

## Micah

### *Samaria and Israel to Be Punished*

<sup>1</sup> During the time that Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah, the word of the LORD came to Micah. Micah was from Moresheth. He saw these visions about Samaria and Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> Listen, all you people!

Earth and everyone on it, \* listen!

The Lord GOD will be a witness against you.

The Lord will come from his holy temple.

<sup>3</sup> See, the LORD is leaving his place to come down and walk on the high places† of the earth.

<sup>4</sup> The mountains will melt under him like wax in a fire.

The valleys will break apart

and slide like water rushing down a hill.

<sup>5</sup> This will happen because of Jacob's sin, because of the sins of the nation‡ of Israel.

### *Samaria, the Cause of Sin*

What caused Jacob to sin?

It was Samaria.

Where is the high place in Judah?

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\* **1:2 everyone on it** Literally, "its fullness." † **1:3 high places** Here, this might mean simply "hills," or it might mean places of worship (see "high place" in the Word List). ‡ **1:5 nation** Literally, "house." This might mean the royal family of that country.

It is Jerusalem.

<sup>6</sup> So I will change Samaria into a pile of rocks in the field,  
a place ready for planting grapes.

I will push Samaria's stones down into the valley,  
leaving nothing but the foundations.

<sup>7</sup> All her idols will be broken to pieces.  
And the offerings to her idols will be burned.  
I will destroy all her statues of false gods,  
because she got them as pay for being a prostitute.

So those things will be taken away  
to be used again for paying prostitutes.

### *Micah's Great Sadness*

<sup>8</sup> I will be very sad about what will happen.  
I will go without sandals and clothes.

I will cry like a dog. §

I will mourn like a bird.\*

<sup>9</sup> Samaria's † wound cannot be healed.  
Her disease has spread to Judah.

It has reached the city gate of my people;  
it has spread all the way to Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup> Don't tell it in Gath. ‡  
Don't cry in Acco. §

Roll yourself in the dust  
at Beth Ophrah.\*

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§ **1:8 dog** Literally, "jackal," a kind of wild dog. \* **1:8 bird** Literally, "ostrich," a large bird. † **1:9 Samaria** The capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel. ‡ **1:10 Gath** This is a wordplay. This name means "tell." § **1:10 Acco** This name means "cry." \* **1:10 Beth Ophrah** This name means "house of dust."

- 11 You people living in Shaphir,<sup>†</sup>  
 pass on your way, naked and ashamed.  
 The people living in Zaanan<sup>‡</sup>  
 will not come out.  
 The people in Beth Ezel<sup>§</sup> will cry  
 and take their support from you.
- 12 The people living in Maroth\*  
 wait for something good to happen,  
 even though trouble has come down from the  
 LORD  
 and has reached the city gate of Jerusalem.
- 13 You people living in Lachish,<sup>†</sup>  
 get the horses ready for your chariots.  
 You are guilty of the same sins Israel<sup>‡</sup> committed,  
 and you brought those sins to Jerusalem.<sup>§</sup>
- 14 So you must give goodbye gifts  
 to Moresheth\* in Gath.  
 The houses in Aczib<sup>†</sup> will trick  
 the kings of Israel.
- 15 You people who live in Mareshah,<sup>‡</sup>  
 I will bring someone against you who will  
 take the things you own.  
 The Glory of Israel

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<sup>†</sup> **1:11 Shaphir** This name means “beautiful.” <sup>‡</sup> **1:11 Zaanan** This name means “come out.” <sup>§</sup> **1:11 Beth Ezel** This name means “house of support.” \* **1:12 Maroth** This name means “bitter,” “angry,” or “sad.” <sup>†</sup> **1:13 Lachish** This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “horse.” <sup>‡</sup> **1:13 Israel** Here, probably the northern kingdom of Israel centered in Samaria. <sup>§</sup> **1:13 Jerusalem** Literally, “Daughter Zion.” See “Zion” in the Word List. \* **1:14 Moresheth** Micah’s hometown. <sup>†</sup> **1:14 Aczib** This name means “lie” or “trick.” <sup>‡</sup> **1:15 Mareshah** The name means “a person who takes things.”

will come into Adullam. §  
 16 So cut off your hair, make yourself bald,\*  
 because you will cry for the children you  
 love.  
 Make yourself bald like an eagle† and show your  
 sadness,  
 because your children will be taken away  
 from you.

## 2

### *The Evil Plans of People*

1 Trouble will come to those who make plans to  
 sin.  
 They lie on their beds making their evil  
 plans.  
 Then when the morning light comes, they do  
 what they planned,  
 because they have the power to do what they  
 want.  
 2 They want fields, so they take them.  
 They want houses, so they take them.  
 They cheat a man  
 and take his house and his land.

### *The Lord's Plans to Punish the People*

3 That is why the LORD says:  
 "Look, I am planning trouble against this family.

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§ **1:15 Adullam** A cave that David hid in when he ran away from Saul. See 1 Sam. 22:1. \* **1:16 cut ... bald** This showed that a person made a special agreement with God or that a person was very sad. † **1:16 eagle** Or "vulture." See "vulture" in the Word List.

You will not be able to save yourselves.\*  
 You will stop being proud,  
 because bad times are coming.  
 4 Then people will sing songs about you.  
 They will sing this sad song:  
 ‘We are ruined!  
 The LORD took away our land and gave it to  
 other people.  
 Yes, he took my land away from me.  
 He has divided our fields among our ene-  
 mies.  
 5 So we will not be able to measure the land  
 and divide it among the LORD’S people.’ ”

*Micah Is Asked Not to Prophecy*

6 The people say, “Don’t prophecy to us.  
 Don’t say those bad things about us.  
 Nothing bad will happen to us.”  
 7 But people of Jacob,  
 I must say these things.  
 The LORD is losing his patience  
 because of the bad things you did.  
 If you lived right,  
 I could say nice words to you.  
 8 But you attack my people like enemies.  
 You steal the clothes off the backs of people  
 walking by.  
 They think they are safe,  
 but you are there to treat them like prisoners  
 of war.†

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\* **2:3** *save yourselves* Literally, “take your necks off it.” † **2:8**  
*They think ... war* Or “Returning from war, they think they are  
 safe.”

- 9 You have taken nice houses  
away from the women of my people.  
You have taken my wealth  
away from their small children forever.
- 10 Get up and leave!  
This will not be your place of rest, because  
you ruined it.  
You made it unclean, so it will be destroyed!  
It will be a terrible destruction!
- 11 These people don't want to listen to me.  
But if a man comes telling lies, they will  
accept him.  
They would accept a false prophet if he comes  
and says,  
"There will be good times in the future, with  
plenty of wine and beer."

*The Lord Will Bring His People Together*

- 12 Yes, people of Jacob, I will bring all of you  
together.  
I will bring together all those in Israel who  
are still living.  
I will put them together like sheep in the sheep  
pen,  
like a flock in its pasture.  
Then the place will be filled  
with the noise of many people.
- 13 The "One Who Breaks Through Walls" will  
push through and walk to the front of his  
people.  
They will break through the gates and leave  
that city.

They will leave with their king marching before them—  
with the LORD at the front of his people.

### 3

#### *The Leaders of Israel Are Guilty of Evil*

- <sup>1</sup> Then I said, “Listen, leaders of Jacob and officers of the nation\* of Israel!  
You should know what justice is.
- <sup>2</sup> But you hate good and love evil.  
You tear the skin off the people  
and tear the flesh off their bones.
- <sup>3</sup> You are destroying my people.†  
You take their skin off them and break their bones.  
You chop their bones up like meat to put in the pot!
- <sup>4</sup> Then you will pray to the LORD,  
but he will not answer you.  
No, he will hide his face from you,  
because what you do is evil.”

#### *False Prophets*

<sup>5</sup> Some false prophets are telling lies to the Lord’s people. This is what the LORD says about them:

“These prophets are led by their stomachs.

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\* **3:1 nation** Literally, “house.” This might mean the royal family of that country. † **3:3 You are destroying my people** Literally, “You who eat the flesh of my people.”

They promise peace for those who give them food,  
 but they promise war to those who do not give them food.

6 “This is why it is like night for you  
 and you don’t have visions.  
 You cannot see what will happen in the future,  
 so it is like darkness to you.  
 The sun has gone down on the prophets.  
 They cannot see what will happen in the future,  
 so it is like darkness to them.  
 7 The seers are ashamed.  
 The fortunetellers are embarrassed.  
 None of them will say anything,  
 because God will not speak to them.”

*Micah Is an Honest Prophet of God*

8 But the LORD’S Spirit has filled me  
 with power, goodness, and strength.  
 So I can tell Jacob about his crimes,  
 and so I can tell Israel about his sins!

*The Leaders of Israel Are to Blame*

9 Leaders of Jacob and rulers of Israel, listen to me!  
 You hate the right way of living!  
 If something is straight,  
 then you make it crooked!  
 10 You build Zion by murdering people.‡  
 You build Jerusalem by cheating people!  
 11 The judges in Jerusalem accept bribes

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‡ **3:10** *murdering people* Literally, “bloodshed.”

to help them decide who wins in court.  
 The priests in Jerusalem must be paid  
 before they will teach the people.  
 People must pay the prophets  
 before they will look into the future.  
 Then those leaders expect the LORD to help  
 them.  
 They say, "The LORD lives here with us,  
 so nothing bad will happen to us."

<sup>12</sup> Leaders, because of you, Zion will be de-  
 stroyed.  
 It will become a plowed field.  
 Jerusalem will become a pile of rocks.  
 Temple Mount will be an empty hill<sup>§</sup> over-  
 grown with bushes.

## 4

### *The Law Will Come From Jerusalem*

<sup>1</sup> In the last days the mountain of the LORD'S  
 Temple  
 will be on the highest of all mountains.  
 It will be raised higher than the hills.  
 There will be a steady stream of people going  
 there.  
<sup>2</sup> People from many nations will go there and say,  
 "Come, let's go up to the mountain of the  
 LORD,  
 to the Temple of the God of Jacob.

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<sup>§</sup> **3:12 empty hill** Or "high place," a term usually used for local shrines (places for worship) where people often worshiped idols.

Then God will teach us his way of living,  
and we will follow him.”

His teaching, the LORD’S message, will begin in  
Jerusalem on Mount Zion  
and will go out to all the world.

<sup>3</sup> Then God will act as judge to end arguments  
between people in many places.

He will decide what is right for great nations  
far and near.

They will stop using their weapons for war.

They will hammer their swords into plows  
and use their spears to make tools for  
harvesting.

All fighting between nations will end.

They will never again train for war.

<sup>4</sup> They will sit under their own  
grapevine and fig tree.

No one will make them afraid.

That is because the LORD All-Powerful said  
it would happen like that.

<sup>5</sup> All the people from other nations follow their  
own gods,

but we will follow the LORD our God forever  
and ever!\*

*The Kingdom to Be Brought Back*

<sup>6</sup> The LORD says,

“Jerusalem was hurt and crippled.

She was thrown away.

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\* **4:5** Or “All the nations will walk in the name of their gods,  
but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God, forever and  
ever!”

She was hurt and punished,  
but I will bring her back to me.

7 “The people of that ‘crippled’ city  
will be the only ones left alive.  
They were forced to leave,  
but I will make them into a strong nation.”  
The LORD will be their king.  
He will rule from Mount Zion forever.

8 And you, Tower of Flocks,<sup>†</sup>  
your time will come.  
Ophel, hill of Zion,  
you will again have the right to rule.  
Yes, the kingdom will be in Jerusalem  
as it was in the past.

*Why Must the Israelites Go to Babylon?*

9 Now, why are you crying so loudly?  
Is your king gone?  
Have you lost your wise leader?  
Is that why you are suffering like a woman  
in labor?  
10 Cry out, you people of Jerusalem,<sup>‡</sup> and feel the  
pain,  
as if you were giving birth.  
You must go out of the city  
and live in the fields.  
You will go away to Babylon,  
but you will also be saved from that place.

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<sup>†</sup> **4:8 Tower of Flocks** Or “Migdal Eder.” This probably means a part of Jerusalem. The leaders would be like shepherds in a tower watching their sheep. <sup>‡</sup> **4:10 people of Jerusalem** Literally, “daughter Zion,” a name for Jerusalem. Also in verse 13. See “Zion” in the Word List.

The LORD will come and rescue you there.  
He will take you away from your enemies.

*The Lord Will Destroy the Other Nations*

<sup>11</sup> Many nations have come to fight against you.  
They say, "Look, there is Zion!  
Let's attack her!"

<sup>12</sup> They have their plans,  
but they don't know what the LORD is  
planning.  
He brought them here for a special purpose.  
They will be crushed like grain on a thresh-  
ing floor.

*Israel Will Defeat Its Enemies*

<sup>13</sup> "People of Jerusalem, get up and crush them!  
I will make you very strong.  
It will be as if you have horns of iron and hooves  
of bronze.  
You will beat many people into small pieces.  
You will give their wealth to the LORD.  
You will give their treasure to the Lord of all  
the earth."

## 5

<sup>1</sup> Now strong city,\* gather your soldiers!  
They are surrounding us for the attack!  
They will hit the Judge of Israel  
on the cheek with a stick.

*The Messiah to Be Born in Bethlehem*

<sup>2</sup> But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,

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\* **5:1 strong city** Literally, "daughter of troops."

are the smallest town in Judah.  
 Your family is almost too small to count,  
 but the “Ruler of Israel” will come from you  
 to rule for me.  
 His beginnings<sup>†</sup> are from ancient times,  
 from long, long ago.  
<sup>3</sup> The Lord will let his people be defeated  
 until the woman gives birth to her child, the  
 promised king.  
 Then the rest of his brothers will come back  
 to join the people of Israel.  
<sup>4</sup> He will begin to rule Israel in the power of the  
 LORD.  
 Like a shepherd, he will lead his people in  
 the wonderful name of the LORD his God.  
 And they will live in safety  
 because then his greatness will be known all  
 over the world.  
<sup>5</sup> He will bring a time of peace.

Yes, the Assyrian army will come into our  
 country  
 and march through our land.‡  
 But we have plenty of leaders§  
 we can send against them.  
<sup>6</sup> With swords in hand our leaders will defeat the  
 Assyrians  
 and rule the land of Nimrod.\*  
 They<sup>†</sup> will save us from the Assyrians

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<sup>†</sup> 5:2 *beginnings* Or “family origins.”    ‡ 5:5 *march ... land*  
 Or “trample our palaces.”    § 5:5 *plenty of leaders* Literally,  
 “seven shepherds, no eight leaders.”    \* 5:6 *land of Nimrod*  
 Another name for Assyria.    † 5:6 *They* Literally, “He.”

when they come into our land and march  
through our territory.

<sup>7</sup> But those from Jacob who are still living and  
scattered among the nations  
will be like dew from the LORD that does not  
depend on anyone.

They will be like rain on the grass  
that does not wait for anyone.

<sup>8</sup> Those from Jacob who are still living  
are scattered among the nations.

But they will be like a lion among the animals in  
the forest.

They will be like a young lion among flocks  
of sheep.

If the lion passes through,  
he goes where he wants to go.

If he attacks an animal,  
no one can save it.  
The survivors will be like that.

<sup>9</sup> You will lift your hand against your enemies,  
and you will destroy them.

### *People Will Depend on God*

<sup>10</sup> The LORD says,

“At that time I will take away your horses,  
and I will destroy your chariots.

<sup>11</sup> I will destroy the cities in your country.  
I will pull down all your fortresses.

<sup>12</sup> You will no longer try to do magic.  
You will have no more fortunetellers.

<sup>13</sup> I will destroy your statues of false gods.  
I will pull down your memorial stones.  
You will not worship what your hands have  
made.

- 14 I will destroy the Asherah poles  
and your false gods.‡
- 15 Some nations will not listen to me,  
but I will show my anger and get my  
revenge.”

## 6

### *The Lord's Complaint*

- 1 Now hear what the LORD says:  
“Present your argument to the mountains.  
Let the hills hear your story.\*
- 2 The LORD has a complaint against his people.  
Mountains, listen to the LORD'S complaint.  
Foundations of the earth, hear the Lord.  
He will prove that Israel is wrong!”
- 3 He says, “My people, tell me what I did!  
Did I do something wrong against you?  
Did I make life too hard for you?
- 4 I will tell you what I did.  
I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to you.  
I brought you from the land of Egypt.  
I freed you from slavery.
- 5 My people, remember the evil plans of Balak  
king of Moab.  
Remember what Balaam son of Beor said to  
Balak.

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‡ 5:14 **false gods** Or “cities.” \* 6:1 This is like a court case.  
The mountains and hills are the judge and jury.

Remember what happened from Acacia to Gilgal,<sup>†</sup>  
and you will know the LORD is right!”

*What Does God Want From Us?*

<sup>6</sup> What must I bring when I come to meet with the LORD?

What must I do when I bow down to God above?

Should I come to him with burnt offerings and a year-old calf?

<sup>7</sup> Will the LORD be pleased with a thousand rams or with ten thousand rivers of oil?

Should I offer him my first child to pay for my wrongs?

Should I sacrifice my very own child for my sins?

<sup>8</sup> Human, the LORD has told you what goodness is.

This is what he wants from you:

Be fair to other people.

Love kindness and loyalty,  
and humbly obey your God.

*What Were the Israelites Doing?*

<sup>9</sup> The LORD shouts to the city:

“A wise person respects the Lord’s name.<sup>‡</sup>

So pay attention to the punishing rod and to the one who uses it!<sup>§</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Do the wicked still hide treasures

<sup>†</sup> **6:5** *Acacia to Gilgal* This story is found in Num. 22-25.

<sup>‡</sup> **6:9** *the Lord’s name* Literally, “your name.” **§ 6:9** *So pay attention ... uses it* The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.

that they have stolen?  
 Do they still cheat people  
     with baskets that are too small?\*  
     Yes, all of this is still happening!  
 11 Some people carry special weights  
     that they use to cheat people when they  
     weigh their goods.  
     Should I pardon them?  
 12 The rich in that city are still cruel.  
     The people there still tell lies.  
     Yes, they tell their lies.  
 13 So I have begun to punish you.  
     I will destroy you because of your sins.  
 14 You will eat, but you will not become full.  
     You will still be hungry and empty.†  
 You will try to bring people to safety,  
     but people with swords will kill the people  
     you rescued.  
 15 You will plant your seeds,  
     but you will not gather food.  
 You will try to squeeze oil from your olives,  
     but you will not get any oil.  
 You will crush your grapes,  
     but you will not get enough juice to have  
     wine to drink.  
 16 This is because you obey the laws of Omri.‡  
     You do all the evil things that Ahab's family  
     does.  
 You follow their teachings,

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\* **6:10 *baskets ... too small*** Literally, "short ephahs." An ephah is about 1/2 bushel. † **6:14 *You ... empty*** The Hebrew text here is unclear. ‡ **6:16 *Omri*** A king of Israel who led his nation to worship false gods. See 1 Kings 16:21-26.

so I will let you be destroyed.  
 People will whistle in amazement  
 when they see your destroyed city.  
 Then you will bear the shame  
 that the other nations bring to you.”§

## 7

### *Micah Is Upset at the Evil People Do*

- <sup>1</sup> I am upset because I am like fruit that has been gathered,  
 like grapes that have already been picked.  
 There are no grapes left to eat.  
 There are none of the early figs that I love.
- <sup>2</sup> By this I mean that all the faithful people are gone.  
 There are no good people left.  
 Everyone is planning to kill someone.  
 Everyone is trying to trap their brother.
- <sup>3</sup> People are good at doing bad things with both hands.  
 Officials ask for bribes.  
 Judges take money to change their decisions in court.  
 “Important leaders” do whatever they want to do.
- <sup>4</sup> Even the best of them is as crooked  
 as a tangled thornbush.

### *The Day of Punishment Is Coming*

Your prophets said this day would come,

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§ 6:16 **Then ... you** Or “My people’s shame will be taken away.”

and the day of your watchmen\* has come.  
Now you will be punished.

Now you will be confused!

<sup>5</sup> Don't trust your neighbor  
or trust a friend!  
Don't even speak freely  
with your wife.

<sup>6</sup> Your enemies will be the people in your own  
house.

A son will not honor his father.  
A daughter will turn against her mother.

A daughter-in-law will turn against her  
mother-in-law.

*The Lord Is the Savior*

<sup>7</sup> So I will look to the LORD for help.  
I will wait for God to save me.  
My God will hear me.

<sup>8</sup> I have fallen, but enemy, don't laugh at me!  
I will get up again.

I sit in darkness now,  
but the LORD will be a light for me.

*The Lord Forgives*

<sup>9</sup> I sinned against the LORD,  
so he was angry with me.  
But he will argue my case for me in court.  
He will do what is right for me.  
Then he will bring me out into the light,  
and I will see that he is right.

<sup>10</sup> My enemy said to me,

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\* **7:4** *watchmen* Another name for prophets. This shows that the prophets were like guards who stood on a city's wall and watched for trouble coming from far away.

“Where is the LORD your God?”  
 But my enemy will see this,  
 and she will be ashamed.  
 At that time I will laugh at her.†  
 People will walk over her,‡ like mud in the  
 streets.

### *The Jews to Return*

11 The time will come when your walls will be  
 rebuilt.  
 At that time the country will grow.  
 12 Your people will come back to your land.  
 They will come back from Assyria and from  
 the cities of Egypt.  
 They will come from Egypt  
 and from the other side of the Euphrates  
 River.  
 They will come from the sea in the west  
 and from the mountains in the east.

13 The land was ruined by the people  
 who lived there and by what they did.  
 14 So rule your people with your rod.  
 Rule the flock of people who belong to you.  
 That flock lives alone in the woods  
 and up on Mount Carmel.  
 That flock lives in Bashan and Gilead  
 as they did in the past.

### *Israel Will Defeat Its Enemies*

15 I did many miracles when I took you out of  
 Egypt.

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† 7:10 *laugh at her* Literally, “my eyes will stare at her.”

‡ 7:10 *enemy, don’t laugh ... walk over her* This probably  
 refers to an enemy city, such as the capital of Edom.

I will let you see more miracles like that.  
 16 The nations will see those miracles,  
 and they will be ashamed.  
 They will see that their “power”  
 is nothing compared to mine.  
 They will be amazed  
 and put their hands over their mouths.  
 They will cover their ears  
 and refuse to listen.  
 17 They will crawl in the dust like a snake.  
 They will shake with fear.  
 They will be like insects crawling  
 from their holes in the ground  
 and coming to the LORD our God.  
 God, they will fear and respect you!

*Praise for the Lord*

18 There is no God like you.  
 You take away people’s guilt.  
 God will forgive his people who survive.  
 He will not stay angry with them forever,  
 because he enjoys being kind.  
 19 He will come back and comfort us again.  
 He will throw all our sins into the deep sea.  
 20 God, please be true to Jacob.  
 Be kind and loyal to Abraham,<sup>§</sup> as you  
 promised our ancestors long ago.

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<sup>§</sup> **7:20 Abraham** Here, Abraham is used to mean all the people of Israel. See “Abraham” in the Word List.

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