



Micah: God of Justice

Memory Verse: Micah 6:8 "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

Background

Micah is the 33rd book of the Bible and the 6th book of the minor prophets in the Old Testament. Micah, whose name means "Who is like Yahweh?", came from Moresheth, an agricultural area in southwestern Judah near the border of Philistia. Micah prophesied from c. 735-700 BC, "during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (1:1), making him a contemporary of Hosea and Isaiah. Micah directing his ministry primarily at Judah, also prophesied to Israel, predicting its fall to the Assyrian Empire (1:6). Because of this prediction, it is likely that most of his ministry took place before 722 BC, when Israel fell to the Assyrians. Micah's ministry and cry against the idolatry and immorality of God's people may also have influenced the great religious reforms of King Hezekiah who came to power c. 715 BC (2 Kings 18:1-7).

Micah's prophecy focused mainly on the moral and social problems of Judah and Israel. Micah discusses the sins of the people, their coming destruction, and hope of restoration. Throughout the book, Micah transitions between the present desolation and the future glory for God's people. He compares the kingdom of Judah, filled with sin and injustice, with the future Kingdom of God ruled by the Messiah and filled with justice and peace.

The Short Story

Israel and Judah will suffer for their sins of idolatry and injustice.

What's the Big Idea?

The book of Micah tells of God's coming judgment for both Israel and Judah. Much of Micah's indictment against Israel and Judah have to do with their social ethics, or lack thereof. Micah directs his prophecy toward those in power "who despise justice and distort all that is right;" (3:9). Judah's sins included oppression, exploitation of the poor and powerless, bribery among the judges, prophets, and priests, as well as cheating, violence, robbery, and pride. Because of their injustice, Jerusalem will be "become a heap of rubble" (3:12) as they face God's judgment. The final chapters of Micah describe a courtroom scene in which God sets forth His case against His people. Micah 6:8 "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." God's people had failed to recognize that there is a relationship between true spirituality and social ethics. In God's court case against them, the verdict could only be guilty. Nevertheless, God, who is just, is also a merciful God and after the judgment, restoration will come. Micah ends his book with a note of hope as he exclaims that God will not stay angry forever, but "delight[s] to show mercy" and "will again have compassion on us; you [God] will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea" (7:18-19).

So What? Why is this book so important? What was God's purpose for the book?

Written 700 years before Jesus' birth, Micah gives a striking prophecy regarding the town of His birth and His eternal nature. "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times" (5:2). Additionally, Micah gives some of the best descriptions in the Old Testament about the future Kingdom when Jesus Christ will reign over the whole world (2:12-13; 4:1-8; 5:4-5). "He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth" (5:4). This Kingdom will be filled with peace and joy with the Messiah as its ruler and people from every nation worshipping Him. As we wait in hope for God's Kingdom to fully come, may we live as God requires "To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (6:8).

**Material taken from various sources.*

Teaching Text

Micah 6:6-8 “With what **shall I come before the LORD** and **bow down** before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with **thousands of rams**,... He has showed you, O man, **what is good**. And what does the LORD **require of you**? To **act justly** and to **love mercy** and to walk **humbly with your God**.”

Sermon-Based Discussion Questions

- What is Micah trying to say about worship ? What excuse could Israel use for non compliance?
- What is the purpose and significance of burnt offerings and sacrifices? Who does it point to?
- How do we receive knowledge about God's desires for us? Once received are we accountable?
- What does God require of you? What does he really want? What are you willing to give?
- What does it mean to walk humbly with God? According to scripture how are we to do this?

Practical Application

- How do you fully engage the Lord in worship? How do you show Him respect and honor?
- Where do you struggle with not being in full compliance with the teachings of Jesus?
- Where do you need to be more merciful towards others? How about towards yourself?
- How would you characterize your walk with God? Is there anything you would change?
- What is the Holy Spirit asking you to do in the “world” you live in? Where do you need to change?

Hitting the Highpoints

- 1:2 “Hear, you peoples, all of you, listen... that the Sovereign LORD may bear witness against you..”
- 2:13 “The One who breaks open the way will go up before them...”
- 3:1 ““Listen, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of Israel. Should you not embrace justice..”
- 5:2 “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel.”
- 6:1 “Listen to what the LORD says: “Stand up, plead my case before the mountains;”
let the hills hear what you have to say

Bonus Feature: Where is Jesus?

Micah contains several prophecies relative to Jesus. In chapter five verse two the prophecy of his birth in Bethlehem is recorded. In chapters two, four and five there are additional references to His messianic reign. For example, chapter four verses one through eight refer the messiah as peacemaker, teacher, provider and gatherer of the lame, the exiles, the grief stricken. These are among countless other Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled by Jesus and give us confidence in Him as our Lord and Savior. We also know that all sacrifices and offerings were pointing to the perfect sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Personal Takeaways and Notes