

The Kingdom of the Lamé

Micah 4:6-8

Introduction – Chapter 3 began condemning the powerful and corrupt leaders of Israel, and the proclamation of the death of a nation. That is followed by a two-chapter exposition of hope ‘in that day’. The Messiah will change everything, especially for those who persevere in their faith in the midst of whatever affliction God has meted out. 2:12-13 had already promised the gathering of the remnant, but this section gets more personal, addressing those who are or will be greatly afflicted. And so if you have a particular trial, you too are invited to listen in.

The Text - “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.”

In That Day (vv6-7) – Just as in the first 5 verses, we are talking about God’s dealings with men in the ‘last days’, the days of the Messianic kingdom, established and active since the time of the Incarnation.

God-afflicted – Before defining the lame and the outcast, note that these are people whom God takes responsibility for bringing affliction upon. The exile (and plagues, and hurricanes, and famines, and...) occurs and brings suffering even upon the faithful because God wants it to happen.

We call them ‘hard providences’ because they are difficult to endure, but we receive them from the hand of our Father, not as a result of cosmic-chance. They are described with two words in these two verses.

The Outcast – The faithful saints who have been cast away from the presence and blessing of God are not left forever. This is what the psalmist cries (i.e. Psalm 42). This is what Jeremiah promises in a letter to the captives (Jer 29:10)

But God is not only the Lord of the hurricanes and exiles *generally*. He is the Lord of your specific afflictions and trials as well. Your specific trials and sufferings have been hand picked by God for you.

The Lamé – The AV says ‘her that halteth’ and the word describes one who walks with a limp. This word, used twice in vv 6-7, has only been used one other time in the OT canon at the time of Micah – and that is describing Jacob in Gen 32:31. There is a great similarity between these two stories. Jacob wrestles with God and prevails and the sign of his prevailing is the limp. God then changes his name to Israel and blesses him. Now, Israel, the nation has ‘wrestled with God’. And those who hold fast in the faith, through the afflictions God brings are identified as ‘the remnant’. This is the true Israel that God promises to bless.

Implications -

The Path to Glory – Jacob was being perfected, and Israel was being perfected. Paul was being perfected (2 Cor 12:7-10), and even Christ was perfected (Heb 2:10-11). How are all of these being perfected? How are you being perfected? Through your God-appointed sufferings, through your particular trials and sufferings. And you have a limp to prove it.

Same Means, Different Ends – Remember, the exile is occurring, judgment is taking place, because of the falling away of Israel. Plenty of unbelievers suffer, just as plenty of believers suffer. God can use the same means to accomplish completely different ends. This is true with afflictions, as it is true with the hearing of the gospel itself (1 Pet 2:7-8).

Dominion With a Limp (v8) – This is the ‘eschaton’, the goal of history. The people of God who remain faithful through His chastisement and are marked by it, they are the ones who are truly the kingdom-holders. Philistia, Assyria, Babylon – none of these survive because God did not make them a remnant. Just as for individuals, so for the church, Christ says ‘*for my strength is made perfect in weakness*’.

Tower of the Flock – and the stronghold are ‘defensive’ structures. The sanctified church becomes the place of refuge for all to flee.

Kingdom Dominion – these words are ‘offensive’ in nature. This limping remnant becomes the mighty force by which the gospel goes forth and conquers the world. “*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*” (Matt 5:8).

But I Don’t See It!! – The temptation is always there, in the church corporately, and in your own personal affliction. It often times does not look like God is in control, let alone manifesting His sovereign dominion. The limp hurts and it seems as though God is nowhere to be found. When this happens, we are instructed to look not to our afflictions – but to Jesus. “*You have put all things in subjection under his feet.*’ For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus...” (Heb 2:8f).