

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?

MICAH 5:1-6

Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. 2 But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. 3 Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. 4 And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. 5 And he shall be their peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men; 6 they shall shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod at its entrances; and he shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he comes into our land and treads within our border. — Micah 5:1-6

1. What attributes of God do you see in this passage?
2. What is so good about this coming king's arrival? Do we experience any of these things now as followers of Jesus the Messiah?
3. This prophecy of Micah came at a time of intense distress for Jerusalem and the people of Judah. The Assyrian army was invading with a plan to destroy the whole city. Does this passage speak to you any hope or truth in the midst of the distress you have?
4. Why is it so important for the location of the birth to be pinpointed 750 years before Jesus arrived? How does fulfilled prophecy strengthen our faith and hope?

MICAH 5:7-15

Then the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples like dew from the Lord, like showers on the grass, which delay not for a man nor wait for the children of man. 8 And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of sheep, which, when it goes through, treads down and tears in pieces, and there is none to deliver. 9 Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries, and all your enemies shall be cut off. 10 And in that day, declares the Lord, I will cut off your horses from among you and will destroy your chariots; 11 and I will cut off the cities of your land and throw down all your strongholds; 12 and I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and you shall have no more tellers of fortunes; 13 and I will cut off your carved images and your pillars from among you, and you shall bow down no more to the work of your hands; 14 and I will root out your Asherah images from among you and destroy your cities. 15 And in anger and wrath I will execute vengeance on the nations that did not obey. — Micah 5:7-15

1. Why are verses 7-8 so hopeful for the future of Israel? Why is it important for God to say that his remnant will be in the midst of many peoples, yet not defeated by them?
2. The things in verses 10-14 are list of stuff Israel turned to for self-sufficiency. Its a list of things they trusted in besides God. What are some parallels of the things in verses 10-14 in our day and age that we use to accomplish self-sufficiency?
3. When God shows up he cuts away sin from our lives. What's the Holy Spirit helping you get rid of right now?

4. Our tendency is to resist this “cutting away” that the Lord wants to do in our lives. Often times, its not just a specific sin that needs to change in our lives, but also how we relate with God needs to change and grow. How does the way you relate with God need to change and grow?

5. What attributes of God do you see in this passage?

MICAH 6

This begins the third of three cycles of judgment and hope in the book of Micah, each beginning with “hear.”

Hear what the Lord says: Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. 2 Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the Lord has an indictment against his people, and he will contend with Israel. 3 “O my people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me! 4 For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. 5 O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the Lord.” 6 “With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? 7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” 8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? 9 The voice of the Lord cries to the city—and it is sound wisdom to fear your name: “Hear of the rod and of him who appointed it! 10 Can I forget any longer the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is accursed? 11 Shall I acquit the man with wicked scales and with a bag of deceitful weights. 12 Your rich men are full of violence; your inhabitants speak lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. 13 Therefore I strike you with a grievous blow, making you desolate because of your sins. 14 You shall eat, but not be satisfied, and there shall be hunger within you; you shall put away, but not preserve, and what you preserve I will give to the sword. 15 You shall sow, but not reap; you shall tread olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil; you shall tread grapes, but not drink wine. 16 For you have kept the statutes of Omri, and all the works of the house of Ahab; and you have walked in their counsels, that I may make you a desolation, and your inhabitants a hissing; so you shall bear the scorn of my people.” — Micah 6

1. Why does this section about what the Lord requires come in between these two sections on sin and judgment?

2. In which of the three areas given in verse eight do you sense the Spirit growing in you currently?

3. What is something that you spend a lot of time pursuing and thinking about? Do you love mercy/kindness with that same level of desire? How can you love kindness more than you do now?

4. How do we balance these direct standards of God with his endless grace towards us? Are “requirements” and grace compatible?

5. The summary of the problem in Israel is found in verse sixteen: they walk in the sins of Omri and Ahab. The sins of these two kings set a negative trajectory for Israel for generations (If you want to know what they did, see 1 Kings 16:25-33). The Lord seeks to redeem us from generational sins and so how is the Lord using you to “change the tide” of a particular sin struggle in your family line?

MICAH 7:1-17

Woe is me! For I have become as when the summer fruit has been gathered, as when the grapes have been gleaned: there is no cluster to eat, no first-ripe fig that my soul desires. 2 The godly has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among mankind; they all lie in wait for blood, and each hunts the other with a net. 3 Their hands are on what is evil, to do it well; the prince and the judge ask for a bribe, and the great man utters the evil desire of his soul; thus they weave it together. 4 The best of them is like a brier, the most upright of them a thorn hedge. The day of your watchmen, of your punishment, has come; now their confusion is at hand. 5 Put no trust in a neighbor; have no confidence in a friend; guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your arms; 6 for the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house. 7 But as for me, I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. 8 Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me. 9 I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him, until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon his vindication. 10 Then my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me, "Where is the Lord your God?" My eyes will look upon her; now she will be trampled down like the mire of the streets. 11 A day for the building of your walls! In that day the boundary shall be far extended. 12 In that day they will come to you, from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt to the River, from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain. 13 But the earth will be desolate because of its inhabitants, for the fruit of their deeds. 14 Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock of your inheritance, who dwell alone in a forest in the midst of a garden land; let them graze in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old. 15 As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them marvelous things. 16 The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; they shall lay their hands on their mouths; their ears shall be deaf; 17 they shall lick the dust like a serpent, like the crawling things of the earth; they shall come trembling out of their strongholds; they shall turn in dread to the Lord our God, and they shall be in fear of you.— Micah 7:1-17

1. Some of the hardest sections to read and understand in the prophets are when they use poetic imagery, like in verses 1-2, so it makes for good discussion. Why does the situation in verse two and three make Micah feel like a fruit picker who arrived too late to the harvest?

2. How is Micah able to say verse 7? What does it look like for you to truly be able to say this same thing in the midst of your life struggles?

3. Even though Micah knows his sin (verse 9), he seems to still be confident of salvation. What gives Micah the confident hope that he will rise? How can we have this same confidence, even in the midst of our own sin?

4. What do we learn about God's character in this passage?

MICAH 7:18-20

Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. 19 He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. 20 You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old. — Micah 7:18-20

1. If the Lord is so amazing in how he handles our sin against him, as this passage declares beautifully, how come more people don't follow him? What's the core issue?
2. What attribute about God from this passage is particularly meaningful to you? Why?
3. Why is faithfulness to Jacob and Abraham an important thing to know and declare?
4. If God, the powerful judge, truly handles sin in the way verse 19 describes, how should we handle the sin done against us? Is there any unforgiveness towards some people in your life that you need to deal with before the Lord?
5. What attribute of God could you share from these verses that might impact someone you know in a meaningful way?