TIMELY GREETINGS

— The Only Peace of Mind —

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WHICH NATIONS WILL DISARM, AND WHY?

A WORLD WIDE STIR, AND ITS RESULTS

OPENING PRAYER THOUGHT

I shall read from "The Mount of Blessing," beginning on page 182:

M.B., pg. 182 – "Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. When the church begins to seek for the support of secular power, it is evident that she is devoid of the power of Christ – the constraint of divine love.

"But the difficulty lies with the individual members of the church, and it is here that the cure must be wrought. Jesus bids the accuser first cast the beam out of his own eye, renounce his censorious spirit, confess and forsake his own sin, before trying to correct others.... What you need is a change of heart. You must have this experience before you are fitted to correct others; for 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.'

"When a crisis comes in the life of any soul, and you attempt to give counsel or admonition, your words will have only the weight of influence for good that your own example and spirit have gained for you. You must <u>be</u> good before you can <u>do</u> good. You can not exert an influence that will transform others until your own heart has been humbled and refined and made tender by the grace of Christ. When this change has been wrought in you, it will be as natural for you to live to bless others as it is for the rose-bush to yield its fragrant bloom, or the vine its purple clusters."

We need to pray for a change of heart; pray for a realization that to have a censorious spirit is even worse than to seek the aid of a secular power, and that setting a good example can be our only weight of influence for good.

WHICH NATIONS WILL DISARM, AND WHY?

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, JANUARY 25, 1947
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To continue with the theme of our previous studies – the kingdom of Judah – we shall turn to the book of Micah. It consists as you know, of seven chapters, and they carry a continuous story of Judah in both her early and her latter days. The first three chapters are concerning Judah in her early days, and the last four contain the promises to antitypical Judah, the Judah of the latter days, of whom our main interest now is.

In order to connect the first three chapters of Micah with the last four, we shall begin with the last verse of chapter three.

Mic. 3:12 – "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest."

Because there was nothing more that could have been done to convince Judah that she was in the wrong and that she was in need to return to the Lord, the Lord finally forewarned that her palace ground was to be plowed as a field, and that her palace and city were to become heaps. The fulfillment of this part of Micah's prophecy is a faithful witness before all nations, and the punishment of that people is a fair example

for all people to know that God means just what He says. God did not, however, cast aside His faithful few and their descendants forever. To them He left this comforting promise–

Mic. 4:1 – "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it."

Although Micah forespoke sad news for ancient Judah, he forespoke this joyful news for Judah of the latter days. Trying, indeed, must it have been for Judah to look forward to her own destruction. Conversely, though, it must have encouraged her to know that the time would come for her to return and to "build the old waste places," "to raise up the foundations of many generations" (Isa. 58:12). And still more joyful should she now be to learn that the time for her returning to God and to the homeland has actually come!

In order to obviate any doubt in this connection the Lord reaffirms His Word by saying: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: It shall not return unto Me void, but It shall accomplish that which I please, and It shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent It. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord

for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." Isa. 55:10-13. We, too, should clap our hands even now for having this great opportunity to engage in this glorious work, and for the great and grand privilege to proclaim these good tidings and to be called "The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Isa. 58:12. Indeed these are the "good tidings" of "peace" that the prophet Nahum forespoke. Nah. 1:15.

When the kingdom of Judah is re-established, then it is that the scripture is fulfilled:

Verse 2 – "And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation." Zechariah 2:10-13.

"And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of

camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on Mine altar, and I will glorify the house of My glory. Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in My wrath I smote thee, but in My favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." Isa. 60:3-12.

Obviously we are right at the dawn of a new day, the day in which the gospel work is to triumph in victory and to reap an abundant harvest of converts. Virtually whole nations are to join "the mountain of the Lord" during the Judgment day, the day in which the law goes "forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem," from the future headquarters of the gospel.

The time is, therefore, near at hand when in order truly to go to church, one must go to Jerusalem, and there be taught the way of the Lord, and to thus walk in His paths.

Mic. 4:3 – "And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into

pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Many nations are gladly to accept His rebukes, beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks rather than continue to run in the armament race.

According to Micah, the only nations that are to disarm are those that accept the Lord's Truth for today and go to the Promised Land. Never again will they need either swords or spears.

Verse 4 – "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."

The nations and peoples are now having a difficult time to get to their "fig tree," so to speak, much less to sit in peace under it. They are in constant fear that some one may dislodge them even from their sitting under no tree. Consequently they will try to protect their rights, or unrights, by beating their "plowshares into swords, and [their] pruning hooks into spears." Joel 3:10. And so judging their own strength by their war preparations, even the weak will say, "I am strong." But it shall not be thus with those nations which join the people of the Kingdom of the Lord: They will not need to trust in their own strength, for they shall have the Lord's protection. Each shall comfortably and securely sit under his own "fig tree," knowing that no one can possibly push him away from under it. This is to be so, for "the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."

Verse 5 – "For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever."

Those outside of the Kingdom that the Spirit of God cannot convince of their error, will continue to walk in the name of their false gods. But the people in the Kingdom "will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever."

Verse 6, 7 – "In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; and I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever."

The day in which God's people are gathered from all parts of the earth and brought to Zion is at hand, and the Lord will reign over them henceforth forever.

Verse 8 – "And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall It come, even the first dominion; the Kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem."

The "tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion," is to be the main object of attraction in Jerusalem. And what could it be? – Well in olden times towers were built for the purpose of keeping a watch over the city, and so "the tower of the flock" must be the throne on Zion, a lofty hill, Zion's stronghold. This stronghold, you note, does not belong to the mother (not to ancient Zion) but to her daughter (to antitypical Zion).

Verses 9, 10 – "Now why dost thou cry out aloud? is

there no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail. Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies."

These two verses take us back to the time when the faithful of ancient Judah cried out as they saw themselves about to be dispersed among the nations, but the encouraging counsel to labour and bring forth children while in the field, and the comforting promise of her deliverance from antitypical Babylon, left her by the prophets, ever remained with her even to this day. Zion, the church, was destined to go into the Gentile nations, there to multiply, and at last to be delivered. These good tidings, now just before the gathering begins, the Lord wants us to proclaim far and wide, saying: "Hear the Word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare It in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all." Jer. 31:10-12.

Verses 11, 12 – "Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His counsel: for

He shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor."

Verse 13 – "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth."

Not the daughter of Jerusalem, but the daughter of Zion is to do the threshing. And she has the promise of an iron horn – Divine power, the kind that does not break. Moreover she is promised hoofs of brass, a special and distinct message by which to beat in pieces many people; that is, she is with it to thresh and select the wheat from the chaff. "I then saw the third angel. Said my accompanying angel, 'Fearful is his work. Awful is his mission. He is the angel that is to select the wheat from the tares, and seal, or bind, the wheat for the heavenly garner. These things should engross the whole mind, the whole attention.'" – "Early Writings," p. 118.

"For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many." Isa. 66:15, 16. This is the first separation.

"And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and

in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to My holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord." Isa. 66:19, 20.

Those that escape from the slaying of the Lord, you note, are sent to the Gentile nations there to proclaim to them the Lord's fame and His glory, and also to bring all their brethren (all that can be saved) to the house of the Lord. From this you can plainly see that those who escape must be the first fruits, the 144,000 Jacobites (Rev. 14:4). Those whom they bring from the Gentile nations to the house of the Lord must, therefore, be the second fruits (Rev. 7:9), thus where there is first there is also second. Finally you plainly see that from the purification of the church the 144,000 escape and become the servants of God, the remnant, those who finish the gospel work in all the world.

Now to summarize, let us review the most outstanding points of the study:

First the kingdom of Judah was to be dissolved – Zion plowed as a field and Jerusalem reduced to heaps.

Then in the latter days it is to be re-established, and exalted above the kingdoms of the Gentiles.

Third, when it is thus "established," many nations are to go into it, and even to invite one another to go there to be taught the Lord's way and to walk in His paths. This is to be so because the "law is to go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

Fourth, the Lord is to judge from Zion, and from there He is to rebuke strong nations afar off. Those who accept His rebuke are to beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. The nations that join the Kingdom of the Lord are never again to lift up a sword against a nation, nor will they learn war any more. No longer will they need armament, for they are to be protected by a "wall of fire." Zech. 2:5. Every man is to sit under his own fig tree, and none is to make him afraid, "for the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."

Fifth, everyone of those who do not go to Jerusalem, and who do not disarm, shall walk in the name of his own false god. But all who join the kingdom of Judah shall walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

Sixth, God will assemble and gather His people, the church – she that halteth, and she that was driven out, and she that was afflicted. He will make her a strong nation "and the Lord shall reign over them in Mt. Zion from henceforth even for ever."

Seventh, to this Kingdom shall come even the first dominion.

This afternoon's study shows how the gathering is to be accomplished and the gospel work finished, and the wicked world brought to an end. True, such a plan for finishing the work has not been our plan, but it is about time we realize that our plans have never been and never will be the Lord's plans. We had better now accept His plans if we wish to go to Zion and there to stand with the Lamb.

A new day is dawning on us, Brother, Sister. And

now, rather than imagining that we are rich and increased with goods, in need of nothing, we see ourselves in need of everything. Shall we not accept these riches (Truth) that are tried in the fire, and these garments of righteousness by which to cover our nakedness? Shall we not anoint our eyes with this fresh golden oil of Truth that we may see and know the way, that we may reach "the door" on time? There is no reason for staying wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. The Lord is waiting at the door of our hearts. He is anxious to pour out a blessing, to fill the cup to overflowing. Let us not disappoint Him by forcing Him to pass us by. Let us now disarm and fearlessly prepare to sit in peace under our God-given "fig tree."

OPENING PRAYER THOUGHT

I shall read from "The Mount of Blessing," beginning on page 183, the last paragraph.

M.B., pg. 183 – "If Christ is in you 'the hope of glory,' you will have no disposition to watch others, to expose their errors. Instead of seeking to accuse and condemn, it will be your object to help, to bless, and to save. In dealing with those who are in error, you will heed the injunction, Consider 'thyself, lest thou also be tempted.' You will call to mind the many times you have erred, and how hard it was to find the right way when you had once left it. You will not push your brother into greater darkness, but with a heart full of pity will tell him of his danger.

"He who looks often upon the cross of Calvary, remembering that his sins placed the Saviour there, will never try to estimate the degree of his guilt in comparison with that of others. He will not climb upon the judgment seat to bring accusation against another. There can be no spirit of criticism or self-exaltation on the part of those who walk in the shadow of Calvary's cross."

From this we see that our need is to pray for Christ to abide in us, so that instead of watching for opportunities to accuse or to condemn others, and to expose their errors, we shall seek every occasion to help them, to bless them, to save them. We should pray for a deep realization of our own sins; pray that the spirit of criticism and self-exaltation be forever banished from us. Then we shall not feel free to mount the judgment seat and accuse anyone.

A WORLD WIDE STIR, AND ITS RESULTS

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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This afternoon we shall continue our study of the book of Micah. Let us turn to the fifth chapter, and begin with the first verse.

Micah 5:1 – "Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: He hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek."

You will notice that besides introducing a number of pronouns – he, us, they, this verse also introduces several different topics: first a "daughter of troops," then "the judge of Israel" and a "rod." Other subjects are introduced further along in the chapter.

Now to gain the vision and the lesson that Inspiration is anxious that we should from this scripture, it is necessary that we study one subject at a time. And in order to do this, we must group the verses according to subjects. Since the subject of verse one is the same as of verses 10-15, we shall quote them connectively:

Verses 1, 10-15 – "Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops:... and it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: and I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down

all thy strong holds: and I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers: thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands. And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities. And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard."

These verses present a group of people – good and bad commingled – whom God is to cleanse. Then the scripture closes with God's promise to execute vengeance upon the heathen. The mixed group of people, "wheat" and "tares," very obviously constitute the church that is approaching "the time of the harvest" (Matt. 13:30), the time in which all idolators are to perish. "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.... Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Matt. 13:49, 43.

We now come to the last part of Micah 5:1. The antecedent of the pronoun "He" is found in the preceding verse – chapter 4, verse 13. There quickly we see that it is the Lord Himself. Plainly, then, by the pronoun "us" Micah means himself and his people – Judah and Israel, the church.

Clear it is that while the Lord with His message of warning and reproofs makes a siege against His people the adversaries gather together in groups to oppose. Such has been the case at the introduction of each newly-revealed Truth.

The church is logically called "daughter of troops," because her mother the Jewish church at the time of

the introduction of the gospel of Christ, gathered together in troops, to oppose the Lord.

Moreover being smitten in the face rather than in the back, the Judge of Israel (Christ) must have been squarely facing them – speaking to them, – the reason for which the Jews' crucified Him. The verses that follow verse one again confirm the fact that "the Judge" is Christ. They that smite Him are, of course, His adversaries, His enemies. Concerning them Inspiration says:

Verse 9 – "Thine hand shall be lifted up upon Thine adversaries, and all Thine enemies shall be cut off."

According to Christ's parables, the time His "adversaries," His enemies of progressive Truth, are cut off is at the commencement of the purification of the church, at the harvest time. Then, according to Ezekiel's prophecy, the Lord commissions the men with slaughtering weapons in their hands, saying, "Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house." Ezek. 9:5, 6. The Spirit of Prophecy confirms this by saying:

"Here we see that the church – the Lord's sanctuary – was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light, and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God's power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say, The

Lord will not do good neither will he do evil. He is too merciful to visit his people in judgment. Thus peace and safety is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God's people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs, that would not bark, are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children, all perish together." – "Testimonies," Vol. 5, pg. 211. And through the apostle Peter, Inspiration declares:

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" 1 Pet. 4:17.

Verse 2 – "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

There is no doubt that this verse predicts the birth of Christ, "the Judge of Israel," "Whose goings forth" have been from everlasting.

Verse 3 – "Therefore will He give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of His brethren shall return unto the children of Israel."

Crucifying Christ and their refusing to return to the Lord, there was nothing that could have been done for the Jews at that time but to give them up "until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth."

The pronoun "she" points to the daughter of Zion

(Mic. 4:10). She is to bring forth her children while in the field; while in the Gentile lands. Then the time of her sojourning is to end and she is to be delivered. "In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth,...and I will make her that halted a remnant...and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever." Mic. 4:6, 7.

Verses 4, 5 – "And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men."

When the children of the daughter of Zion return to Mount Zion, they are to abide forever. Never again are they to be cast out among the Gentile nations. Never are they to be given up. The Lord is thus to make Himself "great unto the ends of the earth." When she that travaileth shall have brought forth, then the saints are to raise against the Assyrian "seven shepherds, and eight principal men"; that is, all God's shepherds and all His principal men, including Christ, the eighth.

Verse 6 – "And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders."

The kingdom of Israel that was destroyed by Assyria, and also the kingdom of Judah that was destroyed by Babylon, even all the twelve tribes of

Israel are to be delivered.

"And I will," declares the Lord, "make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be My people, and I will be their God. And David My servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, and do them." Ezek. 37:22-24.

Verse 7 – "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men."

After the Judgment in the house of God takes place, then it is that "the remnant," those that are left, are to finish the work of the gospel.

"Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent, will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not keep pace with the light. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and he cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view." – "Testimonies," Vol. 5, pg. 80.

Then it is that they, the remnant of Jacob, are to be gathered into their homeland, after which they are sent as missionaries to the Gentiles that have not heard of God's name and of His fame. Thus it is that those who escape alive from the Judgment of the Lord, the remnant, shall be as dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass. They shall wait for none in their missionary work. They shall bring all their brethren out of all nations "for an offering unto the Lord." Isa. 66:15, 16, 20.

Verse 8 – "And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver."

While God's people are as dew and as showers to the righteous (Mic. 5:7), they are to the wicked as lions among beasts and flocks of sheep. In other words, their gospel will save the penitent, but destroy the impenitent.

Verses 9-14 – "Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: and I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds: and I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers: thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thy hands. And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities."

These verses can mean only one thing, and that is, that God will thoroughly purge His floor. He will take the fan in His hand and blow out the chaff, He

will destroy the sinners that are among His people. In thus purifying His church, He will create a clean people, a united and zeal-filled ministry. "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice;" He declares, "with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion." Isa. 52:8.

Verse 15 – "And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard."

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 1 Peter 4:17, 18.

That we miss no part of the lesson in this study, let us recapitulate the main points.

To begin with, a group of people – good and bad commingled – are brought to view. They, as we have seen, constitute the church that is approaching the time of harvest in which the wicked are to be severed from among the just. (Matt. 13:49).

While the Lord with a message of warnings and reproofs makes a siege against His people, the adversaries gather together in groups ("troops") to oppose. Then they are to be cut off. The horses (leaders) shall be cut off (discharged) and the chariots (gathering places) destroyed. God's people are to be thoroughly purged of sin and sinners and only the penitent are to be left. They are the remnant of Jacob who "shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for

they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid." Zeph. 3:13. They are to be gathered into their homeland, from thence to go as missionaries to the Gentiles. To the penitent they are to be as dew and as showers, but to the impenitent, as lions among beasts and flocks.

So the stir caused by Truth's siege of the church and It's adversaries warring against It, that is already beginning to arrest the attention of the world, is to result in the cleansing of the church, "temple." Mal. 3:1-3.

Thus is the Lord to finish His work on earth, gather His people, destroy the sinners and the heathen alike. Necessarily, "...the days of purification of the church are hastening on apace. God will have a people pure and true." – "Testimonies," Vol. 5, pg. 80.

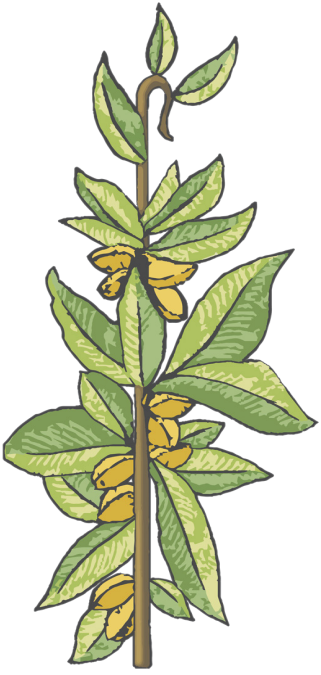
Depth Of Mercy

Depth of mercy! can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God His wrath forbear,
Me, the chief of sinners spare?

I have long withstood His grace,
Long provoked Him to His face,
Would not hearken to His calls,
Grieved Him by a thousand falls.

There for me the Saviour stands,
Shows His wounds and spreads His hands,
God is love! I know, I feel;
Jesus weeps and loves me still.

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