

Lesson Plan: Isaiah 2:1-5 in comparison with Micah 4:1-7

Goals:

1. To consider the tension between a universal “end of days” vision and one with a particular emphasis on the place of the Jewish people;
2. To recognize that prophetic truth can be complex and that prophetic messages can therefore appear discordant;
3. To develop skills in recognizing structure of ideas (rhetorical criticism) in prophets

Note: This is an extension lesson, designed for brighter students. It builds on the previous lesson.

Introduction:

Using slide 2, ask the students to identify what the unique role of the Jewish people is in Isaiah 2:2-4. Students should recognize that apart from the focus on Jerusalem, the Jews as a group have NO special role, nor do they seem to be a “Star Player” in the “end of days.”

On one side of the board, write down

_____ : התפקידים של עם ישראל בבואת אחרית הימים של ישעיה:

Brainstorm, but very few answers will show up. Keep it on the board, away from the powerpoint.

While slide 1 is up, have students turn to Micah, and give a brief introduction:

*contemporary of Yeshaya, lives through the same events, but has a different perspective. While Yeshaya comes from Jerusalem, Micha comes from a smaller town (this will be important later).

Have a student read Micha 4:1-3 out loud while Isa 2:2-4 is on the board. Students should realize that the prophecies are almost identical. I do NOT recommend investigating the minor differences.

Suggest that the two prophets either got the same Nevu'a or one heard it from the other.

Then note that Micha adds four verses (4:4-7) which are NOT there in Yeshaya. What new ideas does Micha present? This will be explored in the worksheet

Worksheet

In reviewing the worksheet, highlight how Micah focuses on the fate of the Jewish people in these verses and is less concerned with the world as a whole.

On the opposite side of the board, write down

_____ : התפקידים של עם ישראל בנבואת מיכה, התוספת לנבואת אחרית הימים:

Keep a running list during the discussion. It will serve as a contrast to the opposite side, in which you list the jobs of Am Israel in the core “end of days” prophecy.

Do not review the whole worksheet. Here are highlights, with slides:

Pasuk 4

Slide 3 –

- Identify the single word (tranquility or something like it)
- Who seems to be the subject of v. 4? Is it the Jews (like in the parallel pesukim that use similar terms) or is it the goyim (continuing the same subject as in the previous pasuk)? Ask for opinions, and then use the slide to show that the mefarshim disagree. Note that it is at least POSSIBLE that the focus now shifts to Am Israel.

Pasuk 5

Use slide 4 to identify the different roles of the Jews and the gentiles here. The Jews worship God, the gentiles are polytheists.

Ask: Does this fit with the core “aharit hayyamim” prophecy which is common to both Isaiah and Micah? Clearly, if the nations are still pagan in v. 5, then it doesn’t fit. Present either of these answers:

- a. Micha adds these verses because his nevu’a shifts the focus away from the nations – he is less concerned with what the goyim do than with what the Jews do
- b. Radak – Micha is here describing the goyim’s pre-mashiah state.

The answers are not mutually exclusive, because either way, Micha is here de-emphasizing the monotheism of the goyim.

I do think that it’s time to let the “cat” out of the bag – the core “aharit hayyamim” prophecy (Isa 2:1-4 = Micha 4:1-3) is actually Isaiah’s prophecy, which Micha copies and comments upon. (כנלע"ד).

Pasuk 6

Use slide 5-

First, make sure they understand what “kibbutz galuyot” is, then ask why it doesn’t show up in the core “aharit hayyamim” prophecy (answer: he’s focused on the goyim). They should have remembered that it shows up in Isaiah 11.

Ask why Micha adds it here, and discuss his focus on the Jews. Add “be returned to Israel by God” to the list of “jobs of Am Israel in Micha’s prophecy.”

Pasuk 7

Use slide 6 to show how only Israel is the focus of God’s kingship in Micha’s prophecy.

Discussion and Conclusion

Use slide 7 to highlight the differences between Micha 4:4-7 and the “core prophecy.” The following are the key “modifications” in Micha 4:4-7:

- a. Unclear whether Jews are the ONLY monotheists. Clearly Micha chooses to focus on their polytheistic stage.
- b. Kibbutz Galuyot only for Jews
- c. Emphasis on God’s kingship over the Jews.

Students will inevitably ask “why are there differences”?

You can turn the question and ask “Who is right?” Is “The end of days” primarily for the gentiles or primarily for the Jews?

Students should understand that both are right, that Judaism is a complex message, and that often, two ideas that are in tension with each other can each be correct and true.

This is a fundamental “understanding” that students need to reach, and it is worth devoting time to a class discussion, and perhaps assigning some other essay about two ideas that are in tension with each other, that are both true, and can both be ordained by God. It will help them when they discover P and D.