

give God's answer to the discouragement, so as to show that God is still with His people, and that in the end He will surely bring to pass the wonderful blessing that He has already described. We notice that 4:9, 4:11, and 5:1, all begin with the word "now". Micah uses this word to introduce each of three separate pictures. Let us look at the first of them.

#### 1. The First Picture                      4:9-10

Micah 4:9 describes a people in great sorrow. He says, "Now why dost thou cry out aloud? is there no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail."

For one hundred fifty years after Micah wrote there was always a king among the people. Then the king of Babylon came, besieged the land for three years, captured Jerusalem, blinded the King Zedekiah, and carried the people off into captivity. Verse 9 vividly describes the anguish and misery of the people in this situation, by asking the question, "Is there no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished?"

In the next verse God proceeds to give the answer. He tells the people that they have misery to go through, but that there is deliverance ahead. After stating that they will be led out into captivity and taken across the desert, he says, "Thou shalt go even to Babylon". This statement must have come as a very strange thought to people in Micah's day. When he wrote, Assyria was the great foreign aggressor. Babylon was under the control of the Assyrians. No one would ever have thought of Babylon as a source of future menace. The Assyrians had already taken the northern kingdom of Israel into exile. Micah tells the people of Judah that they are not going to go into captivity to the Assyrians, as might have been thought probable, but that they are to go to a different place altogether. However, he promises that the Babylonian captivity is not the end. He says, "There shalt thou be delivered: There the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies."