

MICAH

Micah’s name means: who is like God? The book of Micah deals with the character of God and shows us the relationship between judgment and hope. In this series, we will learn what God is like and experience a renewed sense of hope. We will learn about this God particularly in the context of how he handles evil amongst his followers and in the nations surrounding them.

As we encounter the mess of evil in ourselves, in our churches, in our communities, in our governments, and our world, we see that God deals with sin decisively but also beautifully restores people to new life. He takes sin seriously. He takes restoration seriously. Who is like Him?

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MICAH 1-2

Micah 1-2 is the first of three cycles of the pronouncement judgment and hope to the nation of Israel. Throughout the course of the book, the Lord, through Micah, outlines several of the sin problems with his people, yet his desire and plan to redeem them from their enemies and from their sin. In chapter two, Micah articulates the sins of the leaders and “prophets” of Israel and the people’s desire to listen to only preachers that tell them what they want to hear. He also ends with a few verses of hope.

The word of the Lord that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. 2 Hear, you peoples, all of you; pay attention, O earth, and all that is in it, and let the Lord God be a witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple. 3 For behold, the Lord is coming out of his place, and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth. 4 And the mountains will melt under him, and the valleys will split open, like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place. 5 All this is for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem? — Micah 1:1-5

Woe to those who devise wickedness and work evil on their beds When the morning dawns, they perform it, because it is in the power of their hand. 2 They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them away; they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance. 3 Therefore thus says the Lord: behold, against this family I am devising disaster, from which you cannot remove your necks, and you shall not walk haughtily, for it will be a time of disaster. 4 In that day they shall take up a taunt song against you and moan bitterly, and say, “We are utterly ruined; he changes the portion of my people; how he removes it from me! To an apostate he allots our fields.” 5 Therefore you will have none to cast the line by lot in the assembly of the Lord. 6 “Do not preach”—thus they preach— “one should not preach of such things; disgrace will not overtake us.” 7 Should this be said, O house of Jacob? Has the Lord grown impatient? Are these his deeds? Do not my words do good to him who walks uprightly? 8 But lately my people have risen up as an enemy; you strip the rich robe from those who pass by trustingly with no thought of war. 9 The women of my people you drive out from their delightful houses; from their young children you take away my splendor forever. 10 Arise and go, for this is no place to rest, because of uncleanness that destroys with a grievous destruction. 11 If a man should go about and utter wind and lies, saying, “I will preach to you of wine and strong drink,” he would be the preacher for this people! 12 I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob; I will gather the remnant of Israel; I will set them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture, a noisy multitude of men. 13 He who opens the breach goes up before them; they break through and pass the gate, going out by it. Their king passes on before them, the Lord at their head. — 2:1-13

1. Micah 2:1-2 articulates some of the problems with Israel’s leaders. Do you see yourself in any of these sins?

2. Verse eleven gives a scathing rebuke to Israel for who they listen to: people who would preach about wine. What would be the modern equivalent? What kind of words from the Lord do we wish to hear? What kind do we avoid?

3. What attribute of God do you see in this passage (and give the main verse that describes this attribute)?

4. What is so hopeful about verse 12 and 13?

MICAH 3:1-4:5

And I said: Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know justice?— 2 you who hate the good and love the evil, who tear the skin from off my people and their flesh from off their bones, 3 who eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones in pieces and chop them up like meat in a pot, like flesh in a cauldron. 4 Then they will cry to the Lord, but he will not answer them; he will hide his face from them at that time, because they have made their deeds evil. 5 Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who cry “Peace” when they have something to eat, but declare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths. 6 Therefore it shall be night to you, without vision, and darkness to you, without divination. The sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be black over them; 7 the seers shall be disgraced, and the diviners put to shame; they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer from God. 8 But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin. 9 Hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who detest justice and make crooked all that is straight, 10 who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity. 11 Its heads give judgment for a bribe; its priests teach for a price; its prophets practice divination for money; yet they lean on the Lord and say, “Is not the Lord in the midst of us? No disaster shall come upon us.” 12 Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height. — Micah 3:1-12

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, 2 and many nations shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 3 He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; 4 but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. 5 For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever. — Micah 4:1-5

1. In verse 12, God declares judgment on Zion and Jerusalem. Why is this judgment coming?

2. In 3:5-8, Micah is contrasted with the false prophets of his day, saying that he will continue to declare the sins Israel has committed. Many preachers and people have laid claim on these verses as justification for the “hell, fire, and brimstone” message that they proclaim. While we don’t want to be angry and ungracious, we definitely don’t want to go soft on sin. How can we be people of the Spirit, who humbly and lovingly talk to people about the problem of sin?

3. Micah clearly has a burden and responsibility to try and help Israel follow God and convict them of their sin. Do you feel a sense of responsibility for the church?

4. What attributes of God do we see in this passage?

MICAH 4:1-13

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, 2 and many nations shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 3 He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; 4 but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. 5 For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever. 6 In that day, declares the Lord, I will assemble the lame and gather those who have been driven away and those whom I have afflicted; 7 and the lame I will make the remnant, and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and forevermore. 8 And you, O tower of the flock, hill of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, the former dominion shall come, kingship for the daughter of Jerusalem. 9 Now why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in you? Has your counselor perished, that pain seized you like a woman in labor? 10 Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in labor, for now you shall go out from the city and dwell in the open country; you shall go to Babylon. There you shall be rescued; there the Lord will redeem you from the hand of your enemies. 11 Now many nations are assembled against you, saying, "Let her be defiled, and let our eyes gaze upon Zion." 12 But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord; they do not understand his plan, that he has gathered them as sheaves to the threshing floor. 13 Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion, for I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hoofs bronze; you shall beat in pieces many peoples; and shall devote their gain to the Lord, their wealth to the Lord of the whole earth. — Micah 4:1-13

1. The main message of hope has to do with the restoration of Israel, with God reigning over them forever. While we can imagine this being truly hopeful for Israelites in 7th century BC, but how does this promise (which hasn't been completely fulfilled) give us Christians in Arizona actual hope? Does this data actually speak to our circumstances today?
2. What from verses 1-7 builds your hope? Are there any particular phrases or words that speak to a current situation in your life?

3. Verse 11-12 talk about a moment where “many nations” are lined up in battle against Jerusalem (Zion). Their perspective is to destroy Jerusalem but Yahweh has something different in mind. Do you have the courage to see the Lord’s plan in the midst of fearful, evil and impossible circumstances?

4. What attributes of God do we see in this passage?