Yahweh, The Breaker of Israel (Micah 2:12-13)

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Page Kelley was a great teacher, a man who loved the prophets and enjoyed teaching Hebrew to his students. Those of us who participated in his classes learned to develop a greater appreciation for the Old Testament. In his seminars on Hebrew, students learned how to study Hebrew words in their context and unlock the riches of meanings in Scriptures. This paper is dedicated to the memory of a great teacher.

The role of Micah 2:12-13 has been disputed by scholars who have studied the structure of the book of Micah. This oracle of hope and salvation comes at the end of two chapters in which the prophet preached a harsh message of doom. Chapter 3 also introduces another oracle of judgment, ending with a prediction of judgment on Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple (3:9-12). Thus this oracle of hope in Micah 2:12-13, interrupting the emphasis on judgment in the first three chapters of the book, has been judged to be out of place in Micah.[1] The purpose of this essay is to study the oracle of hope and salvation in Micah 2:12-13 and to ascertain the identity of the agent of salvation who is described as "the breaker." The essay will also study the many similes used in the oracle to describe the role of Yahweh in his relationship with Israel.

The Structure of the Book of Micah

Traditionally, the whole book of Micah has been attributed to the prophet Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah. Both prophets preached in Judah in the latter part of the eighth century B.C.E. Micah was from Moresheth-gath, a village about twenty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem. According to the superscription of the book, Micah preached during the reigns of Jotham (742-735), Ahaz (735-715), and Hezekiah (715-687). Most of Micah's ministry occurred at a time when the presence of the mighty Assyrian empire was felt throughout the ancient Near East. He lived through the Syro-Ephraimite war in 734, when Ahaz became a vassal of Tiglath-Pileser III, and at the time when the population of several cities of the northern kingdom was deported to Assyria (2 Kings 15:29). He proclaimed the devastation of Samaria (1:6) and saw his prophecy fulfilled when the city was conquered in 722 and a large section of its population was relocated to several places controlled by Assyria (2 Kings 17:5-6). Micah also experienced the invasion of Sennacherib in 701, when Judah lost territory to the Edomites (2 Kings 15:6) and to the

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[1] Albert Condamin, "Interpolations ou transpositions accidentelles?" *Revue Biblique* 11 (1902) 379-97.

Philistines (2 Chr 28:18), and Judah was forced to pay tribute to Assyria. It is in the light of these events that Delbert Hillers interprets the book of Micah as a nativist document. According to Hillers, Micah was associated with a movement of revitalization that emphasized "the removal of foreign elements," "the reversal of social classes," the beginning of the messianic age with a peaceful ruler, and the people's triumph against their enemies.[2]

     However, the redaction and structure of the book of Micah have been a source of discussion among scholars. Numerous proposals have been made to understand the structure of the book. Some scholars divide the book into three major sections by grouping chapters 1-2, 3-5, 6-7. This division of the book is based on the use of the word "hear" to introduce chapters 1, 3, and 6. Generally, the book of Micah has been divided into three sections: chapters 1-3, 4-5, 6-7, with oracles alternating between oracles of doom and oracles of salvation. The language, style, and historical background of chapters 4-7 are distinct from what appears in chapters 1-3. For this reason, only chapters 1-3 can be assigned to Micah himself; chapters 4-7 reflect the work of prophets who lived after the exile of the nation. These exilic prophets were influenced by the severe words of the eighth-century prophet against the sins of Israel and Judah. In order to address their own situations, these prophets reworked the oracles of Micah, added new oracles to his words, and produced a new work that used the words of the past to speak to the concerns of a new generation of Israelites.

The Nature of Micah 2:11-12

In the section assigned to Micah, chapters 1-3, following the superscription (1:1), the prophet announces God's judgment upon Samaria (1:2-7) and Jerusalem (1:8-9) and proclaims the destruction of several cities of Judah (1:10-16). Micah 2:1-11 is an oracle of judgment against the rich and powerful of Judah who have caused the suffering of the people. Micah 2:12-13 breaks the oracle of doom by introducing an oracle of hope and salvation in which Yahweh declares that he will gather the remnant of Israel and deliver them from the place in which they are confined. Micah 3:1-12 returns to oracles of judgment. The prophet preaches against the political and religious leaders of Judah, because they have mistreated the poor people of Judah. As a punishment for their oppressive actions, Yahweh will bring a severe judgment upon Jerusalem: the city will become a pile of rubble, the temple will be destroyed, and the area where the temple was located would become desolate (3:12).

     In the midst of these oracles of judgment, the message of 2:12-13 is unique and unusual. Since the tone of this oracle is different from what precedes in chapters 1 and 2, scholars have raised the question about the relationship of 2:12-13 and the oracles in chapters 1 and 2. The proper understanding of this oracle and the correct identification of "the breaker" must begin with two significant issues of interpretation that are interrelated to each other: the message of Micah 2:12-13 and the date of the oracle.

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[2]Delbert R. Hillers, *Micah* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 6-7.

The Message of Micah 2:12-13

The message of the oracle in 2:12-13 has been the source of much debate. The oracle is divided into two parts. The speaker of v. 12 is Yahweh who promises the restoration of the remnant of Israel that is scattered among the nations. The speaker of v. 13 is a different person since Yahweh is spoken of in the third person. The speaker of v. 13 declares that Yahweh will save his people from their confinement by breaking the walls that confine them and by leading them into freedom. This oracle of hope and salvation appears between the proclamation of exile in chapters 1-2 and the prophecy of the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in chapter 3. Micah, in his chastisement of the leaders of Judah, declares that the nation and its leaders will be banished from the land as punishment for their treatment of the people. However, to the writer of the oracle in 2:12-13, the exile of the nation will not be permanent, for the time will come when the scattered people, the remnant of Israel, will be gathered by Yahweh their king, who then will lead his people home.

A. S. Van der Woude believes that 2:12-13 is an oracle of the false prophets who proclaimed a false message of hope despite the rebellion of the people against Yahweh and their rejection of the ancient religious traditions of the nation.[3] But this view is negated by the message of the oracle itself. The false prophets believed that Yahweh would deliver the nation from their enemies and would never admit the possibility of the people going into exile (see 3:11). As Max Margolis says, "It is not likely that the false prophets concerned themselves with the events following the downfall of the nation, which contingency they were most emphatic in denying."[4] Leslie C. Allen interprets 2:12-13 as an oracle from Micah proclaimed to reflect Judah's situation in 701 at the time Assyria besieged Jerusalem and conquered several cities of Judah. According to Allen's view, the place of refuge was Jerusalem. Faced with the imminent attack of Jerusalem by Sennacherib, the people from the villages and the countryside of Judah came to Jerusalem for refuge and safety. Allen gives three reasons for this interpretation. The first reason is the similarity of this oracle with the oracle of Isaiah in 2 Kings 19:31. Since Isaiah spoke those words in response to the events in 701, the oracle of Micah reflects the same situation. The second reason to relate 2:12-13 to the events of 701 is the appearance of the word "gate" in v. 13. The use of the word "gate" in v. 13 goes back to 1:9 where Jerusalem is referred as "the gate of my people." Allen believes that the appearance of the word "gate" in v. 13 binds this oracle to the other oracles in chapters 1 and 2. Finally, Allen says that since God had announced the exile in 1:16, God also would provide a means of escape, by making Jerusalem a city of refuge.[5] Allen describes the events as follows:

> As the refugees gather from the various towns and villages in Judah in this
> final bastion of hope, they look behind them apprehensively at the

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[3]A. S. van der Woude, "Micah in Dispute with the Pseudo-Prophets," *VT* 19 (1969) 244-60.

[4]Max Margolis, *Micah* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1908) . This quote from Margolis was taken from Hillers, *Micah*, 40.

[5]Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 301.

pursuing foe. Are they safe? Will not Jerusalem fall like many another
fortified city of Judah? As the last Judean villagers get through before the
capital is blockaded by the Assyrian army, the prophet issues this oracle
which not only assures that God is driving his people into this fold of
safety, but looks confidently to the future with the forecast that the God
who has led his people in will eventually lead them out in peace.[6]

Allen's interpretation does not provide a clear explanation of the content of Mic
2:12-13. First, people going to Jerusalem to flee from Assyrian danger cannot be
considered as analogous to Yahweh gathering his flock. Second, a group of
refugees cannot be considered "the remnant of Israel." Finally, the return of the
people to their land could not be considered "going up" (עלה, v. 13), since an exit
from Jerusalem to the villages would be considered a descent.
      Gershon Brin believes that 2:12-13 is a continuation of the oracles of
doom in chapters 1-2 and considers the words of the prophet to be a message of
judgment. According to his view, the people of Judah are confronted with a
defenseless situation (v. 12). Yahweh has gathered his people, not to save them
from their enemy, but to judge them.[7] Brin studied the words עסף (assemble) and
קבץ (gather) outside of the book of Micah and concludes that the usage of these two
words is not confined to oracles of salvation. Moreover, he says that most of the
verses where the two words occur have a meaning of trouble and war.[8]

The Date of Micah 2:12-13

The date of this oracle is also debated. Most scholars, following the work of
Bernhard Stade, regard this oracle as an addition to the work of Micah during or
after the exile.[9] Hans Wolff says that what connects vv. 12 and 13 is the exilic
situation of the people.[10] However, the exilic date for the oracle is not unanimous.
Those scholars who associate the oracle with the events of 701 B.C.E. ascribe the
words to Micah. Francis Andersen and David Freedman conclude that "the
possibility that Micah saw out beyond the judgments of chapters 1-3 to some kind
of recovery, as described in 2:12-13, cannot be ruled out *a priori*."[11] The prophet
could predict the exile of the nation and at the same time believe that Yahweh
would restore that nation again.
      The historical background of this oracle reflects the exilic situation of the
people of Israel. As a result of the deportation policies of Assyria and Babylon,
thousands of people were forcibly removed from Israel and Judah and scattered
throughout the Assyrian and Babylonian empires. This oracle was probably added
to the prophecies of Micah at a time when the hope for a return home was being

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     [6]Ibid., 302.
     [7]Gershon Brin, "Micah 2,12-13: A Textual and Ideological Study," *ZAW* 101
(1989) 118-24.
     [8]Ibid., 121.
     [9]Bernhard Stade, "Bemerkungen über das Buch Micha," *ZAW* 1 (1881) 161-72.
     [10]Hans W. Wolff, *Micah: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990) 86.
     [11]Francis I. Andersen and David N. Freedman, *Micah* (New York: Doubleday,
2000) 334.

proclaimed to people who had lost hope.

Two reasons can be given to treat the oracle in 2:12-13 as exilic. The first reason is that the gathering of the remnant of Israel presupposes the exile of the nation as Micah had predicted in 1:11, 16, and 2:4. Also Yahweh promises that he will gather "all of Jacob," from among the nations (2:12). This presupposes both Judah and Israel. The name Jacob appears eleven times in Micah and the name Israel is used twelve times, but the use of these two names in Micah does not provide a clear identification of who is being addressed. Generally, after the division of the united monarchy, the names Israel and Jacob were to designate the people of the northern kingdom. After the fall of Samaria and after the exile of Judah, the names Israel and Jacob were used to designate the whole people of God. As Mark Biddle notes, "Micah's usage ... seems to conform to exilic and postexilic practice rather than that of the eighth century."[12] Biddle sees a distinction between the use of "Jacob" and "the remnant of Israel" in Micah 2:12-13. According to him, the exilic redactor of Micah believed that all the Judean exiles ("all of Jacob") would return from exile but that only a few of the people from the northern kingdom would return from exile.[13] But since the eighth-century prophet had preached the destruction of Samaria in 1:6-7 and the destruction of Jerusalem in 3:12, this oracle of restoration of "all of Jacob" must reflect a time when the exile of the nation had already taken place and the hope that Yahweh would bring back all of his people who were scattered among the nations.

The second reason for considering this oracle to be exilic is the similarity of many of Deutero-Isaiah's themes in this oracle of hope and salvation. Yahweh is portrayed in Deutero- Isaiah as the king who defeats the enemies of Israel and delivers his people from the Babylonian exile.[14] In Isa 40:11, Yahweh is portrayed as a shepherd who brings back his sheep from Babylon. In 52:12 God guides and protects his people by going in front of them, as he did when the people came out of Egypt. In 45:2 Yahweh overwhelms his enemies by breaking the doors of their cities. In addition, Deutero-Isaiah portrays the return of the people to Canaan as a new exodus.

In the promise of Micah 2:12, three words related to the gathering of the dispersed people appear: אסף (assemble), קבץ (gather), and שארית (remnant).[15] The words אסף and קבץ appear often in the later prophets to convey the idea of bringing together the people from their exile among the nations.[16] The idea of a remnant presupposes the judgment of Yahweh on Israel. In 2 Kgs 25:11, the remnant is a clear reference to the people who were left behind in Judah after the city of

[12]Mark E. Biddle, "'Israel' and 'Jacob' in the Book of Micah: Micah in the Context of the Twelve," in *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, ed. James D. Nogalski and Marvin A. Sweeney (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000) 148.

[13]Ibid., 158.

[14]On the king imagery in Deutero-Isaiah, cf. J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967) 395.

[15]Geo Widengren, "Yahweh's Gathering of the Dispersed," in *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays on Ancient Palestine Life and Literature in Honor of G. W. Ahlström*, ed. W. B. Barrick and J. R. Spencer (Sheffield: JSOT, 1984) 230.

[16]Isa 40:11; 43:5, 23:3; 31:10; Ezek 34:13; Zeph 3:19.

Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians in 587 B.C.E. The word "remnant," as used by the prophets, designates those who will survive the judgment God will bring upon the nation and who will become the people whom God will use to carry on the divine promise.[17] The restoration of Israel is pictured in the image of a shepherd gathering together the scattered flock. This imagery fits well with the message of the scattering of the people presented in Micah 2:1-11. This picture in v. 12 presents the remnant of Israel as a people scattered among the nations. The scattering of the people was the result of the great judgment that came upon the nation in fulfillment of Micah's message. Now Yahweh will gather his dispersed people, as a shepherd gathers his flock. The shepherd imagery is used throughout the Old Testament to describe the work of Yahweh. Yahweh was known as "the Shepherd of Israel" who leads his people like a flock (Ps 80:1). He is the one who cares and protects his people as a shepherd cares for a helpless flock:

> For thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak (Ezek 34:11-16).[18]

The Breaker of Israel

The oracle in Micah 2:12-13 portrays Israel as helpless sheep. Many years before the exile of Israel, Micaiah ben Imlah in his vision had already seen Israel scattered as sheep: "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep that have no shepherd" (1 Kgs 22:17).[19] Like a flock, Israel is gathered together in a pen. But Yahweh will gather all the people, none of them will be left behind (Isa 10:20; Jer 31:8; Ezek 34:11-12). The place of their confinement is not Jerusalem. Wolff said that the imagery of fold and pen suggests that the people are together in a foreign city and that this fact may explain the mention of Bozrah in v. 12 of the Hebrew text.[20]

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[17]The word שארית appears five times in Micah: 2:12, 4:7, 5:7, 8 [Heb. 4:6, 7]; 7:18. In 5:7-8 the text clearly refers to the remnant of Israel that is scattered among the nations.

[18]For the imagery of Yahweh as a shepherd in the Psalms, cf. 28:9, 74:1, 77:20, 78:52-53, 95:7, 100:3, 121:3-8. For the imagery of Yahweh as a shepherd in the prophets, cf. Isa 40:11; 49:9-10; Jer 23:1-4; 31:10; 49:19-20; Mic 4:6-8; 7:14.

[19]See also Jer 50:17; Isa 53:6; Ezek 34:2.

[20]Wolff, *Micah*, 85.

With Yahweh leading his people, the remnant of Israel will break out and march triumphantly out of its prison and return to its land. The identity of "the breaker" in v. 13 has been interpreted in different ways. S. R. Driver believes that "the breaker" was "the leader, or a detachment of men, whose duty it was to break up walls or other obstacles opposing the progress of an army." According to Driver, the breaker goes through the wall of the prison in which the people are confined, breaks the wall and the people are set free, marching through the wall, with Yahweh, their king at their side, heading the victorious procession.[21] C. F. Keil identifies "the breaker" with Zerubbabel, since "the breaker" would be a historical figure who would bring the people out of captivity, as Moses did.[22] The Jewish writer Kimchi, associated Mic 2:13 with the fall of Jerusalem. According to William McKane, Kimchi takes v.13 "as a description of a scene which was the prelude to exile and identifies it with an allusion to the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar and with the breakout of Zedekiah and his cohort (Jer 52:1-7)."[23]

Allen and Smith identify "the breaker" with Yahweh, who delivers his people after the Assyrian invasion in 701.[24] According to Smith, after the Assyrian threat was over, the time for the refugees to go back to their villages had arrived: "Yahweh will break through the gates of the city of Jerusalem."[25] Before the siege, the gates had protected the people; after the siege, the walls were confining them. When Yahweh breaks the gates, the way of freedom will be opened and the exiled people of Israel, those who had escaped the Assyrian onslaught, will go through the gate. Yahweh their king, will lead them.[26]

Biddle believes that Micah 2:12-13 is one of the passages dealing with the anti-Edom polemic of exilic Judaism: "Edom's destruction will usher in universal judgment on the nations, and the returning exiles will then pass through Edom's territory unhindered."[27] Jan Wagenaar adopts a similar view on v. 13: "The intention of Micah ii 13 may similarly have been to note the return of the exiles from 'Edom'."[28] Verse 13 is a note from an editor declaring that Yahweh preceded the return of the exiles from Edom: "From Edom the breaker went before them."[29] James Mays sees the oracle in vv. 12-13 as an oracle of judgment. According to Mays, Yahweh is not breaking the wall of captivity to save his people; rather, he is

[21]S. R. Driver, "Notes on Difficult Texts," *The Expositor* 7 (1887) 265.

[22]C. F. Keil, *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949) 1:448.

[23]William McKane, *The Book of Micah* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998) 88.

[24]Allen, *Books*, 302, and Ralph Smith, *Micah to Malachi*, WBC (Waco: Word, 1984) 29.

[25]Smith, *Micah to Malachi*, 29.

[26]It is important to notice that if the gate of the city is broken, the people will become defenseless, since the gate provides protection for the city and the people behind it. Cf. the comments by Hans-Joachim Kraus [*Psalms 60-150* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989) 143] in his study of Psalm 80, where פרץ is also used of Yahweh breaking down the walls of a city. Kraus says, "without protection Israel's land is abandoned to aliens."

[27]Biddle, "'Israel' and 'Jacob,'" 159.

[28]Jan A. Wagenaar, "'From Edom He Went Up . . .': Some Remarks on the Text and Interpretation of Micah II 12-13," *VT* 50 (2000) 538.

[29]Ibid., 538.

breaking down the fortified walls of Jerusalem in order to lead the people through them into exile. The siege and the fall of Jerusalem are the work of Yahweh as king. The exile is a demonstration of Yahweh's sovereignty.[30] Gershon Brin takes a similar view. He said that v. 13 describes the action of Yahweh sending his people into exile. According to Brin, "the breaker" describes a fighter or a commander of fighters who leads an army. In his view, "the breaker" is the enemy who goes out against Israel.[31] The idea that God is going before his people indicates that "God supports the enemy, who are fulfilling his verdict." Thus the imagery of God "going out" before the people reflects his decision to send Israel into exile as a punishment for their sins.[32]

McComiskey identifies "the breaker" with the future king to be born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2-4). He writes,

> The Breaker must be one of the throng, because he goes before them and leads them out. His work is not done from the outside the enclosure. Together they go forward with their King before them. The parallelism of the last clause establishes a close relationship between the work of the Breaker and the King of 5:2-4. Both arise from the people (5:2) and bring deliverance to the people (5:4); the people they lead are likened to a flock (5:4); and both are intimately associated with Yahweh (5:4). We may thus understand the Breaker to be Israel's King.[33]

None of the interpretations above reflect the intent of the oracle in 2:12-13. The oracle clearly identifies Yahweh as the breaker of Israel. Yahweh is the liberator, the leader who acts to rescue his people. He is the one who breaks the gates holding his people prisoners, and he is the one who gathers his people scattered among the nations and delivers them from their exile and returns them to their land. The gate is a metaphor for the exile which is portrayed like a city that holds the people, like a prison that keeps them confined.[34] As "the breaker" (הפרץ), Yahweh leads the way just as he led the people when they came out of Egypt (Exod 13:21).[35] He breaks the wall that confines his people and leads them as their head[36] (ראש) to freedom. As a result, the people "breakout" (פרצו) and go out

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[30]James L. Mays, *Micah*, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster) 75.

[31]W. E. Barnes, in his review of K. Budde's article, "Micah 2 und 3," *ZAW* 38 (1919-20) 2-22, published in *JTS* 25 (1924) 79-84, adopts a similar view. He says, "Though Jacob seems safe in the fenced cities of Judah (and in particular in Jerusalem), JEHOVAH will send up the 'Breach-maker' (i. e., the Assyrians) and the whole population will be gathered out of the land which has been defile" (84).

[32]Brin, "Micah 2,12-13,"123-24.

[33]Thomas E. McComiskey, "Micah," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985) 7:416.

[34]Deutero-Isaiah refers to the people in exile as "prisoners" (cf. Isa. 49:9).

[35]According to Walter Brueggemann (*Theology of the Old Testament* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997] 204), the imagery of leading reflects the "action of a shepherd tending sheep." The imagery of the shepherd was utilized in Isaianic circles to speak of "Yahweh's attentiveness to Israel in exile."

[36]H.-P. Müller, "ראש," *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997) 3:1191, notes that, in this context, the word ראש serves to designate

through the gate on their way home.[37]

The verb פרץ appears in the Old Testament in the context of military action and disaster situations.[38] The word also appears with Yahweh as the subject. In Pss 80:13 and 89:41, Yahweh appears as the one who breaks through the walls of a fortified city. In 1 Samuel 5:20 (cf. 1 Chr 15:13) and 2 Sam. 6:8, Yahweh appears as the one who breaks through enemy's lines.

The imagery of Yahweh as a king who goes before his people to defeat earthly enemies and to bring salvation to Israel appears in Isa 41:21-24; 43:15; 44:6-7; 52:7, 12; Jer 10:6-10; Zeph 3:14-19; Zech 14:9, 16-17. The people turn to Yahweh their king for help and salvation in time of need, and as king, Yahweh exercises his power when his people cry out for help. This oracle of salvation in Micah portrays Yahweh as the victorious king who leads the returning exiles back to their land.

Summary

In conclusion, Micah 2:12-13 presents a promise of hope in which Yahweh promises to gather his people who are scattered among the nations. The dispersion of Israel among the nations was the result of the sins of the nation expressed in its oppression of the poor and its rejection of Yahweh. But the exile of Israel was not total nor final. Yahweh himself will gather the remnant of both the northern and southern kingdom and bring his people back to their land. Yahweh is the breaker of Israel, and as such he will break the walls that imprison his people. Just like Yahweh did in Egypt, he will bring his people back to the land he promised to give them. Micah portrays Yahweh as the shepherd who gathers his flock, as the breaker who breaks the walls that imprison his people, and as the king who triumphantly lead his people home.

Yahweh's function in war.

[37]The return of the people from Babylon is portrayed in Deutero-Isaiah as "a going out," cf. Isa. 48:20; 49:9; 52:11, 12; 55:12.

[38]Christopher Toll, "Die Wurzel PRS im Hebräischen," *Orientalia Suecana* 21 (1972) 73-86; Victor P. Hamilton, "פרץ," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1980) 2:737.