Isaiah 2:1-5 and Micah 4:1-5:
An Exegetical and Comparative Study

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Abstract

This article provides an exegetical and comparative study on Isaiah 2:1-5 and Micah 4:1-5. The paper serves as a model for students to do papers of this kind.

Translation[1]

Micah 4:1-5

1. And[2] it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the highest mountain[3], it will be raised up above the hills and the people will stream to it.

2. And many nations will come, and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us out[4] of His ways that we may walk in His paths." For the law (instruction)[5] will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

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[1] This article is meant to serve as an example of an exegetical paper. I would like to thank Dr. J. Niehaus for his insight and Ms. Julie Harrison, Ms. Teresa Moody, and Dr. Terry Wilder for their assistance in its production.

[2] KJV has "but," RSV, NRSV and NIV lack the conjunction, NAS has "and," NKJ has "now."

[3] NAS and NIV have "as chief of the . . . ," KJV "in the top of . . . ," NKJV has "on the top of . . .," RSV and NRSV have "as the highest of . . . " This is the same for Isaiah 2:2.

[4] KJV has "of his ways," NAS has "about his ways," NIV, RSV, NRSV, NKJV all have "his ways."

[5] NRSV has "instruction," NIV, KJV, NAS, RSV, NKJV all have "law." This is the same for Isaiah 2:3.

3. And He will judge between many peoples and decide for[6] mighty nations afar off. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift sword against nation, neither will they learn war any more.

4. But each man[7] will sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and none will cause fear; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

5. For though all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we[8] ourselves, will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.

Isaiah 2:1-5

1. The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz envisioned concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2. And it will come about in the last days, the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the highest mountain and will be raised up above the hills and all the nations will stream to it.

3. And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us out of[9] His ways, that we may walk in His paths." For the law (instruction) will go forth from Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4. And He will judge between the nations and will decide for[10] many peoples. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore.

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[6] KJV and NKJV have "rebuke," NAS has "render decisions for," RSV has "decide for," NRSV has "arbitrate between," NIV has "settle disputes for."

[7] KJV, RSV and NRSV have "they," NAS has "each of them," NKJV has "everyone," and NIV has "every man."

[8] NAS has "as for us, we . . . ," all others ignore the emphasis of the Hebrew הוא and simply have "we will . . ."

[9] NAS has "concerning . . . ," KJV has "of his ways," NIV, RSV, NRSV, NKJV all have "his ways."

[10] NRSV has "shall arbitrate for." For all other translations, see footnote 5.

5. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

Text Critical Notes[11]

Micah 4:1-5

1. [a] נָכוֹן is transposed to a different location in Isaiah 2:2. It makes no difference in the translation. || [b] The Septuagint omits בֵּית completely. The more difficult MT reading is preferred. The LXX most likely represents an attempt to smooth out the phrase. || [c] Isa. 2:2 leaves out הוּא. The lack of this pronoun in Isaiah may be a dropout or a paraphrasing in Micah. || [d-d] Isa. 2:2 has אֵלָיו כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם instead of עָלָיו עַמִּים. The apparatus recommends comparison with the Syriac Peshitta. The difference is mainly stylistic if one understands הגוים and עמים to be synonyms in this context.

2. [a] Isa. 2:3 uses עַמִּים instead. These terms should probably be understood as synonyms in the context of the two passages. || [b] Apparatus postulates that וְאָמְרוּ might be an addition. There is no apparent reason to think an addition has been made.

3. [a-a] Stylistic difference with Isa. 2:4. Inverse of 2:3a above. || [b-b] Again, stylistic difference but same idea. Isa. 2:4 has לְעַמִּים רַבִּים || [c-c] עַד־רָחוֹק is omitted in Isa. 2:4. Therefore, apparatus suggests that it might be an addition. This would depend on Isa. 2:4 being the original text. If Micah is the original then Isa. has dropped the phrase. || [d] Isa. 2:4 has the singular instead of יִשָּׂא Again, it seems to be a stylistic difference as the translation is essentially the same.

4. The textual apparatus has no comments on this verse.

5. [a-a] the Septuagint has τὴν ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ ("his way") in place of אֱלֹהָיו בְּשֵׁם ("in the name of his god"). The Septuagint might be making a theological interpretation here or it may just be a misreading. Either way, the theological context makes the MT reading preferable.

Isaiah 2:1-5

1. The textual apparatus makes no comment on this verse.

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[11] These are comments in relation to the text critical apparatus of the BHS. Further text critical insights are to be found in the main body of the paper.

2. [a] נְכוֹן is transposed with the Syriac Peshitta after יִהְיֶה See Micah 4:1[a] above for comment. ‖ [b-b] Stylistic difference. See Micah 4:1[d-d] above.
3-5. The textual apparatus makes no comment on these verses.

Prolegomena

The passages which this study will examine and compare are in the books of Isaiah and Micah. Much ink has been spilled concerning the authorship and date of both books, but with the focus of this paper in mind, the assumptions of the author will be stated succinctly.

Isaiah was the son of Amoz, whom Jewish tradition holds to be the brother of King Amaziah of Judah. This tradition is conjecture at best, but Isaiah did seem to have some influence with the royal court. He may have been a scribe (2 Chr. 26:22) or an official.[12] The book named after him is composed of his oracles to God's chosen people. Some have argued for multiple authors of the book, but as H. Wolf points out, there is really no historical attestation for this idea. Also, with the possible exception of Malachi, all of the other prophets have their names preserved with their books.[13] The final date of the book's compilation was probably somewhere between 740 and 680 B.C.

Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah. His hometown was Moreseth-gath (1:14) and he was mentioned by Jeremiah (26:18) long after his death. He probably witnessed the fall of Samaria and the Assyrian attack on Jerusalem in 701 B.C.[14] He prophesies the fall of Samaria in 1:6-7 but the rest of his book focuses on Judah. It seems logical that he would have given most of his oracles in Jerusalem.[15] The date of the final compilation of his book was probably between 739 and 686 B.C..

In dealing with Isa. 2:1-5 and Micah 4:1-5, it is important to see them in their contexts. Chapter 1 of Isaiah serves as a general introduction to

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[12] See C. H. Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1986), 126.

[13] *Interpreting Isaiah: the Suffering and Glory of the Messiah* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 36. For more information on the authorship of Isaiah see Rachel Margalioth, *The Indivisible Isaiah* (New York: Yeshiva Univ. Press, 1964); O. Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12* (trans. R.A. Wilson; London: SCM, 1972); C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* (trans. D.M.G. Stalker; London: SCM, 1969); R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969); J. Barton Payne, "The Eighth Century Israelitish Background of Isaiah 40-66," WTJ 29 (1967): 179-90.

[14] W. J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: Its Expression in the Books of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 98.

[15] Jerusalem and the Temple are given a high profile in the book (1:2, 5; 3:10; 4:4, 8, 10, 13). Additionally, Micah was well acquainted with the activities of the leaders, prophets, and priests (3:1-7, 9-11). It was these very leaders that Micah addressed concerning their evil. See Bullock, 104.

the book and 2:1 begins a new section which introduces the prophet's message to the people.[16] The message of 2:1-5 is certainly of a different nature from what is in chapter 1 and, for that matter, from what follows.[17] Despite this fact, the message of the passage itself is undeniably one of eschatological hope and this certainly is a theme that is manifest elsewhere in Isaiah.[18]

The passage in Micah also stands in contrast to its surroundings. However, Micah's employ of 4:1-5 is deliberately and artistically linked with its surrounding material. This restoration oracle comes on the tail of a pronouncement of judgment (3:9-12) and continues the theme of the fate of Jerusalem. The contrasts are evident: the role of Zion in 3:10, 12 and 4:2 versus the reduction (3:12) and exaltation (4:1) of the temple mountain; the evil heads of Jacob (3:9, 11) in contrast with the mountain of YHWH as head of the mountains (4:1); Zion built with bloodshed (3:10) and yet established by God (4:1-2); and the evil judgment by Jerusalem's leaders (3:11) versus God's righteous judging (4:2-3).[19] In both Isaiah and Micah, it is clear that the passage was eschatological for the *Sitz im Leben* in which it was given. The sin of the people and their evil social practices literally "stank to high heaven." The Jerusalem of the passage and the Jerusalem of the eighth century B.C. were very different. This section, with its elevated poetic prose, serves as both a challenge to righteous living and a promise of restoration after judgment.

As to the structure, it has been noted that Isaiah 2:1 is a starting point. Isaiah and Micah are, in essence, identical in 2:2-4 and 4:1-3. Micah 4:4 is not present in Isaiah. Verse 5 in both passages expresses a similar thought. The following outlines are suggested for each passage:[20]

Isaiah 2:1-5		Micah 4:1-5	
2:1	Introduction	4:1-2a	Celebration of Jerusalem's exaltation
2:2-3a	Celebration of Jerusalem's exaltation	4:2b-4a	Expansion and results of the Lord's instruction
2:3b-4	Expansion and results of the Lord's instruction	4:4b	Attestation
2:5	Call for change	4:5	Ecumenical response

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[16] Cf. 1:1. E.J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah* (vol. 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 94.

[17] Many scholars disagree over what the relation of Isa. 2:1-5 is to the surrounding context and how far the section that 2:1 introduces goes.

[18] Cf. Isa. 27:13; 32:17-18; 51:4; 56:7; 66:20.

[19] See B. Waltke, "Micah" in *An Exegetical and Expository Commentary: The Minor Prophets* (T. E. McComiskey, ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 676.

[20] There is chiasmus and parallelism employed throughout the passage.

The Micah passage has no introductory verse and uses the contrasts present to blend into the cycles of the book fairly smoothly. There are many parallel pairs that give the passage structure and meter.[21] Micah 4:5 seems to be a conclusion to 4:1-4. On the other hand, Isaiah 2:5 may be transitory between sections or may merely belong to the next subsection.

Exegetical Comment

With the setting briefly laid out, we will now examine the passages in depth. Where the passages coincide we will treat them together. In Isaiah 2:1 we have a rather unusual construction. We are told that Isaiah "envisioned the word" concerning Judah and Jerusalem. A more common construction was "the word of the Lord which came to . . ."[22] The word, הַדָּבָר, is, in either case, an announcement of some sort from the Lord. On the basis of what follows, הַדָּבָר apparently carries the broader meaning of "event, thing, or matter." The article lends it some force; it is a specific "word" that Isaiah saw.[23] The verb חָזָה[24] is often associated with prophetic activity. It is always used in the Qal stem and has to do with seeing, experiencing or perceiving. In this context, it is a synonym of הַדָּבָר. Isaiah is "envisioning" the "vision" or events that follow. The subjects of the vision are Judah and Jerusalem.

With Isa. 2:2 we begin the parallel with Mic. 4:1. The phrase הַיָּמִים בְּאַחֲרִית, "in the last days," is a reference to the future.[25] It is often a temporal phrase that refers to a specific point in history. However, it can also refer to an eschatological period.[26] For example, in Dan 10:14, this phrase is explained as pertaining to "days yet *future*."[27] Keil feels that the

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[21] Mountains and hills, peoples and nations, ways and paths, swords and spears.

[22] Cf. Jer. 14:1; Ezek. 13:1; Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1; Jon. 1:1; Mic. 1:1; Zeph. 1:1. Amos (1:1) has a similar phrasing as that of Isaiah 2:1. John N. Oswalt, *TNICOT: Isaiah Chapters 1-39* (R.K. Harrison, ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 114.

[23] Young, 95. The lack of the phrase "of the Lord" does not mean that what follows is not inspired revelation.

[24] "It is important to note that *chazah*, etc. refers to a special type of divine revelation, probably during the night, but distinct from a dream." *TDOT* 4:290. See Num. 24:4, 16; 2 Sam. 24:11; Job 19:26, 27; Ps. 11:7; 46:9; Prov. 24:32; Isa. 1:1; 13:1; 26:11; 30:10; 33:20; 48:6; Lam. 2:14; Ezek. 12:27; 13:6-9, 16, 23; 21:34; 22:28; Amos 1:1; Mic. 1:1; 4:11; Hab. 1:1; Zec. 10:2.

[25] הַיָּמִים The article gives it the meaning of totality of the days. The Hebrew method of designating history. The Hebrew title for Chronicles is "The Books of the Days." (Young, 98).

[26] G. W. Buchanan, "Eschatology and the End of Days," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 20 (1961): 188ff.

[27] Italics are from NASB. It is literally, "days yet," but the idea of future is implied.

term always denotes the messianic era: "It was therefore the last time in its most literal and purest sense, commencing with the New Testament aeon and terminating at its close."[28] Peter associated the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost with "the last days" by quoting Joel in Acts 2:17. Hebrews 1:2 says that the church is living in a period known as "these last days." Given the context of the Isaiah/Micah passage, it is best to interpret the phrase eschatologically. However, it is not prudent to try to define the time beyond simply the idea that "it is coming."[29]

The "mountain of the house of the Lord" is used to express the idea of the seat of YHWH's rule. This mountain will be established (נָכוֹן). The word is in a different position in Isaiah than in Micah. Delitzsch notes that the positioning of נכון with יְהוָה in Micah gives the "establishment" a permanent sense.[30] There is a question as to how בְּרֹאשׁ should be translated. In particular, the preposition בְּ is troublesome. Some interpret it as "upon" and others as "at." Perhaps the best way to understand it is as a בְּ of identity.[31] Coupled with רֹאשׁ as a superlative, we can translate the phrase as "as the highest mountain."[32] The phrase which follows, "and will be raised up above the hills," is a parallel to the establishment of the mountain.[33] In the ancient near east, local gods were often associated with the high places or hills.[34] The Israelites themselves, when they succumbed to the sin of idolatry, went to the high places and worshipped at pagan altars. Preaching against such practices was a constant theme of the prophets (Isa. 36:7; Jer. 19:5; Ezek. 6:3; Hos. 10:8; Amos 7:9; Mic. 1:3; Hab. 3:19). By establishing the mountain of the house of the Lord high above all the other hills, YHWH is demonstrating His superiority over all of the false gods.[35]

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[28] C. F. Keil, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Minor Prophets* (Vol. 10; trans. James Martin; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 456. F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah* (Vol.7; trans. James Martin; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 113. Cf. Heb. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:20, with 1 Cor. 15 and Rev.

[29] Cf. Gen. 49:1, Num. 24:14, Deut. 4:30, Deut. 31:29, Isa. 2:2, Jer. 23:20, Jer. 30:24, Jer. 48:47, Jer. 49:39, Ezek. 38:16, Dan. 2:28, Hos. 3:5. Waltke disagrees (677).

[30] *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*. (Vol. 7; trans. James Martin; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 456.

[31] B. K. Waltke and M. O'Conner, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 198.

[32] The other mountains look on Zion with jealousy. (Ps. 68:16-18)

[33] A parallel in Hebrew poetry is more than mere repetition of an idea. The parallel expands on the original statement in some way.

[34] Lev. 26:30; Num. 22:41; 33:52; Deut. 12:2; 32:13; Jdg. 5:18; 2 Sam. 1:19, etc. See *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (R. L. Harris ed.; Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 147.

[35] H. Wolff, *Micah the Prophet* (trans. R. D. Gehrke; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 120. The enthronement of YHWH is equivalent to the dethronement of all other gods.

The result of this exaltation of the Lord's house is that "all the nations will stream to it."[36] Micah has "peoples" instead of "nations" and lacks the "all" (כָּל). It is interesting to note that Isaiah and Micah will often have גּוֹיִם where the other has עַמִּים and vice versa. These terms seem to be interchangeable and the switching is of little significance in this passage.[37] The verb וְנָהֲרוּ is unusual. It is apparently a derivative of the noun for "river." The nations are literally viewed as flowing like water to the mountain. This gives us the interesting picture of a river flowing up hill! Such is the attraction of YHWH to the people![38] Some have seen this as an undoing of what happened at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11).[39] The Tower of Babel (i.e. confusion) was the place where the nations streamed out into the world and now that is being reversed as the nations stream to Jerusalem (i.e. city of peace).

Isa 2:3 and Micah 4:2 continue with the results of the exaltation of the mountain of the house of the Lord. The peoples or nations are now speaking. They are exhorting one another in the cultic language of Israel[40] as they are in the process of streaming to Zion. Delitzsch points to the desire of the nations to receive salvation as their motivation for the journey.[41] It is interesting that the name Jacob is invoked instead of the more common epithet, Israel.[42] This is the name that was often cited as part of the formula, "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," and so might very well be a reference to God's care and relationship with the patriarchs and His salvific plan. God has been working providentially from the very beginning to bring about this flow of the nations to Himself. These peoples go to be taught out of YHWH's ways (מִדְּרָכָיו).[43]

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[36] The "holy mountain" is found in those Isaianic passages that depict the coming of the Jews and Gentiles to Jerusalem in the last days (11:9; 27:13; 56:7; 57:13; 65:11, 25; 66:20).

[37] The "nations" may be slightly more specific in the sense that the term usually excludes Israel whereas "peoples" doesn't necessarily carry this distinction. However, even this distinction is somewhat artificial (cf. Mic 5:6-7 [Eng. 7-8]).

[38] The only other passage which uses the word with the sense of stream or flow is Jer. 51:44, in which it is said that the nations will no longer stream to Babylon.

[39] Young, 102. See also R. L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi.* (Word Biblical Commentary 32; Waco: Word Books, 1984), 37.

[40] "Go up" and "God Of Jacob." Three times a year all male Israelites were to "go up" or make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Only the citizens and priests of Jerusalem itself knew it as a daily center of worship. For the people of the countryside it was a pilgrim center. (D. R. Hillers, *Micah: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Micah* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984], 50).

[41] 114.

[42] Keil and Delitzsch see this as a term of affection from the mouth of Micah. *Isaiah*, 114.

[43] Metaphorical usage. See *TWOT*, 197.

It is important to note that YHWH Himself is the one doing the teaching here.[44] The priests and leaders have failed and are corrupt (Mic 3:11) so YHWH Himself has replaced them! The מִן is not partitive, but rather refers to the source.[45] The teachings are coming "out of His ways" like coffee comes out of a pot. The ways of YHWH are distinctly His. They are the ways that He himself takes. They are the revealed ordinances of both His will and His actions. The fact that the people are coming to learn implies that they must be taught. They have little to no knowledge of Him, so they must partake of His ways. This presents an interesting contrast with Israel, who had previously received such instruction and yet does not know Him (Isa. 1:3).

The phrase, וְנֵלְכָה בְּאֹרְחֹתָיו, parallels the "learn His ways" statement structurally, but it is a result of the knowledge the people have gained ideologically. The phrase "we will walk," expresses either subjective intention or subjective conclusion. Young explains, "This walk is the entire course of a man's life, what he thinks and says as well as how he lives."[46] It is also noteworthy that "a way" entails a certain amount of confinement. To walk in God's ways is to stay within their bounds.[47] By walking in the paths of YHWH the people will take what they have learned from the mountain of the Lord and live it. This in turn will challenge others to join in the stream of nations going to the mountain.

This ends the speech of the peoples, and the emphatic כִּי affirms why the people are streaming to Zion.[48] YHWH's presence means that the law goes forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. The emphasis of the clause is on "from Zion" and "from Jerusalem" as the center of the divine activity. The תּוֹרָה[49] is the true instruction which God gives to mankind. The term can probably be taken as incorporating more than just the Pentateuch. This is confirmed by the parallel, דְּבַר־יְהוָה, which belongs to and comes from God. It is an expression of His will.[50] The "law" also parallels and is connected with "His ways." Taken together these terms encompass the entirety of God's revelation of Himself and its implications for the lives of men.

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[44] וְיֹרֵנוּ - waw with the imperfect indicates purpose. See Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*, 119.

[45] See Waltke, 680. Hillers sees this as implying less than complete acceptance of the Torah (51).

[46] 105.

[47] Ibid.

[48] O'Conner and Waltke, 665.

[49] For a broader meaning of "instruction" see Hos 4:6; 8:12; 1 Chron. 16:46; 22:12; Sir. 41:4; Zeph 3:4. For the "written" law see Ex. 20:1 24:3; 34:1.

[50] O'Conner and Waltke, 106. The "word of the Lord" often refers to prophetic activity (Mic. 1:1; Jer. 18:18; Ezek. 33:30; Amos 3:1) so it may here too refer to the word of the prophet. See Hillers, 51.

In Isa. 2:4 and Micah 4:3, God is represented as the divine judge who settled the disputes between the peoples. This is a result of the nations adopting the teaching of the YHWH. The submission and obedience of the peoples to YHWH is a prerequisite to their being able to learn His ways. So by streaming to His mountain, the nations are acknowledging YHWH as their true ruler and שֹׁפֵט (judge). This is true even for those nations who are far off.[51] The verb וְהוֹכִיחַ means "to decide or arbitrate." It is a synonym for וְשָׁפַט in the previous clause. God, the Judge, is pronouncing judgments for the nations and arbitrating their disputes. There might be a sense of rebuking or chastening those nations that still resist the flow towards Zion.[52] The use of the terms "mighty" or "strong" in regard to the nations supports this idea, but the overall context and וְשָׁפַט tend to support the translation of "decide."

The result of God's judgments and arbitration, and the submission of the peoples to them, is a universal peace.[53] It is the peace that can come only from the teaching of God being thoroughly incorporated into men's lives. This peace will be so all encompassing that the weapons of war will be reshaped so that they can be utilized in peaceful pursuits.[54] The fact that the weapons will become agricultural tools is reminiscent of the basic task of man in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15) before the Fall. It will also be a lasting peace, for the concept of war will be completely forgotten. In other words, it is not a temporary peace between wars but the divine peace of God, held in place by His presence on the mountain.

Isaiah and Micah cease to mirror each other at this point. Micah 4:4 does not appear in the Isaiah passage at all, but continues the thought of 4:3. The phrase תַּחַת גַּפְנוֹ וְתַחַת תְּאֵנָתוֹ is mirrored in 1 Kings 5:5 (Eng 4:25), 2 Kings 18:31 and Isa. 36:16. This shows the phrase to be a common expression for peace and rest.[55] It carries the idea of secure possession of one's own land for a long time.[56] This is confirmed by the fact that "none will cause fear."[57] Gone will be the days of nations having to be ever vigilant in watching their borders. Each one will be content, so

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[51] Isaiah lacks the phrase עַד־רָחוֹק. The significance of this variation is dealt with below.

[52] See Waltke, 681.

[53] This is the inverse of Joel 4:10 [Eng 3:10]. It represents the utter destruction and chaos of the Lord's judgment whereas the Micah/Isaiah section shows complete restoration.

[54] וְכִתְּתוּ A resultative piel (O'Conner and Waltke, 407).

[55] It was a symbol of God's blessing. Cf. Dt. 8:8; Hos. 2:14, 17 [Eng 12, 15].

[56] Vines take at least three years to become productive and fruit trees take even longer. See Hillers, 51 and Wolff, 122.

[57] וְאֵין - Distunctive waw is circumstantial (Waltke, 682). This is reminiscent of Lev. 26:6. This security is heightened in Ezek. 34:28 and Isa. 11:6-9.

there will be no need to worry about anyone trying to take from anyone else. The verse ends with the words "for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." This serves as a type of "Amen" to the vision that has preceded. It is a statement affirming the authenticity of the vision as from the Lord.

Micah 4:5 serves as a liturgical response to the preceding vision. The form of the verbs in the verse, יֵלְכוּ and נֵלֵךְ, require that they be understood in the same way. The plural "we will walk" stands in contrast to the individualizing אִישׁ previous. To walk in the name of a god is not just regulating one's conduct according to a belief system. It is to literally be partaking of the god's strength in order to live one's life.[58] It is reminiscent of a suzerain-vassal covenant. Therefore, the other nations walk in the strength of gods that have no real strength. God's people answer the challenge implicit in the passage by saying that they will walk in YHWH's strength. They will follow in the ways of the Creator and Judge of the world.

Isaiah 2:5 serves somewhat of a similar purpose to Micah 4:5, despite its very different wording. It is a challenge to the people of God to turn away from their sin and to take an active part in pursuing the realization of the vision. The phrase לְכוּ וְנֵלְכָה, "Come let us walk," echoes the וְנַעֲלֶה לְכוּ of verse 3 (cf. 1:18). Likewise, the אוֹר of YHWH is the teaching and word mentioned in verse 3.[59] It is time for the people of YHWH to start living like the people of YHWH.

The Question of Authorship

Since Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-3 are almost identical, the question of who wrote the section has been a source of much debate. We now turn our attention to this debate.

Isa. 2:2; Mic. 4:1: The first textual difference is between the MT and LXX. Both the passages have בֵּית but the LXX lacks a translation equivalent (οἶκόν). However, the MT is supported by the existence of the same expression in 2 Chron. 33:15. It is the more difficult reading and is preferable over the LXX.[60] The first difference *between* the passages is in the positioning of נָכוֹן. It comes after הַיָּמִים in Isaiah but after בֵּית־יְהוָה in Micah. This creates no difference in translation into English but it does

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[58] Keil and Delitzsch, *Minor Prophets*, 458.

[59] The word "light" has many uses in the OT. The sense here is that of being open before the Lord because His countenance is shining upon you and your deeds and actions are just. See Isa. 5:20 (evil for good, light for darkness), 9:1 (people who walk in darkness . . .), 18:4 (Lord's countenance), 60:1, 3, 19-20 (God as light), Jer.4:23 (like Gen. 1:1), 13:16 (darkness as judgment), Jer 31:35 (Lord of hosts is source of light), Hos. 6:5 (light as judgment on evil), Mic 7:8 (Lord is a light for me), 7:9 and Zeph 3:5 (light shows deeds).

[60] Hillers (49) disagrees. See also Waltke (677).

smooth the poetic meter of Micah (3+3). Unfortunately, this doesn't provide much evidence in deciding authorship, however, because the change could arguably be made to point in either direction.[61] The next textual difference is the lack of the indefinite pronoun הוּא in Isaiah. This adds emphasis in the Micah passage and thus makes it smoother. As with the placement of נָכוֹן, this inconsistency can be presented as evidence for the authorship by either prophet.

The next discrepancy is that Micah has עָלָיו whereas Isaiah has אֵלָיו. The automatic assumption is that Isaiah's rendering makes more sense. However, the verb associated with these prepositions is rare (וְנָהֲרוּ) and its sense is in doubt. Thus, there is no firm basis for preferring one rendering over another. The last variance in these verses is seen in Micah's use of עַמִּים where Isaiah uses כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם. Waltke has pointed out that "Isaiah and Micah, who reverse these terms, probably intend no sharp differentiation between them."[62] The כָּל is not significant as a support one way or the other but underscores the universality of worship involved.

Isa. 2:3; Mic. 4:2: The first difference in these verses is the switching of גּוֹיִם and עַמִּים.[63] Again, no meaning or significance can be derived from this and it is unhelpful in deciding the issue of authorship. Micah has בֵּית־ וְאֶל whereas Isaiah has אֶל־בֵּית, lacking the conjunction. The conjunction in Micah seems to make the reading smoother and emphasizes the parallelism. Micah has וְיוֹרֵנוּ where Isaiah uses the defective spelling (וְיֹרֵנוּ). This is consistent with the overall truncation seen in the Isaiah passage.[64]

Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3: Micah has רַבִּים in the first clause where Isaiah has no such adjective. Additionally, Micah has עַד־רָחוֹק עֲצֻמִים where Isaiah simply has עֲצֻמִים רַבִּים and רַבִּים can be viewed as synonyms (although they don't have to be) but עַד־רָחֹק is completely missing even in idea from Isaiah. Joel 4:8 (Eng 3:8) contains a similar phrase, אֶל־גּוֹי רָחוֹק.[65] Hillers views the Micah text as a conflation of the textual variants "far-off nations" and "mighty nations."[66] However, there is no basis for such an

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[61] The change could be evidence of Isaiah quoting /borrowing a finished poem or of the polishing work of a poet borrowing a less refined work.

[62] Waltke, 679.

[63] This will not be commented on further when it occurs in the following verses.

[64] *Matres lectionis* were added to the biblical text at a later date however making the point moot.

[65] Cf. Jer. 5:15; 31:10

[66] Hillers, 50.

assumption, for it implies a lack of originality on Micah's part.[67] Micah and Isaiah have a different spelling when it comes to the word חַרְבֹתֵיהֶם (חַרְבוֹתָם in Isaiah). There seems to be no significance in this change beyond the style of the authors. The same is true for the verbs יֵשְׂאוּ (Micah) and יִשָּׂא (Isaiah). Finally, יְלַמְּדוּ lacks the paragogic nun found in Micah. The paragogic nun represents an earlier form[68] and thus may favor Micah's authorship but it alone is not enough to yield a decision.

It has been noted above that Micah 4:4 is missing from Isaiah 2 but seems like a natural part of verses 1-3. Isa. 2:5 and Mic. 4:5 are similar in their aim, but that is where the resemblance stops. Overall, no decision can be made on the basis of the textual variations alone. As Hillers has pointed out, any conclusions based on form would be suspect, if for no other reason than that the transmission of the texts may have been kinder to the borrower's book than to the original author's, or vice versa.[69]

This being the case we must look at some other arguments. There are four main possibilities that need to be considered:[70] (1) The passage was interpolated into Isaiah and/or Micah by a later redactor, (2) Both prophets borrowed the passage from a common pre-existing source, (3) Isaiah authored the passage and Micah is quoting it, or (4) Micah authored the passage and Isaiah quoting it. We will address these possibilities in the order given here.

L. C. Allen seems to support the idea of a later editor splicing in the passage from another text.[71] Yet this is a very unlikely option. J. N. Oswalt explains, "That a passage of this beauty and power came from an unknown is akin to believing an unknown could have written the 'Moonlight' sonata and have remained unknown."[72] Anonymity is difficult to justify. This means that the position of Micah and Isaiah both borrowing from a common source, while slightly more tenable, is also unlikely.[73] The very presence of the passage in both eighth century prophets indicates that it is probably from the eighth century.[74] Thus, it

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[67] There is no reason not to think that Micah wanted "mighty nations far-off" here. It is the more difficult reading and is therefore to be preferred.

[68] O'Conner and Waltke, 347.

[69] Hillers, 52.

[70] See H. Bullock, 111.

[71] He says the work was influenced by the "Songs of Zion" found in Psalms 46, 48, and 76. NICOT: The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 244.

[72] Oswalt, 115. E. J. Young echoes this thought (112).

[73] It has been noted that Jer. 23:30 would support the idea that one of the prophets wouldn't have taken the vision from the other. However, the context in Jeremiah is the condemnation of false prophets not true prophets quoting one another.

[74] Young (111) supports this. E. Cannawurf argues that the passage is by a post-exilic author. ("The Authenticity of Micah IV:1-4," *Vetus Testamentum* 13 (1963): 26-33.

most likely originated with either Isaiah or Micah. It is possible that the Holy Spirit revealed the vision to both men so that they both wrote it down. However, this doesn't fit with the fact that the Holy Spirit doesn't eliminate the personalities of His messengers. The passage is too similar in both books.

So we are left with the last two options. There are several points in favor of Isaiah being the originator of the vision. The first and most obvious is the claim of Isa. 2:1 to be a vision that Isaiah received. Second is that there are several terms and themes that are echoed in the rest of the book of Isaiah.[75] Additionally, Micah 4:4 contains two phrases, "none shall make them afraid" and "the mouth of the Lord has spoken," that are found nowhere else in Micah but are found in Isaiah.[76]

J. L. Mays has put forth several arguments in favor of Isaianic authorship of the passage.[77] He states that the vocabulary and style of the passage has no correspondence with the rest of Micah, whereas, as noted above, it does with Isaiah. Furthermore, he holds that the passage has no place in the mission of Micah as defined by the other oracles and his own statement of mission (Mic. 3:8). Finally, the material in Mic. 4:1-4 flat out contradicts Mic. 3:12.

D. R. Hillers has noted the weaknesses in Mays' tenets.[78] The lack of similar vocabulary in Micah is a poor criterion because there <u>are</u> similarities with the rest of Micah. For instance, 3:12 is linked with 4:1 by the words וְהַר הַבַּיִת and 3:11 is linked to 4:2, 3 by the verbs יִשְׁפֹּטוּ and יוֹרוּ. Additionally, the size of the book of Micah gives us but a small sample of his vocabulary in comparison to what we have in the book of Isaiah. As to Micah's statement of mission in 3:8, the verse comes at the end of a polemic and should be taken in that context. It is not meant to be an all encompassing statement of what Micah was called by God to do or even as a formal pericope of Micah's call.[79] Finally, to say that 4:1-5 is contradictory to 3:12 is to miss the point of the passage. The passage stands as a challenge to the people to repent and follow God. It is as if the prophet was saying, "If the nations of the world can someday see the glory of God and repent, why can't you, to whom it has already been revealed, change your ways this day?" The only way the future glory of

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[75] See Isa. 9:5; 11:3, 6; 27:13; 32:17; 35:9; 42:1; 51:4; 56:7; 58:1; 60:1, 3, 14, 19; 66:20.

[76] Isa. 1:17, 20; 40:5; 58:14. See Oswalt, 115. Additionally, the imagery of the vine is not foreign to Isaiah (5:1-7).

[77] See his commentary, *Micah: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976).

[78] Hillers, 52-53.

[79] Cf. Isa. 6.

Zion would be contradictory to the image of 3:12 would be if the passage made the claim that Jerusalem would not fall. 4:1-5 is the hope and promise of restoration after the punishment for sin has been carried out. Finally, Mays' argument that universalism was an exilic or post-exilic idea is completely unfounded. Incorporating all the nations in the plan of salvation was God's idea from the very beginning.[80] Finally, some have seen Jer. 26:28 as an argument in favor of Isaianic originality because Micah is remembered for his condemnation and not for the restoration vision. Yet, this cannot be conclusive, since Jeremiah chose what was applicable to his context.

There are several arguments that support the view that Micah was the original author. The passage actually forms an integral part of the book of Micah and its cycles of judgment and hope, whereas it is abrupt in Isaiah and seemingly unrelated to the preceding material. The material flows quite naturally in Micah. For example, the opening conjunction in Micah 4:1 makes good sense but it doesn't fit very well in Isaiah. Yet, isn't it possible that this very smoothness smacks of Micah taking Isaiah's scribbled vision and blending it carefully into his own work? This is certainly a possibility. As is seen in the textual variants between the passages, the work in Isaiah shows signs of adaptation and truncation.[81] Amos (1:2) apparently did this with a verse from Joel (3:16). This is supported by the presence of verse 4 in Micah which is missing in Isaiah. This verse rounds out the vision and flows naturally from the rest of it. The phraseology in Mic. 4:4 does sound Isaianic but it seems strange that the verse would have dropped out of Isaiah if it had been there originally.[82]

The prophecy in Isaiah is abrupt,[83] yet it serves as a suitable introduction for what follows in the rest of the section.[84] Thus, it cannot be ruled out completely. The idea of Micah writing the passage disturbs some because of Isaiah's claim in 2:1. Yet, this is not a problem if Isaiah saw a similar vision and used the quote from Micah under inspiration.[85] Ultimately, the text is more literarily proximate to Isaiah. However, whether or not the section is originally from Isaiah, it is genuine and inspired.[86] J. N. Oswalt states the crux of the matter well: "It is enough

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[80] See Gen. 12:1-3; 18:18. See also J. D. W. Watts, 28.

[81] See H. Wolf, 76-77.

[82] See Oswalt, 115.

[83] It is the only prophecy in Isaiah to begin with וְהָיָה

[84] Isaiah proclaims judgment but then returns to promises of a similar type to those found in the vision in question.

[85] This is the view of Keil and Delitzsch. (*Isaiah*, 112).

[86] See Young, 96.

to believe that inspiration can involve guidance in the utilization of existing materials."[87] This is the situation with the Synoptics as well.[88]

New Testament Use and Interpretation

The phrase "last days" appears in several places in the New Testament (Acts 2:17; Heb. 1:2; Jas. 5:3; 1 Pet. 1:5, 20; 2 Pet. 3:3; 1 Jn. 2:18). The issue at hand then, is to decide whether the "last days" of the Micah/Isaiah passage is the same as that of which the New Testament authors speak. B. Waltke thinks it is.[89] He feels that the prophecy was completely fulfilled at Pentecost (Heb. 8:13; 9:26). This means that most of what is said in the passage is symbolic. It also means that the peace talked about is prophetic hyperbole. However, this seems to minimize the power of the passage.

On the other hand, L. C. Allen believes it is impossible to tell whether the elevation of the mountain is literal or symbolic.[90] This is certainly honest! This author's preference lies with the view expressed by Keil and Delitzsch.[91] They point out that נָכוֹן favors both a physical change and the change in the estimation of the nations. In a sense our passage was fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:17). The Torah in its most complete form was preached to all the nations in all languages. This fulfillment, however, is but a prelude to the conclusion that is yet to come. The "last days" have begun but are not yet finished. As to the vision of Jerusalem's exaltation, the prophet was most likely "telescoping." In other words, he saw the Jerusalem of the last days and the new Jerusalem of the new earth (Rev. 21:10). This makes sense of both the New Testament's interpretation and the grandeur of the passage.

For the prophets themselves, the passage was a message of hope. It meant that no matter how corrupt God's people became and how much they played the harlot and broke covenant, God would still accomplish His purposes. The passage demonstrated God's love and grace to His messengers and His people. Despite their sin that would bring terrible consequences, there would come unmerited restoration. The prophet and the people could take comfort in the fact that God would be glorified and they would reap the benefits of that glorification via fellowship and peace. However, the passage also served as a swift kick in the pants for

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[87] Oswalt, 115.

[88] Hillers (51) points out that substantially the same verses appear in Obad. 1-10 and Jer. 49:7-22. Thus the situation of Micah 4:1-5 and Isaiah 2:1-5 is not completely unique.

[89] Waltke, 678-82. He ties this passage closely to Jer. 31; Isa. 42:6; Ezek. 36:24-31 and Gal. 3:26-29.

[90] Allen, 324-25.

[91] Keil and Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, 113-14.

the original audience. If the Jews, who were "getting in on the ground floor," didn't appreciate what they had by turning away from their sin and living in God's light, then the Gentiles eventually would (cf. Mal. 1:11, 14). God was waiting for His people to return to Him.

Application

To see the application of Isaiah 2:1-5 and Micah 4:1-5 to our own lives is not that difficult to do. We too have our idolatry and evil ways. We too become callous to our Lord and actively walk after sinful pursuits. This passage challenges us to repent of these things. It encourages us to seek the peace and unity that comes from following God's word and walking in His strength. This encouragement comes from the evidence of God's plan that is seen in the passage. He is shown to be the only true God. Salvation cannot come until we acknowledge that fact and are willing to partake of His ways and live by them. From the passage we can also see how corrupted our current situation is. It gives us a gauge by which we can measure ourselves and consequently His grace! We can have a sense of peace and unity with our fellow believers from following God's paths! Finally, we must acknowledge that it is only through God overcoming sin and ruling in our hearts that this vision will come about. It is up to God, for such a glorious and complete change is beyond our power. Knowing this, however, is to know that this change will certainly come, for, "He who has begun a good work in you is faithful to complete it . . ." (Phil. 1:6). In this we can rejoice, "for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken!"

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