

beat them off, and eventually to gain its independence?

Since we do not know much about the details of the events still ahead at the end of this age, we cannot entirely be sure about this second picture. This we can say with certainty - that it describes a time when Israel appears to be in great danger, but when God marvelously intervenes and gives them victory. Again, as in the first picture, we look forward to a time of difficulty and trouble, and receive the divine answer, that God is going to give victory and deliverance. When this comes to pass it gives people even more certainty that eventually the wonderful picture of Micah 4:1-4 will become a reality.

### 3. The Third Picture — 5:1-5a

The third picture begins with another depiction of sorrow and discouragement. A siege is described. The people are gathering themselves to resist it, but without success. The enemy is victorious: "They shall smite the judge of Israel with a red  
/upon the cheek."

We need not be in any doubt as to when this was fulfilled. It was not much more than a century after Micah's day when the armies of Babylon surrounded the city of Jerusalem, besieged the city for three years, and finally captured the city. Zedekiah was captured and cruelly treated. The putting out of his eyes before he was carried off to Babylon to march in the triumphal procession is vividly described in the words, "They shall smite the judge of Israel with a red upon the cheek."

It is interesting that here Zedekiah is not called the king, but "the judge of Israel." Probably this is a suggestion of the fact that when the Babylonians took Jehoiachin (also called Coniah) off into captivity, many of the people of Judah felt that he was their true king and that his uncle Zedekiah, who succeeded him, was only a regent. Jehoiachin's property was kept intact, and many people still dated events by the reign of Jehoiachin, since they believed that he would be brought back to reign again. However, Jeremiah declared that it was not God's