false thought or idea that is connected with another false thought. It is a whole system of false ideas intended to catch (ensnare) a prey. Of course, a **“net”** can be a positive thing as well as a negative thing. In our verse,

evil intends to hunt, gather, and trap so as to destroy good and truth. **“Hunting”** signifies the desire to teach and persuade. (AC 3309 [3]) What kind of hunting is being exposed for our edification and use? Look at the answer given to us in the verse that follows this question. They do evil with both hands!

“That they may successfully do evil with both hands...”

- To get some insight into the meaning of **“both hands,”** let’s turn to AC 10241. “...that the ‘hands’ denote the interiors is because the higher things of the body extend into the hands, and there terminate, consequently by the ‘hands’ is signified whatever pertains to man, and also his power...” Since we have both hands involved in this text, it seems to imply that the evil have totally committed their inner potential to misuse the power of higher spiritual things. Isn’t this a sad commentary on evil’s deadened interiors?

“...the prince asks for gifts, the judge seeks a bribe, and the great man utters his evil desire; so they scheme together.”

- Those who were in positions of leadership were intended, in the spiritual sense, to be prudent caregivers to the needy. In this verse, the prince ignored this use to others and sought instead to fatten his own possessions. A **“prince”** signifies one who was to care for the basics, essentials, and primary truths. (AE 236 [4]; AC 3448; AE 29) AC 6766 remarks on the signification of “‘a man, a prince,’ as being one who is in primary truths, thus who has been pre-eminently enlightened in the doctrine of truth.”
- Asking for gifts has a manifold meaning. When priests accepted **gifts** from the people, they were to accept them on behalf of the Lord. In turn, those **gifts** were to be offered up to the Lord seeking “...expiation from sins...” (AC 9938 [3]) A **gift** “consociates, for it produces love, causes friendship...and mutuality.” (AR 508) Spiritual **gift**-giving must arise from a sound philosophy, as noted in AC 9209 (Elliot’s translation): “...thus with gifts such as are beneficial to spiritual life, and that the outward aspects consist in aiding the external man...But care must nevertheless always be taken to ensure that when aid is given to the external man, it is at the same time beneficial to the internal.” This last point seems so essential in our understanding of what the Lord is teaching. The prince wanted to be honored for himself only. The prince wanted gifts for himself and not the Lord. The prince was not interested in helping the people to receive expiation of sins. The prince was not interested in sharing the gifts of love, friendship, and mutuality between the Lord and the needy. The princes were seeking gifts that ended with themselves and had no bearing on what would be beneficial to the internal of those to whom they were to offer (essential) primary truths.
- Judges are to settle, fairly and equitably, issues of conflict and confusion. But in this case, the judges were neither fair nor equitable. They were swayed by

partiality. The Lord, in *Psalms 15*, describes what it takes to “abide in His tabernacle.” “He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart; he who does not backbite...nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend...nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.”

- What makes for a **“great man”**? Is it political, educational, corporate, or military standing? What makes an intelligent person? Is it based on academic standing or number of degrees? The Writings are consistent in answering this question. A person’s greatness is determined by his or her skill in distinguishing between what is true and false. *CL 233 [7]* extols what is the mark of an intelligent man. *DP 250* reminds all that greatness is within those “who do not set their hearts on [dignities, riches as the highest forms of happiness] but on the uses or the goods in the performance of which dignities and wealth are of service as means.” A great person is someone who loves the Lord and the neighbor with a desire to render them service without thought of recompense.
- So the prince, the judge, and the great man, **“scheme”** together. What things do they scheme? *Spiritual Experiences 1257* reveals what delight schemers have in their hearts and minds constantly: They do “nothing but plan evil plots and devise deceits.”

“The best of them is like a brier; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge...”

- Anyone who has done any clearing of a neglected and wild growth area in the hopes of cultivating a garden surely has encountered briars and thorns. They are formidable foes. They cut skin, stick to clothes, and when you try to pull free, they hold fast and tear away at clothing and skin. Briars and thorns compete against other forms of vegetable life. Survival of the fittest is their motto. Is it any wonder, then, that they correspond to falsity and evils in the church? See *AE 730 [6]*. Briars and thorns stand for “falsity and evil desires.” (*AC 2831 [9]*) If a person seeks to regenerate and cultivate a useful spiritual garden, these forms of evil and falsity will not give up without a fight and inflicted pain. They are “sharper than a thorn hedge.” But they must be uprooted and eliminated. They cannot be allowed to define the borders of our regeneration and the field of our spiritual growth.

“...the day of your watchman and your punishment comes; now shall be their perplexity.”

- In *Ezekiel 3:17-19*, the Lord outlines the duties of a spiritual **“watchman.”** In brief, if the watchman alertly warns the wicked to amend their iniquitous ways and they do not heed his warning, their “blood” is not on the watchman’s hands. But if the watchman does not sound a warning and the enemy kills those under his care, their “blood” will be required of the watchman. The Lord is telling the watchmen of the church that they failed to

lovingly and prudently care for the souls of the people placed in their care. “Your punishment comes” sadly announces the results of their indifference.

- *TCR 15 [2]* provides an insight into the meaning of “**perplexity**.” When a church is not in harmony with the Lord and divides Him into three, or the church “declares that each person by himself is God...From this arises a disintegration not only of the unity of God but theology...and still further of human thought...And what can follow from this but **perplexity and incoherency in things of the church?**” (Emphasis added.) Is this what happened in the Jewish church when they allowed the worship of Baal and other gods to enter the temple dedicated to the worship and love of the Lord?

Putting It All Together

The Lord wants His church to succeed and be like a ripening and succulent summer fruit. But is that the case? “Woe is me!” The Word and *P&P* sadly report that there was no longer “any truth or good in the church: therefore the last time has come upon it.”

Just as any earthly parent longs for and works to help their children achieve and realize a productive life, so does the Lord, with an even greater longing, work for the good of His people. His Soul desires a union and conjunction with every person. To make this happen would be easy for the Lord, but then we all would pay a price. Our freedom and rationality would have to be laid aside. The Lord permits people and His church to reject and fight against His wishes. On the surface, a facade of compliance gave an appearance of uprightness. But the Lord said the faithful person perished from the earth. There were no upright among humanity. Treachery was lying in wait to snare anyone who wanted to receive and use the things of the Lord. Nets of falsity worked on strengthening the cords to easily catch the innocent and simple. Their plan was not a half-hearted attempt. Both hands worked at perfecting the effectiveness of the net-like snare. The prince, the judge, and the great man longed for gifts, bribes, and manifest chaos. They schemed and plotted to remove the things of the Lord from the hearts and minds of the people. Like briars and thorn hedges, they sought to entangle, snare, cut, hurt, and choke out any rival. Like a thorn hedge, they wanted to drain the life and growth from the vines and trees to ensure that there would be no productivity of summer fruit.

Consequently, the church lost sight of its mission. The church was to be a faithful watchman. From its tower of enlightenment, it was to cry out a warning regarding the approach of spiritual enemies. A call for repentance might have converted the people. But silence, ignorance, and contempt for the things of the Lord stole away the hearts of the vintage, the fruits of summer, and a punishment was well on its way. “Woe is me!” Now the choices of the church plunged them into a great perplexity and incoherency regarding spiritual matters. “Woe is me!” That is not what the Lord desired for His people. So He will rectify it all with His coming and establishment of a new church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 7:1-4.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Does this lesson from the Word help you see how great a compassion the Lord has for His people? The message “woe is me” is a cry of (pity) sadness that we need to hear and feel so we can rectify things in our own lives.
- Can you picture the hells stealthily lying in wait for our blood? Can you think of some illustration of the nets they use to try to snare our innocence and simplicity? I used the words to try because if we trust the Lord, they will fail in their scheming plot to snare us.
- How do you see a prince, judge, and great man scheming to mess up things in your own life? To answer this question, we have to recall the correspondences of these entities.
- Is there a watchman in our hearts and minds calling out to us regularly? Does it warn of the approach of a spiritual enemy? If not, what can be done to create an active and alert watchman to give us better reports?
- Perplexity and incoherency regarding spiritual matters are signs of the end of the vastated church. Can you picture any examples of these things happening in the past and in the present?
- If the whole church was spiritually “dead” and in great perplexity, who is left to hear and accept this prophecy? Is it a message that came to fruition with the Lord’s advent?
- How are we to view the message of *Micah*? Is its message sad and depressing? Or is it the pain that one must feel and experience, like the pain of a surgical operation in a hospital? A diseased, cancerous organ threatens one’s life, and to remove it is necessary but painful. But with rest, rehabilitation, and medication, such a procedure may give us back the activity we thought was lost. What do you think? Is this a sad or hopeful prophecy?

MICAH 7:5-6

“Do not trust in a friend; do not put your confidence in a companion; guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your bosom. For son dishonors father, daughter rises against her mother, daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man’s enemies are the men of his own household.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Then falsities and evils will combat amongst themselves, and against truths and goods.”

Derived Doctrine

“Do not trust in a friend; do not put your confidence in a companion...”

- The word **“trust”** can also mean “confidence.” Consider this teaching in *AC 4683 [2]*: “...all confidence derives its being from the life’s purpose, and that genuine confidence **is impossible except in good.**” (Emphasis added.) Add to this the following teaching from *Doctrine of Life 45*: “...he, who does not shun evils as sins, has not faith because he is in evil, and evil inwardly hates truth. Outwardly indeed he may act as a *friend* to truth, and suffer [allow] it to be in the understanding, may even love to have it there; but when what is outward is put off, as is done after death, he first casts out truth his *friend* in this world, then denies that it is truth, and finally feels aversion for it.” (Emphasis added.) Please read also *TCR 446-447*, where the topic of **“friendship of love”** is discussed. In essence, these numbers warn us of the detriment of the “friendship of love” that is “contracted with a person *without regard to their spiritual character.*” (Emphasis added.) Such a friendship is termed “harmful.” What the Lord is telling us in this verse is critically important. **1.** We are to shun evils as sins. **2.** We are not to hold truth in the external as a friend unless we look at its inner importance and love it because it is a good thing from the Lord. **3.** Anything else will fail us and will be cast aside as unimportant in the spiritual world.

“Guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your bosom.”

- *AC 2356* instructs us that “In the Word a ‘door’ signifies that which introduces or gives admission either to truth, to good, or to the Lord.” In *Revelation 3:8-20*, the Lord speaks of a door. “See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it...” And in verse 20, He says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” **What a wonderful contrast!** The Lord’s door is always open and will not be shut. No one and no thing is strong enough to shut His door. Our door is closed and must be opened to His knock. The literal sense advises us to guard the door. Be careful what is admitted. Why?
- The **“mouth”** is mentioned as what has to be guarded. Why is the **mouth** mentioned specifically? In *Matthew 15:11*, the Lord taught, “Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.” A person does not become defiled from the thoughts which pass

through the natural mind, but from set intentions, motives, and purposes which form our heart, and which come out in our thought and speech. For more insights into the “power in their mouth,” read *AR 454*. This passage illustrates what misguided power there is in those who get carried away in zeal to confirm whatever they please.

- The “**bosom**” signifies “...the appropriation of truth.” (*AC 6955*) The “**...her who lies in your bosom**” signifies our affections. Affection (her) looks for truths that can be appropriated and conjoined. I think it is important to note that the Lord is cautioning us to proceed with the appropriation of truth with great reflective prudence. He is telling us to keep our affections from running away with our decision-making. Invite the Lord in. Let Him dine with you and willingly give Him control over that which is to “lie with you” in your bosom. For that which comes forth out of the mouth can either redeem or defile us. Guard the mouth well. Sounds like good advice, especially in these days when we hear scurrilous remarks being made openly and regularly on the political and social scene.

“For son dishonors father, daughter rises against her mother...”

- This section needs a thoughtful—foundational—doctrinal explanation to help us understand why family members are singled out. As we have come to know from our studies, things mentioned in the Word have a positive and negative representation. Let’s begin with this passage from *AC 1424*: “...in the Word ‘families’ signify goods and also truths.” These goods and truths are not strangers nor are they unrelated foreigners. There is a “family” relationship between good and truth. There is a vital “family” connection between good (love) and truth (wisdom) that makes up our faith of love and the faith of love of the church. So, as we read the words “father,” “mother,” “son,” “daughter,” “daughter-in-law,” and “mother-in-law,” something of the deeper inner meaning must be seen and drawn into our spiritual application so that it will relate to our life and the life of the church.
- Why does the Word teach that a son should not dishonor or bring shame on his father? What does that mean? A “**son**” signifies truth and the doctrine of the church. (*AE 724 [3]*) A “**son**” represents love to the Lord and charity towards the neighbor. (*AE 724 [2]*) In essence, it would appear that a son honors his father by keeping faithful to the covenants of the Lord. To “**dishonor**” the father would be to bring shame on the commandments, thus dishonoring the laws of the Lord.
- A “**daughter**” rising against her “**mother**” indicates a degree of unloving rebellion and rejection. “**Mother**,” in the internal sense, signifies the church’s nurturing truths. (*AC 6306 [3]*) In another reference, *AC 9017*, we read that if any child curses “father and mother it means complete rejection of the Lord and of His kingdom by those belonging to the church, and so profanation of the church’s goodness and truth.” *AC 3962* offers us another possible insight. A “**daughter**,” in the positive sense, signifies the affection for the *general*

truths of the Word. All positive learning begins with generals. When generals are loved, a foundation is provided so that we can move on to build with deeper particulars. A **“daughter”** rising up **“against her mother”** indicates a challenge and possible rejection of the Word’s general truths so as to prevent a deeper understanding of the particular truths of the Word.

“...daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law...”

- *AC 4843* teaches that a **“daughter-in-law”** against her **“mother-in-law”** signifies “...that the affection of falsity is opposed to good.” Let’s turn this teaching around so we can state its positive meaning. A loving **“daughter-in-law”** would be the affection of truth supporting and loving good as represented by the **“mother-in-law.”**

“...a man’s enemies are the men of his own household.”

- *Matthew 10:36* quotes the Lord using this text from *Micah*. The purpose of the Lord’s lesson is to remind us that we can’t blame someone else for what we love and choose to honor as important for our lives. Our inclinations toward hereditary evil are the enemy of every household. We have a tendency to love ourselves and the world more than the Lord and the neighbor. The love of self and the world is always an enemy of the spiritual life. Shunning evils as sins against the Lord doesn’t come easily to us. Confessing our sins and making ourselves guilty for them is a hard task. We want to make excuses, rationalize, and blame others for our errors in judgment. The Lord says that we are to humbly confess our evils as sins against Him. He reminds us to supplicate Him for help. And, lastly, the Lord charges us with the necessity of beginning a new life. Plucking out the “first root of life,” the proprium, appears to be hard work. But then the Lord reminds us that it is not a hard task if we practice repentance once or twice a week. Living the life of religion is not as hard as one thinks. We need to know who the enemy is and where the enemy lives. It resides in our **“own household”** (the mind and heart). The name of the household enemy is “our inherited tendencies toward hereditary evils.” Doctrinally, the enemy has another name: “Proprium.” The proprium is a false belief that I am my own authority. It is an “as-of-self feeling” that is spiritually unhealthy and out of control.

Putting It All Together

The summary given to us in *P&P* says that this lesson from *Micah* depicts a sad ending of the Jewish church, where “falsities and evils combated among themselves and against truths and goods.” That sounds like total mayhem. I can’t imagine what it would be like to be in a conflict in which everyone around you is out for themselves. No one is a friend. Everyone is an enemy. It is survival of the fittest, a condition that

is a hopelessly lost cause for the self-centered spirit. Doesn't it sound lonely and scary? How did the church get itself into such a predicament?

Let's review how the prophecy of *Micah* sums up the spiritual condition of the church:

1. "Woe is me" expresses the Lord's sorrow for the choices the people made.
2. Chapter 6 calls the church a house of wickedness that was short-changing the people with wicked measurements. They had "wicked scales, and...a bag of deceitful weights."
3. The inhabitants of the church spoke lies. "...their tongue is deceitful..."
4. Those in the church were eating "but were not satisfied. Hunger was in your midst."
5. They sowed, but did not reap; they could not anoint themselves with oil; they made sweet wine, but did not drink the wine.
6. There was a horrible (derisive) hissing noise of reproach among the people of the church.
7. Chapter 7 of *Micah* teaches that within the church, there was no summer fruit; there were no grapes to be gleaned; the faithful people had perished—there was no one upright among humanity. Instead, everyone hunted his brother. They lay in wait for their brother's blood. They used nets to catch up their brothers.
8. Trickery and deceit were employed with both hands. Bribery, scheming, sharp briers, and thorn hedges angrily limited and tore away at the flesh of the people.
9. Their spiritual watchmen were not attentive; instead, they were in a state of spiritual perplexity.
10. They had no trust in their friends, no confidence in companions, and combativeness reigned within the family structure.

AC 8788 gives us a picture of the spiritual demise of the Jewish church thusly:

1. There are three basic things that make a church. "...there must be with the man of the church faith in the Lord, and also love to Him, and likewise toward the neighbor. These make the church."
2. "But these were not with the people which was called 'Jacob,' for it did not acknowledge the Lord, and thus was not willing to hear about faith in Him, still less about love toward Him, nor even toward the neighbor..."
3. "...for it was in the love of self and the love of the world, which loves are utterly opposed to love to the Lord and love toward the neighbor..."
4. "The Israelitish people above all others...adored external things, and made holiness, and even what is Divine, consist in [external things]..."
5. *AC 8788* teaches that when these conditions live within the heart and mind of the church, internal things are veiled over, and although the church thinks it is involved in the holiness of faith, it really is in a chaotic mixture of deadened externals.

With what is given above, can we not see, appreciatively, why the Lord needed to come and make His advent? He, and only He, was ready and prepared for the work of salvation. None of the tricks of the corrupted church will work against Him. He has prevailed and has provided the truth that will set us free from the wicked weights, the deceitful tongue, the nets, and the perplexity of the watchmen. Having said this, we must learn from the mistakes of the prior churches so we will not repeat them. Our faith in the Lord's New Church depends on our "...faith in the Lord, and also love to Him, and likewise toward the neighbor. These make the church." (AC 8788)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 7:5-6.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- How well did our study prepare us for the understanding of the spiritual sense?
- Did the description of falsities and evils fighting amongst themselves take a form that you can work with? Is there any comfort to be gained from our knowledge of this teaching?
- The description of the family feud—son against father, daughter against mother, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law—tells us of the feud of falsity against evil. Now, are we ready to consider the meaning of *Luke 12:51-53*, where the Lord says that He "has come to give division..." among family members? Is there a difference of meaning and application? The Lord says that He "...came not to give peace on earth...not at all, but rather division." Doesn't this teaching of the Lord point to the necessity of us going through the process of vastations? There needs to be an overturning, an emptying out, the desolation of falsity and evil. Once these things are poured out and cleansing occurs, we can fill the vessels of the mind and heart with good and truth. So the Lord doesn't come to give nice words. He comes to help us get rid of those things that hold and contain the love of self and the world.
- A man's enemies are of his own household. Any examples of this truth that are worth talking about?
- Did you note and think about the contrast of the "doors" the Lord mentions in the verses from *Revelation*? The Lord's doors are always open. No one can close them. Our doors are closed and must be opened for the Lord to come and sup with us.
- The prophecy of *Micah* urges us to guard the door of our mouth. Is this a worthwhile concept to reflect and speak about? Some people pride themselves on their ability to speak their minds. Is it really a virtue to always say what we think and feel? How many times have we had an outburst and then wished we would have thought more before speaking? Guarding the

door of the mouth and watching who sleeps with us in the bosom are two spiritual gems worth considering and reflecting on.

- We read and considered some hard teachings in this section. While reading about falsity and evils fighting against everything, while reading about no just men, bribes, trickery, snares, briars, thorns, etc., my heart and mind longed for some words of encouragement. Ah, don't despair, dear reader. Just wait for our next section. The beginning of hope, restoration, and redemption are just a few lines away. Isn't that the way the Lord operates? When we are at the depths (last limits) of despair and we feel inadequate and lost, the Lord comes to our rescue. In a last moment, He swoops in and takes us up in His arms and gives us hope and comfort.
- How did the Psalmist say it? "...weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." (*Psalm 30:5*) A new state, a new beginning, a new light to remove the hellish nighttime monsters of ignorance.

MICAH 7:7-9

"Therefore I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; when I fall, I will arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He pleads my case and executes justice for me. He will bring me forth to the light; I will see His righteousness."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "Then the church will come, which will be in the light of truth, from the Lord."

AR 413

- "That falsities of various kinds are signified by 'darkness,' is evident from these passages..." *Micah 7:8* is cited.

AE 526 [15]

- "In Micah...7:8...'darkness' signifies the falsities of ignorance, such as existed, and as exist at this day among the upright Gentiles. These falsities are altogether distinct from the falsities of evil, which have evil stored up in them because they are from evil, while the former have good stored up in them because they have good as an end. Those, therefore, who are in these falsities, can be instructed in truths, and they also when instructed receive truths in the heart, for the reason that good, which is in their falsities, loves truths, and also conjoins itself to truth when it is heard. It is otherwise with the falsities

of evil; these are averse to all truth and cast it off because it is truth, and thus is not in agreement with evil.”

TCR 51

- “...in the Word justice [or righteousness] is predicated of love, and judgment of wisdom, I will cite some passages to show that it is by means of these two that God’s government is carried on in the world...Elsewhere it is said that judgment and righteousness ought to be done, as in...Micah 7:9...”

Derived Doctrine

“Therefore I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.”(Emphasis added.)

- What does it mean to say “**I will look to the Lord**”? We can’t see Him with our physical eyes. *AE 585 [7]* teaches us that to “**look to the Lord**” means valuing the Lord’s good and truth so that “...everything of doctrine will be from the Lord and not from man’s self (proprium) which is the case when man is in the spiritual affection of truth, that is, when he loves truth itself because it is truth, and not because it gives him reputation and a name.”
- To “**wait**” for the Lord does not mean to sit with arms at one’s side. Instead, this waiting is more active and dynamic. *AE 514 [11]* likens waiting to “a desire to know and understand...” and notes that we wait for “food” that signifies “knowledge and intelligence; for man does not desire these from himself, but from those things that are with him from the Lord...” *AE 526 [11]* teaches us to wait for truth expectantly.
- The “**God of my salvation**” should have some kind of representation that will touch our hearts and minds. *Isaiah 61:10* speaks of the Lord clothing us “with the garments of salvation; He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” *AE 395 [12]* explains that “to clothe with the garments of salvation’ signifies to instruct and to gift with truths; and to ‘cover with the robe of righteousness’ signifies to fill with every truth from good...” **Salvation** is the continual operation of the Lord in human beings for the reformation and regeneration of all. It is the work of the Divine Providence. See *AR 798*.
- “**My God will hear me**” is a profoundly personal and loving acknowledgement of how much the Lord cares for and wills to save everyone. The Lord knows each one of us personally. “...in the supreme sense ‘to hear’ signifies providence...for the Lord’s foreseeing is the seeing from eternity to eternity...the Lord’s providing is the directing that it be so...” (*AC 3869 [3]*) Isn’t this a wonderful promise? He “**will hear me.**” There is nothing tentative about this Divine statement. Nothing distracts Him from being with us. There is nothing more pressing that would cause Him to forget a one of us. The Writings remind us that if the Lord should forget us for the least of a second, we would cease to be.

“Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; when I fall, I will arise...” (Emphasis added.)

- Is it a surprise that hell, our troublesome enemy, wants to rejoice over us? *AE 578 [4]* reminds us of hell’s “direful and cruel love of destroying all the truths and goods of the church...” Hell has a “cruel lust for destroying the goods of innocence...” When hellish spirits hear of “one of the truths of the church and perceive its goods, they are inflamed with a frenzy for destroying and extinguishing them.” Mistakes we will make. But mistakes can be overcome. If we are sincere in our quest to be with the Lord, He will pick us up and put us back on our feet. We need this kind of confidence in the Lord. Hell quakes in its boots when we trust in the Lord and have full confidence in His restorative and corrective ways. **“When I fall, I will arise...”** When I err, I will honestly confess my transgressions to the Lord so that I can be lifted up and grasp a new beginning He lovingly offers me.

“When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me.” (Emphasis added.)

- **“Darkness”** signifies ignorance and falsity. My finite darkness is ever present and remindful of my limitations. But if I supplicate the Lord for His help, He will not ignore my sincere request for enlightenment. He **“will be a light to me.”** Once again, we have a promise from the Lord that is in the active case and not passive/maybe case.

“I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him...” (Emphasis added.)

- Does the Lord have indignation? Listen to how *AC 5798 [3]* answers this question. The Word describes the Lord as having “indignation, anger, and wrath...” But with the Lord, “...it is quite the contrary, namely that the man who is in evil is indignant, angry, and wroth, and sets himself in opposition to good and truth.” This verse is a prayerful confession. **“I have sinned against the Lord. I felt indignation, and the Lord mercifully put up with me. In spite of my momentary anger and wrath, He worked to pull me out of the pit I had fallen into.”**

“Until He pleads my case and executes justice for me. He will bring me forth to the light; I will see His righteousness.” (Emphasis added.)

- Our life is a confusing and complicated mixture of harmony and discord. Humility favors and fosters our harmony. Self-love favors and fosters discord. Reformation and regeneration are works dedicated to ridding ourselves of discord. The second law of Divine Providence says that if we work to resist and remove evils as sins in our externals, the Lord will go inward and remove internal connecting links of discord while also helping us to disconnect

discord in our externals. The Lord is pleading the case of the humble. He does execute justice for those who value humility.

- Please note how many times the word “**will**” is used in verses 7 to 9. Do you count eight? Why call attention to this word “**will**”? Well, for one thing, it is a powerfully positive word. Secondly, it is a word of command. More accurately, it is a word of Divine command. The Lord, when we give Him charge over our lives, **will** put into place certain dynamics that **will** reshape and rebuild values and doctrinal concepts that had not yet been forged into a practical eternal reality. Prior to the “**will**,” there were perhaps “airy,” “wispy,” “vague” doctrinal statements we repeated in monotone voices. But when the Lord gets hold of them and activates the “**wills**” in our hearts and minds, they become “positive commands” to fight against the hells. Let’s say together all eight “**wills**”:

1. “**I will look** to the Lord”
2. “**I will wait** for the God of my salvation”
3. “My **God will hear** me”
4. “**I will arise**”
5. “The **Lord will be a light** to me”
6. “**I will bear** the indignation of the Lord”
7. “He **will bring me forth** to the light”
8. “**I will see** His righteousness.”

Do you feel the positive assurance of the Lord’s total (will) Divine command? Hell does, and they are in great trepidation that we will believe and follow the Lord and allow Him to form the inner core of our spiritual life.

Putting It All Together

What has been written above is offered as a “putting it all together” summary. But in closing, please note that our *P&P* lesson also contains the important theme of the word “will.” “Then **the church will come, which will be in the light of truth, from the Lord.**” With this *P&P* summation, one is inspired to say, “Amen—so may it ever be, O Lord!”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 7:7-9.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Were you inspired by the sequence of the eight “command wills” used in the text? If you add our lesson from *P&P*, we have ten in all to consider.
- How badly do you think the hells are shaken with this positive report in *Micah*?

- Are we inspired to give up using the words “I can’t”? We know how hard it is to teach ourselves or someone else if they don’t try because they want to say “I can’t do it.”
- Did you ever deal with a child who was convinced they couldn’t do something?
- What technique(s) did you use to swing the child around to a positive learning attitude?
- Did some of those lessons work for you as well?

MICAH 7:10

“Then she who is my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me, ‘Where is the Lord your God?’ My eyes will see her; now she will be trampled down like mud in the streets.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “The old church will be destroyed.”

AR 501

- “That ‘streets’ signify truths or falsities of doctrine, may be seen from the following passages...” *Micah 7:10* is cited as one example.

AE 632 [10]

- “...‘to trample down’...signifies to destroy by means of the corporeal-sensual all truths of heaven and the church...” *Micah 7:10* is cited as one example.

AE 652 [29]

- “As ‘street’ signifies the truth of doctrine leading, and in the contrary sense falsity, ‘the clay of the streets,’ ‘the mire,’ and ‘dung’ signify the falsity of the love of evil, in the following passages...” *Micah 7:10* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

“Then she who is my enemy will see...” (Emphasis added.)

- The “**she**” here is the spiritually dying Jewish church. “**She**” was dying, but “**she**” did not know or believe it. Her streets, the falsity of her doctrines, were mired in the “mud” of love of self, hence the term “my enemy.” The Lord announces that His enemy will see. See what? Does the Jewish church really

see that it defiled the covenants of the Lord? In many quarters of the religious world, the Jewish church is still being heralded as the Lord's favored people. To make their views square up with their beliefs, they render this verse by employing "two women." One (she) woman is Israel, and the other (she) woman is Israel's enemy. In the end, they reason, Israel will be redeemed and rewarded with its rightful status as a favored church and nation. The other "she" will feel the wrath of the Lord for oppressing His people.

- Does "she" believe that the Lord has made His advent and thus supplanted her? The question is when will "she" see? A second question is when will the world see that the Israelite church is dead and has been replaced by His New Church?

"And shame will cover her who said to me, 'Where is the Lord your God?' My eyes will see her; now she will be trampled down like mud in the street." (Emphasis added.)

- *AE 652 [13]* explains "**shame**" as signifying "that there were as many kinds of worship as there were false doctrines, 'streets'...signify the falsities of doctrine." *AE 994* explains that "**shame**" signifies "filthy loves." Indeed, the Old Testament testifies that Israel played the harlot regarding worship. She adopted and incorporated in her temple of worship the many gods of the surrounding peoples. Baal was one of Israel's favorite gods, and the Lord challenged them to leave such a shameful worship. How long will you limp between Baal and God? To say that "her" shame was complete is not a stretch. The Israelites transgressed the ways of the Lord and sought out many kinds of worship; hence, they were confused and followed many false doctrines.
- To "**cover**" has both a positive and negative signification. In the positive sense, to "**cover**" represents protecting one's soul with the truths of the Lord. In the negative sense, to "**cover**" signifies to guard or hide evils with falsity. See *AE 283 [6]*.
- *Psalm 14:1* tells us that "The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." (Emphasis added.) Is this what was in the heart of the people of the dead church? Had they wandered off so far that they knew not nor loved the Lord any more? In many ways, Israel lost a love for Him. And when the light of love goes out, it is almost impossible to love what you can no longer see or understand. *Psalm 14* continues, "They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good."
- "**My eyes will see her...**" *Mark 4:22* and *Luke 8:17* remind us that "...nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light." *Isaiah 29:15* says, "Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the Lord. And their works are in the dark; they say, 'Who sees us?' and 'Who knows us?'" The Lord answers solidly, "I do." To the Lord, night and day are alike. He sees all and knows all of our works.
- "**Now she will be trampled down...**" *AE 632 [3]* explains that "**trampled down**" signifies "the destruction of the church in respect to doctrine."

- **“Like mud in the streets...”** *AE 652 [29]* notes that “...in the spiritual world... in the cities there in which falsities from evil reign, the streets appear full of dung, mire and clay.”

Putting It All Together

1. What does it take for a church to become an enemy of the Lord?
 2. What brings shame to a church?
 3. How is a church “covered”? What kind of coverings will it employ?
 4. And lastly, how is a church trampled down like mud in the streets?
- A healthy church is characterized by its sincerity, vitality, and dedication to “the good of love and the truth of faith...” A church is destroyed “...by falsities from self intelligence...” (*AE 304 [4]*) The vaunting of “man’s own intelligence” causes a church to “see falsity instead of truth...” (*AE 376 [31]*) A church is “a noble church if it is in genuine truths, an ignoble church if it is not in genuine truths, and a church destroyed if it is in falsified truths...” (*Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 77*) When a church chooses to become an ignoble church, it automatically hates the Lord and sees Him as an enemy.
 - When a church turns its back on the Lord, it brings **shame** into its court of worship. Instead of offering clean things, a self-centered church offers inferior and tainted qualities of the heart and mind.
 - *AR 421* reminds us that “...the confirmation of falsity is the denial of truth; therefore when they [a church] hear any spiritual truth, which is a truth of the Word serviceable to those who are of the church for doctrine and life, they keep their minds fixed in the falsities” and “**they either veil over the truth...or reject them as a mere sound, or yawn at it and avert themselves;** and this in the degree in which they are in the pride of their own erudition; *for pride glues falsities together...* Therefore the **Word is hidden from them**, as a book sealed with seven seals.” (Emphasis added.)
 - The unhealthy church can no longer defiantly stand in the presence of the Lord. An ignoble church with its vaunted doctrines will become like mud. Its falsified truths will end. The Lord’s truth will outlast self-intelligence. Like those of a person who has walked in muddy streets, the shoes, clothes, and health of such a church are soiled by the mire of uselessness. The glue of falsity cannot hold the vaunted self-intelligence together. The reign of a false church is over.

P&P sums up this section with the words: “The old church will be destroyed.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 7:10.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- How strongly do you (we) want to be a friend of the Lord's? If we want to be a true friend of the Lord, what care and uses must we take seriously?
- A healthy church is dedicated to the good of love and the truth of faith. What do these words mean? "Good of love" is a phrase used to represent the highest qualities of love, a kind of celestial love that honors and respects the conjugal principles of uniting the Lord's love and wisdom. The truth of faith honors and respects loving and following truth for truth's sake. No games. No shams. No twisting of the Word so as to get our own way. Let the Word be the Word with our pledge and loyalty to obey.
- If we do anything that brings shame to our church, do we have a plan or a way to bring about reparations? We need to look at the Lord with a clear conscience and with open, child-like spontaneity and innocence.
- The passage we read from *AR 421* urges us to get rid of self pride. The vaunting of our own intelligence is harmful. Pride glues falsities together. Humbleness and honesty unseal the glue of falsity. Could we pray that the Lord will have His way with us? We don't want to cover up things. The Lord knows everything. Why not say that, instead of pretending that the darkness has covered up our indiscretions?
- A dead church will be destroyed. A dead church will have its falsities trampled down like mud in the streets. Love and wisdom will win out. We need to pledge our allegiance to the ways of the Lord's New Church. Are we up for such a "noble" commitment?

MICAH 7:11-12

"In that day when your walls are to be built, in that day the decree shall go far and wide. In that day they shall come to you from Assyria and the fortified cities, from the fortress to the river [Euphrates], from sea to sea, and mountain to mountain."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "A new church will be established, gathered from every nation..."

AC 120

- "As by 'Egypt,' so also by 'Euphrates,' are signified memory-knowledges, and also the sensuous things from which these knowledges come. This is evident from the Word in the Prophets, as in Micah...7:10-12...So did the prophets speak concerning the coming of the Lord who should regenerate man so that he might become like the celestial man."

AC 1186 [7]

- "...where Asshur is named, it signifies the rational, either true or false, as in... Micah 7:12..."

AC 9341 [2]

- "...the signification of 'the Euphrates,' which is here 'the river,' as being the good and truth of the rational...as in...like manner in Micah 7:12..."

AR 444

- "By 'Euphrates' are signified the interiors of man's mind bordering upon the spiritual things of his church...That the Euphrates was a boundary, see... Micah 7:12..."

AR 503

- In the Word, "Egypt...is the natural [man], Assyria is the rational, and Israel is the spiritual; these three make the man of the church...Thence, also, the land of Canaan, by which the church is signified, is described as to its extent..." *Micah 7:12* is cited.

AE 569 [13]

- "In Micah...7:12...This describes the establishment of the church by the Lord among the Gentiles, 'this day' signifying the Lord's coming; the extension of the church among them from one limit to the other is signified by 'they shall come from Assyria to the cities of Egypt and from Egypt to the river;' the extension of truth from one limit to the other is signified by 'from sea to sea,' and the extension of good by 'from mountain to mountain.'" (Emphasis added.)

AE 654 [11]

- "In Micah...7:12...This is said of the establishment of the church by the Lord with the Gentiles, and these words describe the extension of that church from one end to the other. One end of the land of Canaan was the river Euphrates and the other was the river of Egypt. The extension of truth from one end to the other is signified by 'from sea to sea,' and the extension of good from one end to the other by 'from mountain to mountain.'" (Emphasis added.)

Derived Doctrine

"In the day when your walls are to be built..."

- **"In the day"** or "in this day" is an expression used in the Word to signify "the Lord's coming." See *AE 569 [13]*. Thus, we are learning what will happen following the death of a corrupted church. The Lord will not abandon His people. He will initiate and extend a new beginning with His advent among a faithful remnant. Without His corrective initiatives, it would have been all over, spiritually, for the church and humankind.
- The prophecy about building new walls signifies that the Lord will put into place spiritual **"walls."** These new walls denote giving "the truths of faith which defend...'walls' denote the truths of faith that protect the church..." (*AC 9863, emphasis added.*)
- To **"build the walls"** signifies "to restore the church by leading it into the good of love and by instructing it in the truths of doctrine." (*AE 391 [17]*)

"In that day the decree shall go far and wide..."

- With the advent of the Lord, "in that day," a Divine decree will be sent forth. A **"decree,"** or statute, signifies the establishment of "a law of order..." See *AC 10248*. Doesn't that make sense? With the establishment of a new church, a "law of order" must go forth from the Lord "far and wide" so that all will hear and obey and will be drawn to the laws of the Lord.

"In that day they shall come to you..."

- **"In that day"** signifies the advent of the Lord. **"They,"** the Gentiles, shall come inquiringly to the Lord's new church. Gentiles are those who "are in the good of life and that receive truths and are thus in the conjunction of good and truth, and in combat against evils and falsities..." (*AE 447 [5]*)

*"...**from** Assyria and the fortified cities, **from** the fortress to the river..." (Emphasis added.)*

- *AE 1029 [13]* gives an interesting contrast to consider and to use in our effort to understand the meaning of this passage. Assyria signifies the rational mind. What kind of rational? Is it a positive or a negative one? "...in the New Church there shall spring up no reasonings from falsities against truths and goods." Therefore, it is important to note that "they" shall **come from** Assyria. Can we assume that this means that the corrupted rational (Assyria) that had used false reasonings must be left behind? Follow this "derived" application one step further with this quote from *AE 911 [14]*: "...the 'fortified cities in which they trust' signify doctrinals from self-intelligence..." When the Lord makes His advent and forms (calls forth) a new church, those who heed the

call must not carry with them former “reasonings” from falsities. There will be no doctrinal carry-overs from Assyria based on self-intelligence. They must be left behind. Those called to the new church must come out of the Assyrian state and its fortified falsities.

- In *AC 8581 [2]*, using John Elliot’s translation, we get an interesting view of the word **“fortress.”** “The reason why a ‘rock’ means the Lord in respect of the truth of faith is that ‘a rock’ is also used to mean **a fortress** that withstands falsities. The **actual fortress** is the truth of faith, for this is what the battle against both falsities and evils is waged from.” (Emphasis added.)
- “...from the fortress to the river...” We have some work to do on identifying what the spiritual sense intends us to understand. Let’s begin with what we are given in the literal sense of our text: **“In the day when your walls are to be built...”** This is a call to rebuild an effective defense system against falsity. Walls protect. Walls keep out intruders and “withholds falsities on all sides.” See *AC 8206*. A **“fortress”** signifies acquiring truths from the Lord that will help us withstand and fight against falsities and evils. The Writings tell us that the river mentioned here has a name: **Euphrates**. See *AC 120*. The **“Euphrates”** signifies memory-knowledges and the good and truth of the rational. See *AC 9341 [2]*. “The Euphrates...signifies the interiors of man’s mind bordering upon spiritual things of his church...” (*AR 444 [2]*) Together, these things, when given to the Lord, are powerful sources of regeneration. They are the means by which our spiritual recovery occurs: the “Lord who should regenerate man so that he might become like the celestial man.” (*AC 120*)
- In summary, what we have here is a promise—a covenant—offered by the Lord. If we spiritually come out of Assyria (self-intelligence and its false reasoning), He will become our “rock,” and He will work a work that will restore, renew, and revitalize our spiritual priorities and values. “In the day when your walls are to be built...” (*Micah 7:11*), the Lord will lead us **to the Euphrates “river.”** What is the meaning of the word **“river”**? A **“river”** means a plan of the Lord’s that we might become like celestial people. A celestial person is one who loves, obeys, and intuitively listens to the voice and governance of the Lord’s order. Can you quietly listen to your soul say “Amen” to this promised covenant? “So may it ever be” is a suggested interpretation of the meaning of the word “Amen.”

“...from sea to sea, and mountain to mountain.”

- These words describe the extension of truth from one limit to the other and the extension of good from one limit to the other. In simpler terms, the Lord is promising us the extension of our spiritual borders. We will grow in our knowledge of truth and the extension of our love. As we grow, Hell shrinks. As we grow, our borders are enlarged.

Putting It All Together

Whenever we work on solving a problem, we must always take the time and care to get our facts straight. Jumping to conclusions or listening to distorted “facts” hinders and prevents our resolving issues. Hell offers us information that is totally “bogus.” Hell wants to convince us that we are hopelessly weak and beyond help. Obviously, hellish spirits lie to us to keep us from hearing and accepting the healing truths from the Lord. Hell knows that if we pursue rebuilding the walls of our spiritual church, we will successfully wall out falsities on all sides. Hell doesn’t want to relinquish its grip on and domination of our hearts and minds. Anyone who listens to and obeys the Lord will begin to alter and repair spiritual mistakes. The first significant repair begins with reliance on the Lord and less dependence on the proprium and self-intelligence. Trusting the Lord and His Word will be the rock that will become our fortress. Trusting and relying on the Lord will bring us to the Euphrates River of great potential. When we give ourselves over to the Lord, He is able to enrich the contents that feed our soul. He will endeavor to enliven our innocence. His goal is to raise us progressively to a higher level. How do we know this is so? He reports to us in the prophecy of *Micah* that He desires to give us the blessings of the celestial level. But we have to invite and desire this to happen; we have to cooperate with Him.

When the Lord walked among us, He taught us, “You have heard it said of old...but I say unto you...” Could He have been any clearer about the errors and falsity of self-intelligence and its misguided traditional ways? He told us, “And you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.” (*John 8:32*)

We have a blueprint in the prophecy of *Micah*: build new walls; walk away from Assyria; leave behind Assyrian-like falsity; focus on the rock, the fortress, the river of freedom. Our borders—our potential—will grow and will be fruitful. This doesn’t sound like hopelessness. This is solid information we need to tenaciously hold to so we will allow the Lord to push out of our lives the lies, deceit, and decrepit conditions of Hell.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 7:11-12.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Did this reflective passage help and encourage you to extend your borders of faith? Did it inspire you to focus on a realistic plan to rebuild the walls of your spiritual church? Let’s start out with a look at the use and meaning of walls.
- Walls are necessary things. They protect and provide us with a sense of security. In the spiritual sense, we are told walls protect us from falsity on all sides. Each truth, each stone, each bonding of the walls of truth is essential. Can you picture the walls being rebuilt as you read and have affection for the Word?

- The Word always intends to give us the facts. It is a source of straight talk if we allow the Lord to open the spiritual sense. More than ever, we need to daily read and reflect on the Word. Can you mention some of the things that are said that frustrate and retard our reading of the Word? In order to see, and meet, the enemy, we have to name them. In doing so, we can mobilize the fighting and supportive truths of the Lord that will help set us free.
- How does a false self-intelligence get started? Does it start out with an experience in which we seemed to work out some apparent and necessary facts? Hell, when it tempted the Lord, tried to defeat Him by quoting scriptures. They actually took the time to find a reference that seemed easy to twist and mold to their end. The Lord saw behind their intent and told “Satan” to get behind Him. Is this a good model for us to follow as we do battle with such mental manipulation of truth? Getting the facts—getting the Divine perspective—is crucial. Is there any other way of doing this apart from reading and loving the Word of the Lord?
- One last thought: how hard is it to get out of the Assyrian state? Get away from it! Look to the rock and the fortress! Find the river! These are the words and advice of the Lord. In effect, your reading and studying of *Micah* with this study guide could be a beginning as you work toward these goals. The Word first, reflection and application second, will open the deep resources of the scriptures.

MICAH 7:13

“Yet the land shall be desolate because of those who dwell in it, and for the fruit of their deeds.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “...when the old has been destroyed.”

AC 348

- “In Micah...7:13...That such ‘fruit’ is no fruit, or that the ‘work’ is dead, and that both fruit and root perish...”

AC 3934 [4]

- “...he who makes profession of the good of faith, and denies works, and still more if he rejects them, is devoid of faith, and yet more of charity. Such being the nature of the works of charity and faith, and as man is never in charity and faith unless he is in works, for this reason ‘works’ are so frequently

mentioned in the Word; as may appear from the following passages..." *Micah 7:13* is cited.

Coronis 56

- "From all these passages [*Micah 7:13* and *7:16* are mentioned among others.] it may be seen what 'vastation' and 'desolation' are; and that it is not a vastation and desolation of the peoples of a land, and of cities, but of the goods and truths of the church, whence there is nothing but evils and falsities."

Derived Doctrine

"Yet the land shall be desolate..."

- *AE 304 [10]* teaches us that "**land**" signifies all things of the church. So we must think of the state of a church and not a physical place, country, or state. The word "**desolate**" signifies the lack of spiritual truth and good which are of faith and charity. See *AE 650 [38]*. Pulling these teachings together, we get a picture of the spiritually dying state of the church of Israel. The church was sadly empty of faith and charity. One gets the picture of a church going through the motions with emptiness and little warmth.

"...because of those who dwell in it..."

- Whose fault was it that faith and charity were desolate in the church? It was not the Lord's fault. Those who dwell, or live, within the church are to blame for its empty or desolate state.

"...and for the fruit of their deeds."

- "**Fruit**" signifies, in the positive sense, the "good of life." (*AE 403 [4]*) In the negative sense, the destruction or devouring of "**fruit**" "signifies the consumption of good..." (*AE 727 [3]*) And what will consume the fruit of a church? The deeds or actions within the person or church.

Putting It All Together

The Lord wants the best for His church. He has every intention and aspiration for a church to succeed. A church is called to have an active faith and life of charity. A church is to enjoy the fruit of accomplishment or success as its reward. But that is not what the people within the church were achieving, nor was it something they longed for. Consequently, their faith, their charity, and their works shriveled up. The Lord had to remind them that it was their actions that caused this desolation. They were spiritually dying on the vine.

This message had to be said. Excuses would not hold up in the light of the Divine Love and Wisdom. Did the church want to hear these words? Would they change their ways? Once again, the word comes back: "...the old has been destroyed."(P&P)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 7:13.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Have you ever read *I Corinthians 13:1-10*? These verses make a poignant statement about the importance of love. Great things might be done, thought, or preached, but without love, they all are for naught. Such is the case regarding the church in our lesson. Their deeds lacked love and sincerity. Death came to them.
- As always, we need to do some spiritual inventory. Do we do the works of faith with charity attached? Do we shun evils as sins against God?
- If we don't do these things and we fail (die as a church), whose fault is it? Failure and death are certainly not what the Lord wants for His church. They come because we fail to obey His Word.

MICAH 7:14-15

"Shepherd Your people with Your staff, the flock of your heritage, who dwell solitarily in a woodland, in the midst of Carmel; let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in days of old. As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "It will be taught and led."

AC 4117 [3]

- "Because Gilead was a boundary, it signified in the spiritual sense the first good, which is that of the senses of the body; for it is the good or the pleasure of these into which the man who is being regenerated is first of all initiated. In this sense is 'Gilead' taken in the Prophets, as in...Micah 7:14..."

AC 5201 [4-6]

- “The reason why ‘feeding’ is spoken of in the Word from its signification, is that when instruction or doctrine from the Word is spoken of in heaven, then in the world of spirits, where spiritual things appear naturally, there are represented to the sight meadows green with grass, herbage, and flowers, with flocks therein; and this with all variety, according to what is being said in heaven about instruction and doctrine...” *Micah 7:14* is cited in subsection 6.

AC 9011 [7]

- “Who does not see that in these passages by ‘a forest’ is not meant a forest, and by ‘Lebanon’ and ‘Carmel’ which are ‘forests’ are not meant Lebanon and Carmel, but something of the church? Yet what of the church is meant has been hitherto hidden, because the internal sense lies hidden...when yet this knowledge existed among the ancients in Chaldea, in Assyria, in Egypt, in Arabia, and thence in Greece, in whose books, emblems, and hieroglyphics such things are still to be met with. But the reason why such knowledge has perished, is that there is no faith that the spiritual is anything.” *Micah 7:14* is one source quoted.

AR 383

- “‘To feed’ is to teach, because the church, in the Word, is called ‘a flock’ and the men of the church are called ‘sheep’ and ‘lambs,’ hence ‘to feed’ signifies to teach, and ‘the shepherd’ one that teaches; and this in many places, as... *Micah 7:14*...”

AR 485

- “‘A staff’ signifies power, because wood, of which staffs were made among the ancient people, signifies good...it is manifest that by ‘a staff’ power is signified...” *Micah 7:14* is but one of the many passages cited.

AE 482 [3]

- “...‘to feed’ signifies to instruct, ‘pastures’ instruction, and ‘shepherd’ an instructor, a few passages only in which ‘feeding’ and ‘pasture’ are mentioned shall be quoted...” *Micah 7:14* is among those cited.

AE 727 [6]

- “In *Micah*...7:14...‘Feed Thy people with Thy rod’ signifies the instruction of those who are of the church in Divine truths from the Word; ‘to feed’

signifying to instruct; 'people' meaning those who are of the church in truths, and 'rod' where the Word is because it is Divine truth. 'The flock of heritage' signifies those of the church who are in spiritual things of the Word, which are the truths of its internal sense; 'they shall feed in Bashan and Gilead' signifies instruction in the goods of the church and in its truths from the natural sense of the Word."

Derived Doctrine

"Shepherd Your people with Your staff..."

- These words form a prayerful petition—a request directed to the Lord—to instruct the few but faithful with powerful truth. Can we rightfully sense a degree of urgency in this prayer? A staff is an instrument used by a shepherd to guide, prod, to offer stability, and to defend. Therefore, the request for powerful instruction makes sense in light of the dying Jewish church. Restoration and revitalization of the church were paramount.

"...the flock of Your heritage..."

- Who or what is the **"heritage"** of the Lord's flock? *AC 5897 [2]* gives us a possible answer to this question. It is more than a pocket or remnant of protected people who remained faithful to the Lord and His Word. More importantly, "remains" or "remnant" in the spiritual sense **"signify the goods and truths stored up in the interior man by the Lord..."** (Emphasis added.) So the prayerful request is to awaken and strengthen the goods and truths in the **"heritage"** stored up by the Lord in the internal being.

"...who dwell solitarily in woodland..."

- Consider this teaching about the meaning of **"dwell alone"** (solitarily), found in *AC 139*: "In ancient times those were said to 'dwell alone' who were under the Lord's guidance as celestial men, because such were no longer infested by evils, or evil spirits. This was represented in the Jewish Church also by their dwelling alone when they had driven out the nations. On this account it is sometimes said of the Lord's church, in the Word, that she is 'alone,'..."
- The word **"woodland"** has a most interesting usage in the Writings. Chadwick's translation of *TCR 259* says that "the Word is like a garden, which may be called the heavenly paradise...and the garden is **surrounded by woodland trees**. A person who through doctrine has possession of Divine truths is **in the middle of this garden**, where the *trees of life* are and in fact he enjoys the...delights. A person whose knowledge of truths **is not from doctrine**, but only drawn from the literal sense **is on the circumference** and sees only the **woodland**. But one who has been taught a false religion, and has

convinced himself of that falsity, is not even in the wood, but **outside** it in a sandy plain, where there is not even grass." (Emphasis added)

"In the midst of Carmel..."

- It is of great importance that we begin our study by asking the question why Carmel (Mount Carmel) is mentioned in Micah's prophecy. Mount Carmel is in the Galilean area. It begins on the Mediterranean Sea and runs some 12 miles inland. Mount Carmel's height is approximately 1800 feet. The mountain splits this section of Israel in half, making parts of Carmel somewhat "solitary" with a lush woodland and vineyards. The name "Carmel" in Hebrew means "vineyard of God."
- Carmel was subject to many important spiritual events. Perhaps the most dramatic and memorable occurrence was Elijah's "stand-down" challenge issued to the priests and prophets of Baal. It was on Mount Carmel that the people of the church of Israel were challenged by the Lord when He asked them, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him."
- The Lord told Elijah to call the false priests to Mount Carmel. This signifies lifting one's mind into a state of illumination in which the worship of the Lord might be the source and inspiration of a fruitful life. See *AE 601 [15]*: "The head of Carmel' signifies the truths of the church, because in Carmel there were vineyards, and 'wine' signifies the truth of the church." *AE 730 [7]* teaches that "'Carmel' signifies the spiritual church, which is in truths from good." *AC 9011 [6]* explains for us that "Carmel signifies the church as to the knowledges of good."
- Are we beginning to get a picture of why Carmel is so significant to our understanding of the spiritual sense? Please go back to the quote from *TCR259* regarding the meaning of "woodland." Do we, once again, hear the Lord's challenge on top of Mount Carmel? Do you want to be in the midst of His woodland and vineyard? Do you want to be on the edge, or do you want to be outside? The Lord and His new church are in the midst of His woodland. Will we try to limp between two opinions? No way! The Lord is to be the center. Baal is to be on the outside in a "sandy place where there is not even grass." (*TCR 259*)

"Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old."

- *AE 727 [6]* explains that to "...feed in Bashan and Gilead signifies instruction in the goods of the church and in its truths from the natural sense of the Word."
- *AE 163 [8]* says that "...by 'Bashan' the external of the church, thus the natural, was signified, for Bashan was outside the land of Canaan where the church was."

- *AE 654 [44]* explains that “Gilead signifies reasoning from the sense of the letter of the Word...since Gilead was not far from the Euphrates, and wax, balm, and myrrh were from it...” *AC 4739* says that “...Gilead’ signifies those who are in simple good, such as the Gentiles are in.” *AE 434 [17]* notes that “Gilead signifies the natural man...”
- Surprisingly, the words “**as in the days of old**” are used by the Prophets Amos, Isaiah, Malachi, and Micah, and in Matthew’s advent message. *AC 2906 [6]* explains that “**the days of old**” stands for the days or state of “the Most Ancient Church.” What is one significant thing about the Most Ancient Church? The people of that Church saw and spoke with the Lord directly. He walked among them. To the Most Ancients, He was in the form of the Divine Human. To them, the Lord was real, and they had full trust and confidence in His guidance and attentiveness. In contrast, the later churches worshipped an “invisible” Lord. They knew Him not, and doubts and confusion over doctrinal things spawned debates and clouded thinking. This invisible concept of God contributed significantly to Israel’s “limping” between the Lord and other gods like Baal. This call for a return to the “**days of old**” is not a poetical moment of reminiscence about the good old days. This is a call to return to the “now it is permitted to enter understandingly into the mysteries of faith.” (*TCR 508 [3]*) The New Church will once again “see” the Lord in His Divine Human. That is a “mission statement” of the New Church. The doctrines of the New Church herald the news that what had become invisible (the Lord) will become visible again.

“As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders.”

- Israel’s time in the land of Egypt was a long and hard state of bondage. It would be overwhelming to summarize in this section all of the wonders the Lord performed for Israel when they came out of Egypt. Think of just a few wonders, beginning with the dividing of the Red Sea, then the manna and quail for 40 years, the pillar of fire at night and the shade of the clouds during the day, clothes and sandals that did not wear out for 40 years, water out of a rock, the sun standing still so that they could defeat an enemy, the gift of the ten commandments, the Ark of the Covenant, the collapse of the walls of Jericho, etc., etc.
- What wonders can we point to as we, too, come out of our state of bondage to Egypt? If we take some quiet time to reflect, I’m sure we will see the wonders of the Lord.

Putting It All Together

“It [the new church] will be taught and led.” (*P&P*)

The Lord will shepherd (teach) His flock. He will feed them with His essential and vital good and truth. His shepherd’s staff will guide, prod, and support them in their learning process. There is a “solitary” protected garden place that is a heavenly

woodland. The “flock” will be surrounded by the “vineyard of God.” It is a verdant woodland. Hell and its legion of detractors will be kept outside His solitary garden in a sandy, barren place that has no grass or vegetation.

The Lord’s re-education of the church will begin with the basics of the literal sense of the Word, called the Bashan and Gilead state. The goal, however, is to gradually move the education of the flock to “the days of old.” Like the people of the Most Ancient Church, His flock will come to see and lovingly obey the ways of the Lord from an inner perception. In this state of innocence, the Divine Human will walk among the flock. He will speak to them of heavenly things that will make Him visible in everything that is within and surrounding them in His woodland.

The Pharisees asked the Lord to rebuke and silence the enthusiasm of His disciples. He replied to them that should the disciples be silenced, “the stones would immediately cry out” and testify of Him. (*Luke 19:40*) In other words, the correspondential order of the world has the “days of old” story indelibly imprinted in everything to tell those who have a pure heart, mind, and eyes a true celestial story. For them, the Divine Human will come alive and will be thrillingly visible.

The Lord promises He will show us magnificent wonders. Egypt seeks to keep us in a state of bondage. Our schedules are demanding and restrictive, and we don’t always make time to learn about the Lord. If we allow ourselves to be spiritually rescued from this bind, the wonders will unfold, and they will be as countless as in the “days of old.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 7:14-15.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- One of the things I love about doing this study is the ongoing process of discovery. In my experience, passages and words that seemed confusing and remote come clear with a sense of awesome enlightenment once the spiritual sense is unfolded. A deep sense of peace comes in and offers me comfort and assurance. Is this happening to you as well? I surely hope so, and I would ask that you share these things with others so that we (together) can grow in our daily reading and meditating on the Word.
- This section reminds me of *Psalms 23*. “The Lord is my shepherd...thy rod and staff, they comfort me...” “Shepherd your people with Your staff...” Are there any other words in the two lessons that tie together for you?
- Carmel was a significant place for the prophets Elijah and Elisha. Can you recall other miracles that happened in this protected and “solitary” place?
- The *TCR 259* passage was significant and picturesque. Seeing the verdant garden, the woodland, and the vineyard as the “Lord’s vineyard” helped me. The three choices of positioning, in, near, and outside, were clear. There also

was a call from the “Shepherd” to choose the center. Were there any other points in that quote that you found usable for your reflection time?

- Returning to the days of old—how did that challenge you in your thinking about the return to the Most Ancient Church concepts? Was seeing the Lord in His Divine Human one of the points you picked? When we study the five churches, we notice that one of the notable changes that occurred to each church was “seeing” the visible God. Sadly, for the Jewish church, the Lord became invisible. He became a name, a being to be feared, but not one to be kept as a center of worship. Happily, the New Church will see Him as a Divine Human.
- Coming out of Egypt—how many studies, sermons, and meditations on this topic have you heard and thought about? Can you attest to the many wonders that the Lord has performed for us in providing an escape from this state of spiritual bondage?

MICAH 7:16-17

“The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; they shall put their hand over their mouth; their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent; they shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth. They shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of You.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Infernal things will be removed from it.”

AC 249

- “That to ‘eat dust all the days of its life’ signifies that their sensuous part became such that it could not live from anything except that which is of the body and the earth, that is to say, that it became infernal, is evident also from the signification of ‘dust’ in the Word; as in Micah...7:14, 16, 17...The ‘days of eternity,’ means the Most Ancient Church; the ‘nations,’ those who trust in their Own, of whom it is predicated that ‘they shall lick the dust like a serpent.’”

AC 7418 [4]

- “By the ‘dust’...is signified what is damned, of which we read...in the following passages...” *Micah 7:14, 16, 17* are cited.

AR 455

- “Noxious serpents, which are of many kinds, signify the sensual things that depend on the evil affections which constitute the interiors of the mind with those who are insane from the falsities of evil; and harmless serpents signify the sensual things that are dependent on the good affections, which constitute the interiors of the mind with those who are wise from the truths of good. Sensual things dependent on evil affections, are signified by serpents in these passages...” *Micah 7:17* is cited.

AE 581 [10]

- “Because the craftiness of the evil is diabolical those who are in it are said ‘to eat the dust.’...And in Micah...7:17...‘dust’ signifying what is damned, and ‘to go upon the belly’ signifying the sensual, which is the ultimate of life in man; and as this is the ultimate of life, it is in no intelligence or wisdom, but in craftiness and cunning, which are contrary to intelligence and wisdom.”

Derived Doctrine

“The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might...”

- *AC 249* teaches that **“nations”** in *Micah 7:16* signifies those who trust in themselves. To **“see”** signifies to perceive. The Lord will show the conceited and proud the folly of trusting in themselves. Will it be easy for them to see these things? They will be **“ashamed.”** What is involved in this feeling? *AC 165* teaches that **shame** comes about when integrity and innocence are missing. *AE 401 [20]* adds that **shame** is present when there is no longer any reception of Divine good and truth. *AE 734 [18]* says that **“shame”** signifies a sense that everything of self-intelligence will succumb. This last passage also sheds light on why they were **“ashamed of all their might.”** In the Lord’s presence and with His opening of their eyes, they saw all of their imagined power of self-intelligence succumbing before the presence and light of the Lord.

“They shall put their hand over their mouth; their ears shall be deaf.”

- We need to focus on the three body parts mentioned: **“hand,” “mouth,”** and **“ears.”** And while we consider their correspondences, we need to hold to a key word: **“deaf.”** In the positive sense, these three parts of the body represent having the power to put uses into our daily living (hand), the ability to express thoughts and ideas from the intellect of the understanding (mouth), and the sense of obedience to the truths of faith (ears). But this verse offers a sense of the opposite of these things because of the word **“deaf.”** The hand over the mouth indicates unwillingness to express the

intellect of understanding in the uses of one's daily life; and the deaf ear signifies to be "without the understanding of truth, and thence in no obedience..." (AE 455 [21])

"They shall lick dust like a serpent..."

- To "**lick dust**" signifies to love the sensual things which are the "lowest of the understanding and will, being in close contact with the world." (AR 455 [2]) Putting this in different words, to say someone is licking dust is a correspondential way of saying a person is so earthly minded they are of no heavenly use.
- The meaning of a "**serpent**" was well explained in AR 455. Please read that number again.

"They shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth."

- To "**walk**" signifies to live according to the doctrine of faith, but to "walk with Jehovah" is to live the life of love." (AC 519) To "**crawl**" signifies inability to "look upward to the things of heaven, but only downward to those of the body and the earth..." (AC 247)
- The meaning of "**crawl from their holes**" is not directly explained. However, AE 410 [2] states that those who hide themselves in caves (holes) signify those who prefer to live in the evils of life. When a person sensually lives in the evils of life, "the goods in them" have been destroyed. They prefer not to live in the "light of daytime" but in a "thick darkness" of the falsities of evil. Could this possibly shed some light on the words "crawl from their holes"?

"...like snakes of the earth..."

- From *Genesis* to *Revelation*, the snake has been the emblem of a force that is opposed to the Lord. A "**snake**," in the negative sense, represents the sensuous self-love that desires to separate a person from conjunction with the Lord. The "**snake**" wishes to invert a person. Snakes encourage speaking truths with the lips only, with the intent to turn "heavenly wisdom into infernal insanity..." (AR 455)

"They shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of You."

- Is there any doubt about the meaning of these words? Hell shall tremble at the presence of the Lord. Because He Is and they are not, there is no chance of them winning. The hellish spirits will be embarrassed and ashamed that they even thought they could defeat the Divine Human.

Putting It All Together

Remember that *P&P* summed up this section with these words: “Infernal things will be removed.” Our text does not leave us wondering what **evils must go**:

1. The evil of trusting in self (one’s self-intelligence out of control).
2. The evil that thinks it is invincibly mighty.
3. The evil that exerts its power (hand) to cover the mouth so that spiritual uses will be blocked and the understanding suppressed from expressing itself.
4. The deafness meant by the desire to keep obedience to the Lord and His Word quiet and unresponsive.
5. The evil of licking the dust. The soul does not want to lick the dust of sensual things. The soul does not want to crawl on its belly looking downward. The soul wants to be fed by the Lord by looking up to Him.
6. The evil of living in dark holes. The soul does not want to live in a confining hole of darkness. It wants the light of heaven.
7. The evil of the serpent. The tricks, cunning, and craftiness of the sensual snake will end. Intelligence, wisdom, and innocence will replace evil and flourish within the Lord’s church.
8. The evil that fears the Lord. A healthy fear of the Lord will replace arrogance and deceit.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 7:16-17.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- When we read that “those who trust themselves” will be proud, conceited, and full of folly, does that clarify what the Lord says will be “evicted” from His new church?
- The evil of trusting in oneself seems to be at the root of the problem. Are we in total agreement with this point? It seems to be a “yes, but” kind of statement. For instance, having confidence in our ability, believing in our training and expertise, is important. Without a degree of confidence, doubts would cause our enthusiasm to be siphoned off. Having confidence seems like a good thing. Where does a healthy dose of self-confidence stray off and become full of folly and evil? The state of a whining, scared “rabbit” who is hesitant to try anything seems to be fraught with as many problems as that of the over-confident egotist. How does someone learn to achieve a healthy spiritual balance to build the right kind of confidence?
- Our lesson exposes the plan of the evil to implement their power (hand) over the mouth to stifle any positive expression of faith and obedience to the Lord. Can you identify or cite examples to support this teaching? The second

example exposes evil efforts to block our “ears” so deafness occurs. This deafness seems to comprise turning a deaf ear to the Lord, not wanting to hear what the Lord says so that we can get what we want and not be bothered with a nagging (warning) conscience. Has anything like this ever happened to you?

- Did you note the different kinds of snakes (serpents) identified in the reading? Sensual things conjoined with insane falsities of evil are the harmful serpents. Whereas harmless serpents are sensual things conjoined with and dependent on good affections. Reflecting on this, do any examples come to mind that might help to illustrate and clarify this distinction?
- Serpents that lick the dust are identified as sensual things that are in close contact with the world. How might we see this so that we can shun this as a sin against the Lord?
- Serpents in their holes indicate hiding, love of darkness, and self-preservation. Evil prefers darkness. It doesn't like close supervision in the light of the Lord. Is this “derived doctrine” too harsh an interpretation of the meaning of the serpents in their holes?

MICAH 7:18-20

“Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob and mercy to Abraham, which You have sworn to our fathers from days of old.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “The Divine compassion will be there.”

AC 8279

- “...as soon as [the evil] have been devastated, that is, deprived of truths, it is as if their wings were cut off, and then they sink down like weights, and the deeper in proportion as their falsities from evil are worse. From this it is that by ‘depths,’ equally as by ‘abysses,’ are signified the hells...as in these passages...” *Micah 7:19* is cited.

AC 9937 [9]

- “...by bearing iniquities...is signified to cast evils and falsities into hell, from which they are; and they are cast thither when they are removed so as not to appear, which is effected when a man is withheld from them by being kept in

good by the Lord...The like...is signified by 'casting them forth into the depths of the sea,' as in Micah...7:19."

AE 538 [7]

- "In Micah...7:19...'the depths of the sea,'...mean the hells where and from which are evils and falsities, it is said 'He will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.'"

AC 3122 [3]

- "In Micah...7:20...where 'Jacob' denotes the Lord's external man, and 'Abraham' the internal, as to the Human."

Derived Doctrine

"Who is a God like You...?"

- Do we need to remind ourselves that Micah's name means "who is like the Lord?" This is a reminding, reflective truth that the Lord has no equal. He alone possesses all love and wisdom. He is our very life. The Lord alone is the Substance and Form out of which all creations draw their being. We need to acknowledge, see, and feel, that only the Lord IS. All else is dependent on Him. If the Lord for the least of a moment were to forget or withdraw from anything, it would cease to exist. "Who is a God like You?" are words that bring everything into a proper and orderly perspective.

"...pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage..."

- *AC 10629* (Elliot translation) explains the words "pardon our iniquity and our sin" as "...being so in order that things on an interior level in them, which teem with falsities and evils, may be shifted away...a church cannot be established among any people unless their interiors are open, through which contact with heaven is effected; and those interiors are not open except in the case of those who are guided by truths of faith grounded in goodness of life, derived from the Lord."
- *AC 7878* explains what is meant by the Lord "**passing over**" us. "...this signifies...namely, the damnation which is from the hells will do so... Moreover, the sphere of damnation which flows forth from the hells, flees past those who are in truth and good from the Lord; for damnation flows in with those who are in evil and falsity, because there is a state of reception there; but not with those who are in truth and good, for these are opposites, one of which flees from the other."

- “In the Word evils are sometimes called sins, sometimes iniquities, and sometimes transgressions; but what the specific meaning of each of them is, is not evident except from the internal sense. The word **transgressions** is used for deeds contrary to the truths of faith, the word **iniquities** for deeds contrary to the good of faith, and the word **sins** for deeds contrary to the good of charity and love. The first two kinds of deeds [transgressions and iniquities] spring from a perverted understanding, the last [sins] from a wicked will...” (AC 9156, Elliot translation; emphasis added.)
- “**...the remnant of His heritage**” conveys a powerful meaning in the spiritual sense. Let’s look first at the word “**remnant**.” The Writings use this word in various ways. It can be “remnant” or “remains” or “residue.” Each of these terms signifies “truths stored up by the Lord in the interior man.” See AC 5113 [8]. These truths are stored up by the Lord, protected by the Lord; the whereabouts of the “**remnant**” is known only by the Lord. He does this so that we, or the Hells, cannot alter them. They are wrapped up in loves and kept in a state of innocence.
- The word “**heritage**” “signifies those of the church [the remnant] who are in the spiritual things of the Word.” (AE 727 [6])

“He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy.”

- The Writings are clear and consistent on the teachings about God’s anger. God is never angry. His zeal, His care for and protection of good and truth, are eternal ends, but these Divine ends are perceived by the evil as anger. Listen to and consider these words from AR 658: “...evil is angry with God, and because it appears to man, when he is punished and tormented for it, as is the case after death in hell, as if it were from God, therefore, in the Word, anger and wrath, yea evil, is attributed to God...” Those who are against God feel and burn with anger because they can’t get away with the full fury of their gross hatreds. In due course of the unfolding of Providence, evil people will come before the Lord, and their evil intentions will be subdued and defeated. The Lord will not remain forever silent. His mercy will bring about order. This will be a moment of “loving” delight for those who have trusted and obeyed the Lord and His Word. It will be perceived by the evil as a moment of anger, fury, and punishment. Hell knows not what delights there are in the Lord’s mercy.

“He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities.”

- Does the Lord ever stop having compassion for us? Not for the least of a moment. If He ever ceased offering compassion to us, we would disintegrate into a pile of ashes. No, what really is being taught here is that the faithful remnant will once again see and recognize how loving and powerful the Lord is. As a “man of war,” He has always fought for us. We will see the “millions” of things He has done to give us continually those moments of “new beginnings.”

Read AC 3854 [3] slowly and reflectively, and you will see the completeness of His compassion and hear convincingly about subduing our iniquities.

“You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.”

- To **“cast”** or to sink “into the depths of the sea” signifies, in the negative sense, “to be cast down to hell.” (AE 1182 [3]) The Lord will remove the nagging, negative, hostile ideas of hell that have plagued us, and He will cast them back to the place of their origin. Hell is where they belong. Hell is where they will be bound so they cannot hinder the birth and growth of the new church.

“You will give truth to Jacob and mercy to Abraham which You have sworn to our fathers...”

- This verse from *Micah* is going to require some thorough reflection time. OK, let’s return to AC 3122 [3]. This passage from the Writings says that **“Jacob”** denotes the Lord’s external man. **“Abraham”** denotes “the internal, as to the Human.” Why do we need to know this? It is all about the Lord’s wonderful glorification. He took on the human form and put off all of the inherited tendencies toward evil from His mother Mary. Hell tempted Him in every one of them. He never gave in to a single inherited tendency toward evil. On the cross, when the Lord uttered the words, “It is finished,” He was announcing that His Human was now going to be united with the Divine from which it was begotten. He now was the Divine Human. Glorification happened as promised in the Word. Through this process, He ordered both the heavens and the hells. His glorification, intended and prophesied, was now completed.

“...from the days of old.”

- AC 2906 [6] explains that the words **“the days of old”** speak of the days or state of the Most Ancient Church. Why is it so important to spend some time breaking out the meaning of this closing meditation? Why end this book of *Micah* with these words? Do you remember a teaching of the church that says the last things said in a series from the Word sum up the things that proceeded?
- If you turn to the section of this workbook called **Epilogue**, you will note how the whole series of messages in *Micah* follow one another and are summed up in the very last things said in Chapter 7. For now, let’s look at the series as recorded in Chapter 7:
 1. The last time has come upon the Jewish church. Why? Good and truth were no longer a priority for them.

2. Total chaos reigned in the church. Falsities and evils fought amongst themselves and against good and truth. This state caused the spiritual collapse of the church.
3. The Lord acted prudently. His light of truth, He told them, would come to the rescue. The Lord would institute a new church with a higher obedience and loyalty to His values and priorities.
4. The old church would be destroyed to make way for the new church.
5. The new church would not be a “favored” people but would be gathered from every nation.
6. When the old church had been destroyed, the new church would be taught and led.
7. Infernal (hellish) things would be removed.
8. The “days of old,” the state of the Most Ancient Church, will return and the Lord will be seen as a Divine Human. He will no longer be invisible. Instead, He will walk among and talk with the people of His church. Innocence and perception will abound within the new church. The Lord will bring Divine compassion upon all who are within His new church.

Can we follow the spiritual progression of the seventh chapter of *Micah*? Isn't the last thing said important as a binding and useful summary of all that preceded it?

Putting It All Together

“Who is a God like You?” These words carry a sense of reverential awe and thanksgiving. Without the Lord, it would have been all over for humankind. We were hopelessly lost and spiritually confused. The Lord assumed our human nature and took on the full fury and hatred of the hells. He vanquished their diabolical purposes. Through His restorative redemption, we will find pardon if we shun evils as sins against the Lord. The Lord took the burden of evil and cast it into a deep sea. He cast evil, falsity, and excessive self-confidence back where they belonged. Hell is a place of misery because its inhabitants don't want the Lord near them. They refuse His delights and mercy. They project on the Lord anger, retaliation, and indifference, when, in fact, that is really what they have in their own hearts against the Lord.

But be of good cheer. The Lord will subdue all of our iniquities. He will gently lead us out of a cold and unresponsive church into the warmth and clearness of light in His new church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 7:18-20.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do you recall some of the exchanges the Lord had with the Pharisees and Scribes? He told them that He came to save the lost. He told them that there

were many other sheep from other folds that would be called to the great feast. But they would not listen. Nor did they adhere to what the prophets said about the call of people from many nations. They would not hear of such teachings. They believed they were and would be the favored nation and church. Isn't that a sad stance? Why not let the truth be truth and obey the words of the Lord?

- As in many of the Minor Prophets we have studied, the details of self-love are exposed and condemned in *Micah*. We looked at some pretty hard teachings in this study. But in the case of so many of the Prophets, the last chapter brings hope and restoration as a closing theme. Is it important to look at the "spiritual cancer" that has to be eradicated? Isn't the light following the darkness so much brighter when we see what kind of rescue the Lord brought about for us?
- Have you ever done a thorough study of the Most Ancient Church? The state of their innocence before the fall of Adam and Eve was wonderful. They trusted and relied on the Lord completely. They all spoke one language. The Lord visited and guided them in all of their ways. Innocence and peace thrived among them. Can we picture that state returning to the church? Do we have it as a prayer request? Are we ready to abandon our own self-intelligence for this to come to fruition?

Epilogue: A Summary of the Book of Micah

The following summary draws and expands on the outline given in the "Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms" (P&P).

CHAPTER ONE

"The word of the Lord came to Micah..." What was the message Micah was to hear and report? The Lord was about to make His advent. The descent of the Lord would be from heaven to earth. The Messiah's message would be hard for the church of that day to hear because the state of the church had been totally falsified. The Lord came to tell them that the church's falsity was so perverse that it had to be destroyed. Things were so bad on earth that "the state of heaven" was even being changed and affected. The mission of the Lord's advent was restoration because "mourning" or spiritual disorder was touching even the highest celestial good. People were deprived of all truth.

CHAPTER TWO

The church had become spiritually rigid and set in its spiritual errors. What brought about this spiritual condition? Their intention, as seen by the Lord, was to do evil. This intention was not only in their thoughts but also reigned in their hearts, their wills. The Lord cited this state as the main cause of the perversion of the church. "... there was no longer any use to teach" these things "except [to] those who obey." When a church participates in evils of every kind, it will perish. The hearts of its people will not admit the light of truth to probe into their disorder. Only those who long to be part of the Lord's new church will allow such light to "invade" their minds and hearts.

CHAPTER THREE

A perverted church has to be destroyed. Why? Because it has destroyed all truths and goods even to the last things of the church. When that happens, the Lord does not hear its people and they do not hear the Lord. When the Word of the Lord and the doctrine from the Word are perverted, "sight" can no longer see or receive anything of truth and good.

As the church perverted all the truths and goods of the Word, its people deluded themselves with the belief that God was with them. Once again, the Lord revealed that this condition of mind and heart had to be destroyed.

CHAPTER FOUR

When the Lord makes His advent, a new church will be established. It will be formed out of the nations. There will be no falsity or evil in the new church. In place of falsity and evil, truths and goods “will flourish.” Those who were in externals from ignorance will be drawn into the church, and “truths and goods with them will grow.” The Lord promises that falsities will not enter and destroy His new church. Instead, falsities will be destroyed among those who steadfastly refused to obey.

CHAPTER FIVE

No matter how much hell wishes to oppose and infest the new church, the Lord who is “the God of the church...will gather the church together and teach those who are in it.” The Lord will utterly destroy reasonings from falsities. There will be salvation in the new church. In the church of the Jewish nation, there will be nothing but falsities of evil. This church will have no power over the Lord’s church. It will perish, and with it, all of its falsities and evils will be destroyed.

CHAPTER SIX

The Lord offered every good to the Jewish church. He protected them. The church failed because they wanted to offer externals of worship. External worship was full of pomp and circumstance. That’s not what the Lord wanted. He wants internal worship. From internals, the life of truth and good is loved. The church had wandered off so far “they could not be brought back.” Punishments no longer worked. Therefore, this church “having been overthrown, should perish.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

We are given a summary of why the Jewish church was in the last time of its spiritual existence and what things would bring it to an end. First, there was total chaos going on in the church. Their falsities and evils were at war with one another. They also fought against the truths and goods of the Word. The Lord’s advent would establish a new church. That new church would be in the light of truth “from the Lord.” The old church would be destroyed. A new church will be established—gathered from every nation. It will be taught and led. Infernal things will be removed from it. The Divine compassion will be there (in the new church) as it was “from days of old,” as it was in the days of the Most Ancient Church. What was so special about the people of the Most Ancient Church? Their innocence, their complete trust in the Lord. They saw Him as the Divine Human; He walked and talked among them; everything within the garden spoke and testified of the value and validity of the Lord’s love and wisdom. In a nutshell, the Lord was visible and not invisible. What will be the hallmark of the Lord’s New Church? It will possess the gifts from the days of old!