

Major Messages from the Minor Prophets

Studies in the Minor Prophets

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

Jersey Shore Baptist Church

Pastor Phil Erickson

Began August 2, 2017

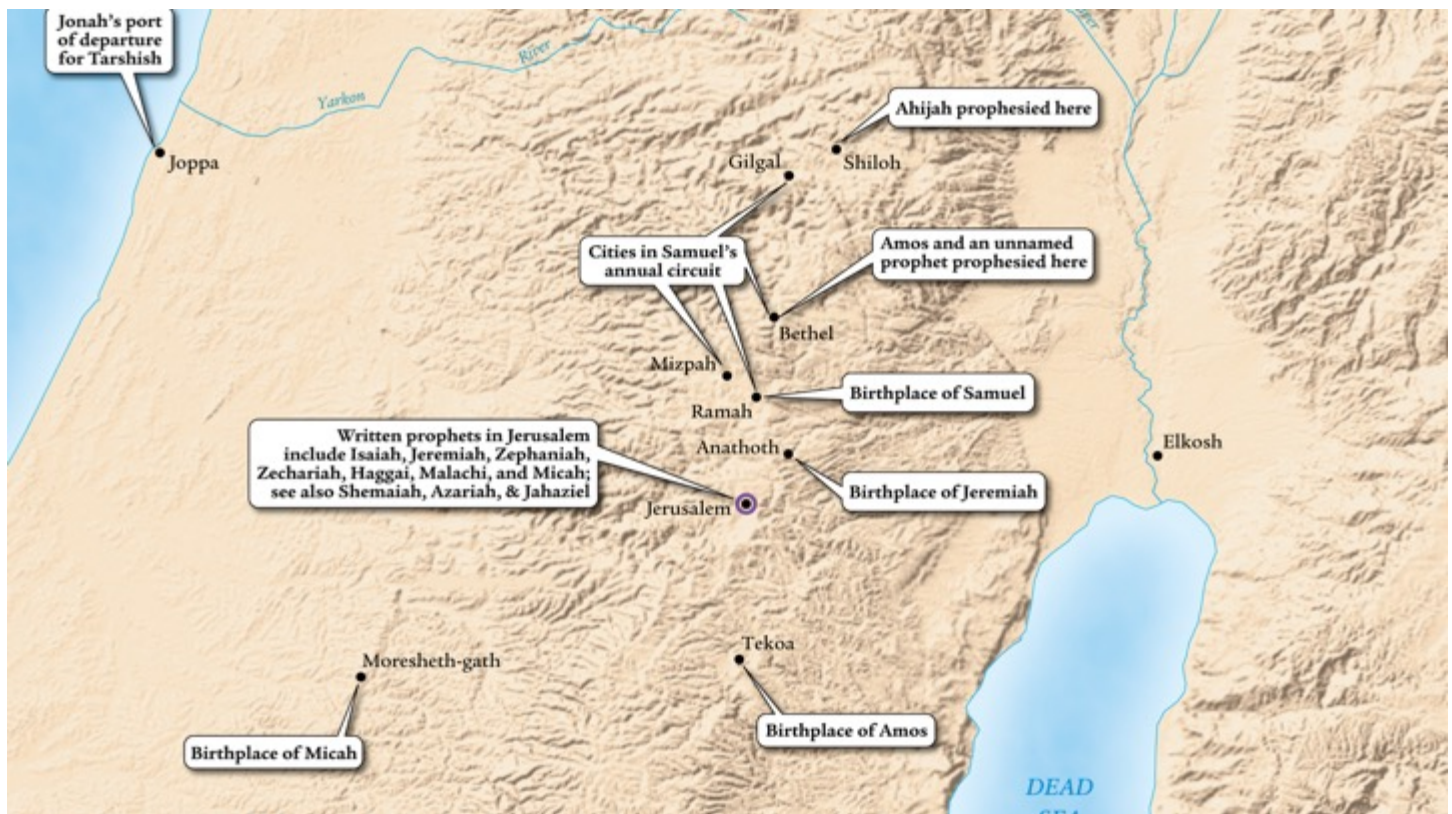
Message Six – Micah

Memory Verse

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" - (Micah 6:8)

Introduction

Micah was a prophet from the town of Moresheth, which is located approximately 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem near the border of the Philistines, and not too far from the City of Gath.



He was called and equipped by the Lord to deliver God's message:

"But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." - (Micah 3:8)

His name means, “who is like Jehovah?” or “who is like Yahweh?” His name is said to be a shortened version of the name Micaiah. There are many other men in the Bible that share the names “Micah” and “Micaiah”

Micah prophesied to both the northern kingdom as well as the southern kingdom. Only the names of Judean kings are mentioned in verse 1, however. This is probably due to the fact that the northern kingdom was just about to be taken into Assyrian captivity at the time of his prophecy. Micah was a prophet during the reigns of Jotham (2 Kings 15:32 – 38, 750 – 731 BC), Ahaz (2 Kings 16, 731 – 715 BC), and Hezekiah (2 Kings 18 – 20, 715 – 686 BC). Hezekiah was the king when the Assyrian’s invaded Judah and attempted to conquer Jerusalem. (See 2 Kings 18:13 – 19:36; 2 Chronicles 32)

Micah was contemporary to the prophet Isaiah in the south; and also to Hosea, Jonah, and Amos from the north.

Micah prophesied at the time when Israel was being completely over-run by the Assyrian Empire, and the same threat was moving southward into Judah. Many of the people from the north were seeking refuge in the south, but unfortunately, they were also bringing with them some of their bad habits. The worship of Baal was becoming more and more of a problem during the time of Micah, as well as the disintegration of moral values.

Micah was the prophet to the poor and downtrodden citizens of the farmland, where Isaiah was a preacher in the cities, and had the ear of kings and princes; but the messages of both Isaiah and Micah were very similar.

“For peasants and villagers, these were days of harassment from enemy armies, of hardship because of exploitation by the wealthy (2:1–13), and of oppression by the rulers (3:1–4) and false prophets (3:5–8). Micah, as Amos, cried for social justice.”¹

There is a striking similarity between Micah 4:1 – 3; and Isaiah 2:2 – 4, which has caused some to believe that one of the two was quoting from the other. Though that is a possibility, it is also completely understandable for God to give the same message to two preachers who were both prophesying in the same region, and in the same spiritual conditions.

Three Important Quotes:

"Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest." - (Micah 3:12)

¹ Ryrie, C. C. (1994). Ryrie study Bible: King James Version (Expanded ed., p. 1334). Chicago: Moody Press.

This verse was quoted by the elders of Judah (Jeremiah 26:18) when Jeremiah was about to be put to death by King Jehoiakim. The King had been greatly offended by the judgment that Jeremiah had pronounced against his kingdom, and had promised to kill Jeremiah. However, the people pleaded with the king to listen to the message, instead of shooting the messenger. (See Jeremiah 26:9 – 24)

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." - (Micah 5:2)

This verse was quoted to the wise men by the chief priests and scribes, when Herod inquired of them regarding the birthplace of Christ.

"For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house." - (Micah 7:6)

This verse was quoted by the Lord in Matthew 10:35 – 36 when He commissioned His disciples.

Micah 4 provides one of the best prophetic descriptions of the future glory of Israel.

The Prophecy of Micah divides neatly into three major sections, each beginning with the word, "hear". In each of the three sections there is a pronouncement of judgment due to the sins of the people, but there is also a promise of restoration due to their repentance and the covenant promises of God:

"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy." (Micah 7:18)

I "Hear, all ye People" Regarding Samaria and Jerusalem (1:2 – 2:13)

God calls for the people to hear Him from His Holy Temple in Heaven.

"And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying," (Leviticus 1:1)

The Lord had already spoken to them from His Holy Tabernacle, but they were guilty of rebelling against what God had told them. Since they did not heed and obey what God had commanded them through Moses, they would be forced to "hear" from God again, this time in judgement.

Harry Ironside said: "It is a great thing to bow to the whole Word of God, even when it judges me and condemns my ways. To do so is the precursor to something better; but to excuse myself at the expense of God's truth is a process most hardening to the conscience."²

It is far better that we should listen to and obey God when He is instructing us, so that we won't have to hear again from God in chastisement.

God is pronouncing that He is about to come down to the earth to judge the people. The judgment will be for both the northern kingdom as well as the southern kingdom. For the north, the judgment would be captivity: her "wound" was incurable (v. 9). The southern kingdom would also be invaded, but because of Hezekiah's repentance, God would spare Jerusalem. (2 Kings 18 – 19; 2 Chronicles 32; Isaiah 37) However, Sennacherib's army would affect much of the southern kingdom. Micah 10 – 16 list eleven Judean cities that will be oppressed by Assyria.

Note – it appears that Micah emphasized his message by wailing and howling; and by preaching "stripped and naked". (v. 8)

"We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." (1

Corinthians 4:10-13)

Note – "declare ye it not at Gath" (v. 10) – this was a reference to what David lamented at the death of Saul in 2 Samuel 5:20. David did not want the Philistines to rejoice at the death of King Saul, and Micah here is using the reference to say that God's enemies are surely going to hear and rejoice over the destruction of God's people.

Note – "make thee bald, and poll thee" (v. 16) – cutting the hair or shaving the head as a sign of mourning or contrition.

A Reasons for Judgment (2:1 – 11)

In addition to the idolatry mentioned in chapter one, judgment would also come because of their evil imaginations and practices (2:1); and their covetousness (2:2). God will punish Judah's covetousness by allowing an invading army to come and covet their land and possessions. (2:3 – 5) The people were also prone to listen to false prophets (2:6 - 11)

² Ironside, H. A. (1909). Notes on the Minor Prophets. (p. 221). Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers.

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;" - (2 Timothy 4:3)

Notice in v. 1 - they think about evil at night, and in the morning, they do it. They do it because they can get away with it. Humanly, nobody tries to stop them.

*"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, **An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,**" (Proverbs 6:16-18)*

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." (Romans 1:21)

The Christian is supposed to control what he thinks about:

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;" (2 Corinthians 10:5)

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Philippians 4:8)

All evil begins in the thought life. We need to be careful not to entertain evil thoughts, or be entertained by evil.

"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee." (Proverbs 23:7)

"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:" (Matthew 15:19)

Notice in v. 2 - they were covetous:

"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (Luke 12:15)

The root of covetousness is a lack of contentment, and a lack of appreciation for what God has given you.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's." (Exodus 20:17)

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." (Philippians 4:11)

We need to be content with what we have, and if God gives us the opportunity to earn something more, we ought to be willing to work hard to get it. But, we should never try to cheat people out of what is theirs. In this particular time in Israel's history there were a lot of poor people who were being taken advantage of by the rich. (See Leviticus 25 for how the people of God were supposed to treat each other.)

Jeremiah will later mention Judah's repeated covetousness:

"For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely." (Jeremiah 6:13)

Note - Jeremiah prophesied prior to and through the Babylonian captivity around 586 BC.

Notice v. 5 – "cast a cord by lot" means to measure. The invading Assyrian army would take away the land of the people.

Notice v. 6 – "prophesy ye not" – the people did not want to hear what Micah and the other prophets of God were telling them:

"That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." (Isaiah 30:9-11)

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jeremiah 5:31)

See also Amos 7:10 – 17 regarding the rejection of true prophets, and the acceptance of false prophets.

The charge for preachers today is to keep on preaching the truth, whether or not the people want to listen:

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Timothy 4:2-4)

The charge for God's people today is to stand for the Truth, no matter how unpopular it might be within the apostate culture. In order to stand, we will have to be strengthened by God.

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;" (Ephesians 6:13-18)

Notice v. 7 – The Spirit of God is not straitened, unless you straiten Him:

"Quench not the Spirit." (1 Thessalonians 5:19)

The Word of God is good to them that listen and obey.

God's Word makes perfect sense to God's people because the Spirit of God gives them understanding:

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14)

God's words will ever "do good to him that walketh uprightly." Spiritual things "are spiritually discerned," and therefore only the upright and godly soul will find real profit and blessing in the Scriptures. But where there is exercise as to this, that Word will be found sufficient for all the needs of the pilgrim-path. There will never be a circumstance so trying, a crisis so serious, that the man of God will be left without furnishing unto all good works, if he be found feeding upon the truth. Scripture, with the Holy Spirit's enlightenment, is all that is required in every emergency.³

Notice vs. 8 – 10 – Because the people would not listen to God and instead tickled their ears with the lies of false prophets, they took advantage of the poor and robbed the people who trusted them. The widows even had their houses stolen from them. (v. 9)

Notice v. 11 – The people were willing to listen to those who agreed with their sinful and covetous lifestyle.

B The Restoration of the Remnant (2:12 – 13)

When the Lord returns at the end of the Tribulation Period, He will go before Israel, both the northern and southern kingdoms, and will guide them and protect them from all of their enemies.

³ Ironside, H. A. (1909). Notes on the Minor Prophets. (p. 227). Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers.

Note “the remnant” - see also Micah 4:7; 5:7 - 8; 7:18

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth." (Isaiah 10:20)

Though, a small remnant of Jews returned to the land after the time of the Babylonian captivity, the prophecy mentioned here speaks of the return of the entire nation to the land of Israel.

Notice the reference to Bozrah, which was apparently a place with great pastures. God will fulfill the 23rd psalm during this time with Israel:

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters." (Psalm 23:1-2)

The word “breaker” means the one who removes obstacles. The Lord Jesus is represented by all three of the people mentioned in v. 13. He is the breaker, the King, and the Lord.

II “Hear, All Ye Princes” of Israel and Judah (3:1 – 5:15)

The word “princes” (Hebrew – qatsiyn) is translated elsewhere in the Bible as rulers, guides, or captains. It has the idea of one who is in authority, not necessarily a son of a king. These are the political and religious leaders, as well as the people of wealth. These people should have been the ones who knew “judgment”, who knew what was right to do and how to do it.

"But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." (Luke 12:48)

Practical Thoughts:

If you have been blessed by God with wealth, then you should use your wealth for the glory of God and the good of others.

If you have been gifted by God with leadership ability, then you have been given an awesome privilege and responsibility to use it to help people. Political leaders, judges, and officers of the law should use their positions to benefit society, not benefit themselves or their rich friends. They need to do right!

A Present Pronouncements (Chapter 3)

Against:

1 The Financially Prosperous (3:1 – 4)

Notice that these wealthy rulers “hate the good and love the evil”. The leadership and the elite of God’s flock should be exactly the opposite of what these men were:

"Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:" (Exodus 18:21)

"The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." (Proverbs 8:13)

Micah’s counterpart in the northern kingdom, Amos, wrote:

"Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph." (Amos 5:14-15)

The wealthy rulers of the people of Israel and Judah were compared to butchers and cannibals. This is, I believe, figurative language. Micah is saying here that the leaders were stripping the poor people under them of everything that they owned.

God states here that when the judgment falls upon them, He will not hear their cries. (See also Proverbs 1:10 – 33)

2 The False Prophets (3:5 – 8)

What the Scripture is saying in v. 5 is that these prophets pronounce peace to the people who feed them “bite with their teeth”, and pronounce war to the people who don’t. They tell the people that take care of them what they want to hear.

See also 1 Kings 22:1 – 40.

Paul warned Timothy that in the last days there would be many preachers who will tell the people what they want to hear:

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;" (2 Timothy 4:3)

Preachers certainly have the privilege and obligation to declare plainly the Word of God both “in season and out of season”. However, all of God’s people are ambassadors for the Lord and are responsible to declare the Truth of God’s word to the people around them.

God says that these prophets who refuse to tell the Truth to the people will not hear from God again. God says that He has all of the answers that the people need, but He won’t speak through these lying prophets.

3 The Fraudulent Priests (3:9 – 12)

Vs. 9 – 12 condemn all of the rulers, but also specifically mention the priests.

It seems that the princes (rulers) of Judah were abusing the poor, and using their offices to take whatever they could from them.

"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." - (1 Timothy 6:9-10)

These rulers and priests were riding a “grave train” by oppressing the people of God and they had actually been deceived into thinking that God was with them. How wrong they were. God states that the punishment for these rulers will be that the place where they were making all of their money will be destroyed, and the people they were extorting the money from will be gone.

B Future Predictions (Chapters 4 – 5)

As the second message of Micah continues, Micah shifts gears a little and moves from imminent and impending doom to distant future prophecies.

1 The Future Peace and Prosperity (Chapter 4)

a. The Peaceful Time That Will Come Finally (Micah 4:1 – 8)

Chapter 4:1 - 8 references the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the earth. (Isaiah 11:1 – 9; Zechariah 14)

V. 2 – “many nations” – not just Israel

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." (Zechariah 8:20-23)

V. 3 – The Millennial Kingdom will be an unprecedented time of peace and prosperity. Compare v. 3 to Joel 3:10, which speaks of a time (Armageddon) when God’s people will go to war:

“Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.” (Joel 3:10)

V. 4 – *“every man under his vine and under his fig tree”*

Israel had this once in their past:

“And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.” (1 Kings 4:25)

They will have it again in their future:

“In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree.” (Zechariah 3:10)

V. 5 – Israel will not be following other nations, they will be faithful to their God:

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15)

Vs. 6 – 8 continue to discuss the blessings of the Millenium. Israel had halted and they were carried away captive, but they will be a strong nation; stronger than the “first dominion”, which is probably a reference to the time of David and Solomon when Israel was also strong. Jerusalem is the tower that will watch over the flock of Israel. Jerusalem will be the capital of Christ’s Kingdom.

b. The Problematic Troubles That Must Come First (Micah 4:9 – 5:1)

Notice that before this wonderful time of peace and prosperity comes, Judah will have to go through the Babylonian captivity (4:9 – 10; 5:1) and the sorrows of the Great Tribulation (4:11 – 13) until they turn back God and realize Jesus is their Messiah. The “judge of Israel in 5:1 is probably a reference to King Zedekiah. (2 Kings 25:1 – 7) The reference in v. 13 is to Armageddon. (Zechariah 12:1 – 10; Revelation 14:14 – 20; 16:16; 19:11 – 21)

Notice the phrase “woman in travail” in vs. 9 – 10. This phrase has been used elsewhere in the Bible to refer both to the Babylonian captivity and the Tribulation Period:

“For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewaileth herself, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers.” (Jeremiah 4:31)

"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." (1 Thessalonians 5:3)

2 Christ's First Presentation (5:2)

V. 2 introduces us to the incarnation of the God man.

He was born in Bethlehem, which means "house of bread".

Bethlehem is where Rachel died. (Genesis 35:16 – 20)

See Matthew 2:1 – 12; 16 - 18

Bethlehem was the birthplace of David.

The following is from my notes – "The Little Town of Bethlehem".

I thought it very interesting when considering this passage that God chose Bethlehem as the place where Jesus was to enter into the world.

Bethlehem was an insignificant place. Why did God choose to be born in Bethlehem? It was a little town just a few miles to the south of the bigger capitol city of Jerusalem.

It is even more interesting to note that Jesus wasn't even born in a respectable place within the little town of Bethlehem, but rather was delivered in a stable (many believe a cave).

Why Bethlehem? Would we have ever heard of Bethlehem had it not been for Jesus entering in. Bethlehem may not even be on the map today, had Jesus not come in.

There is a parallel here to the believer. Bethlehem was nothing special until Jesus moved in.

Notice also that this verse teaches the deity of Christ – "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting". (See also John 1:1 – 3, 14; Hebrews 1:1 – 10)

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (Colossians 1:15-17)

3 Christ's Final Presentation (5:3 – 15)

Notice in vs. 10 – 15 that God will "cut off", and "pluck up" everything that He opposes, and He will "execute vengeance" upon all those who have rejected Him.

III “Hear” the Prosecution of the Lord (6:1 – 7:20)

A God’s Accusation Against Israel and Judah (Chapter 6)

1 Israel’s Rejection was Without Reason (vs. 1 – 8)

God had done everything that He could to demonstrate His love and care for His people (6:1 – 5), but instead they repaid Him with rebellion mixed in with some religious rituals (6:6 – 8). God gave them a perfect three-point outline that explained what He expected from them: to do right; to love people; and to humble themselves before Him; but they didn’t do it.

The following is a message preached on Micah 6:6:

Jersey Shore Baptist Church

September 28, 2014 (Portions originally preached on October 2, 2011)

What Does He Want from Me

Scripture Reading – Micah 6:6 - 8

Text - Micah 6:1 – 8 – text verse 8

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" - (Micah 6:8)

Introduction

Do I Need Revival?

There are seven questions for self-discovery that the great theologian A.W. Tozer encourages us to consider. These questions, if answered honestly, speaks volumes about our spiritual health. They are:

- What we want most
- What we think about most
- How we use our money
- What we do with our leisure time
- The company we enjoy
- Who and what we admire
- What we laugh at

Excerpt from R. O. Roberts book on Revival

“A backslider is a person who was once emptied of his own ways and filled with the ways of God, but gradually allowed his own ways to step back in until he was all but empty of God and full of himself again.”

25 characteristics of the backslider:

1. When prayer ceases to be a vital part of a professing Christian’s life backsliding is present.
2. When the quest for biblical truth ceases and one grows content with the knowledge of eternal things already acquired, there can be no mistaking the presence of backsliding.

3. When the biblical knowledge possessed or acquired is treated as external fact and not applied inwardly, backsliding is present.
4. When earnest thoughts about eternal things cease to be regular and gripping, it would be like a warning light to the backslider.
5. When the services of the church lose their delights a backslidden condition probably exists.
6. When pointed spiritual discussions are an embarrassment, that is certain evidence of backsliding.
7. When sports, recreation, and entertainment are larger and necessary part of your lifestyle, you may assume backsliding is in force.
8. When sins of the body and of the mind can be indulged in without an uproar in your conscience, your backslidden condition is certain.
9. When aspirations for Christlike holiness cease to be dominant in your life and thinking, backsliding is there.
10. When the acquisition of money and goods become a dominant part of your thinking, you have clear confirmation of backsliding.
11. When you can mouth religious songs and words without heart, be sure backsliding is present.
12. When you can hear the Lord's name taken in vain, spiritual concerns mocked, and eternal issues flippantly treated, and not be moved to indignation and action, you are backslidden.
13. When you can watch degrading movies and television and read morally debilitating literature, you can be sure you have backslidden.
14. When breaches of peace in the brotherhood are of no concern to you, that is proof of backsliding.
15. When the slightest excuse seems sufficient to keep you from spiritual duty and opportunity, you are backslidden.
16. When you become content with your lack of spiritual power and no longer seek repeated endowments of power from on high, you have backslidden.
17. When you pardon your own sin and sloth by saying the Lord understands and remembers we are but dust, you may have spoken gospel truth, but you have also revealed your backslidden condition.
18. When there is no music in your soul and no song in your heart, the silence testifies to your backsliding.
19. When you adjust happily to the world's lifestyle, your own mirror will tell the truth of your backsliding.
20. When injustice and human misery exist around you and you do little or nothing to relieve the suffering, be sure you are backslidden.
21. When your church has fallen into spiritual declension and the Word of God is no longer preached there with power and you are still content, you are in a backslidden condition.

22. When the spiritual condition of the world declines around you and you cannot perceive it, that is testimony to your backslidden stance.

23. When you are willing to cheat your employer backsliding is present.

24. When you find yourself rich in grace and mercy and marvel at your own godlikeness, then you have fallen far in your backsliding.

25. When your tears are dried up and the hard, cold spiritual facts of your existence cannot unleash them, see this as an awful testimony to both the hardness of your heart and the depth of your backsliding.

Keith Green

"My eyes are dry, my faith is old, my heart is hard, my prayers are cold, and I know how I ought to be – alive to you and dead to me."

If that verse of song is true for you, you need revival.

Revival is not all that complicated

People have a tendency to take something that is very simple, and make it very complicated.

The Christian life today can get very complicated sometimes – not because God makes it complicated, but because we complicate it. Jesus told us:

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." - (Matthew 11:30)

The Pharisees of Jesus days were famous for this. Jesus said of them:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." -

(Matthew 23:23-24)

These religious leaders tended to take the simple commands and make them difficult. They were the ones who wanted to make a long list of rules and regulations. When one of the scribes came to Jesus questioning Him about the commandments of God, Jesus said:

"And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." - (Mark 12:29-31)

Illustrate – Brother Chalie at camp – “Do right”

Illustrate – Bible College – long list of dress requirements; attendance requirements, etc.

God never intended for His people to get frustrated wondering what He expected from them.

Moses, the one who received the Ten Commandments and the Law from God, said basically the same thing that Micah did:

"And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?" - (Deuteronomy 10:12-13)

Read Micah 6:1 – 8 again

You may have asked the question, "What does God want from me?"

Micah gives a very simple 3 - point outline that explains very clearly in a general way what God expects from his children:

Illustrate – Parents Expectations – "What Does He Want From Me"

This is one of those "reset button" passages of Scripture.

In our passage, Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah had gotten away from God.

Micah was a prophet primarily to the common men of the southern kingdom of Judah, during the reigns of three of Judah's kings: Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. It was during the prophetic ministry of Micah that the northern kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians.

Micah was prophesying to Judah of the judgment that they would face if they did not turn back to God.

In vs. 1 – 3, God like a prosecutor in a court of Law pleads His case against Israel.

In v. 4, He reminds them of His deliverance of the people of Israel from the bondage that they endured in Egypt.

In v. 5, He reminds them of how He reversed the curse that Balak tried to have placed on them through Balaam. He mentions Shittim and Gilgal. These were places the children of Israel camped at – Shittim being on the east side of the Jordan, and Gilgal on the west. God is basically reminding them of His provision and protection.

In vs. 6 & 7, God reminds them that He is not interested in all of the religious ritual.

Samuel said:

"And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king." - (1 Samuel 15:22-23)

Transition

So, what does God want from His children?

If He doesn't want all of this religious ritual and formality, what does He require?

Verse 8 gives us the perfect three-point outline directly from the mouth of God. He tells us here very plainly what He expects from us; what He requires of His children.

I **To Do Justly - To do the right thing**

How do we know what the right thing is?

1 We have a conscience.

"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)" - (Romans 2:12-15)

2 We have the Holy Spirit of God

"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:" - (John 16:7-8)

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." - (1 Corinthians 2:9-16)

3 We have a Bible

There is no excuse for not knowing what the right thing is.

Our problem is not that we don't understand the Scripture – it is that we do not obey the Scripture.

Illustrate – Lester Roloff – “It’s the part that I understand that bothers me”

Illustrate – Dirk Willhems - excerpt from the Martyr’s Mirror

In the year 1569 a pious, faithful brother and follower of Jesus Christ, named Dirk Willems, was apprehended at Asperen, in Holland, and had to endure severe tyranny from the papists. But as he had founded his faith not upon the drifting sand of human commandments, but upon the firm foundation stone, Christ Jesus, he, notwithstanding all evil winds of human doctrine, and heavy showers of tyrannical and severe persecution, remained immovable and steadfast unto the end; wherefore, when the chief Shepherd shall appear in the clouds of heaven and gather together His elect from all the ends of the earth, he shall also through grace hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." I Pet. 5:4; Matt. 24:31; 25:23.

Concerning his apprehension, it is stated by trustworthy persons, that when he fled he was hotly pursued by a thief-catcher, and as there had been some frost, said Dirk Willems ran before over the ice, getting across with considerable peril. The thief-catcher following him broke through, when Dirk Willems, perceiving that the former was in danger of his life, quickly returned and aided him in getting out, and thus saved his life. The thiefcatcher wanted to let him go, but the burgomaster, very sternly called to him to consider his oath, and thus he was again seized by the thief-catcher, and, at said place, after severe imprisonment and great trials proceeding from the deceitful papists, put to death at a lingering fire by these bloodthirsty, ravening wolves, enduring it with great steadfastness, and confirming the genuine faith of the truth with his death and blood, as an instructive example to all pious Christians of this time, and to the everlasting disgrace of the tyrannous papists.

II To Love Mercy – To be compassionate – to be kind

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." - (Ephesians 4:30-32)

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." - (1 Peter 3:8-9)

"And of some have compassion, making a difference:" - (Jude 1:22)

Explain the difference between Mercy and justice

- 1 Look for ways to show kindness to people
- 2 Forgive each other – stop harboring grudges and bitterness
- 3 Send the message of forgiveness to the world around you

Illustrate – The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30 - 37)

III To Walk Humbly With Thy God

"Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:" - (Acts 20:19)

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." - (1 Peter 5:5)

"But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." - (James 4:6-10)

Paul said that he was the least of all the apostles; less than the least of all saints; and the chiefest of all sinners.

Make yourself small – See God big – “Magnify the Lord”

Concluding Illustration – The famous inventor, Samuel Morse was once asked if he ever encountered situations where he didn't know what to do. Morse responded, "More than once, and whenever I could not see my way clearly, I knelt down and prayed to God for light and understanding."

Morse received many honors from his invention of the telegraph but felt undeserving: "I have made a valuable application of electricity not because I was superior to other men but solely because God, who meant it for mankind, must reveal it to someone and He was pleased to reveal it to me."

Tim Hansel, [Eating Problems for Breakfast](#), Word Publishing, 1988, pp. 33-34

2 Israel's Desolation Due to their Rejection (vs. 9 – 16)

Notice – ***“hear ye the rod”*** – God will point out their continued rebellion, and the punishments that will come as a result.

"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."
(Proverbs 22:15)

"Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee." (Deuteronomy 8:5)

"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."
(Proverbs 13:24)

See also Hebrews 12:5 - 11

Notice again, God speaks of their covetousness, and their oppression of the poor. The “scant” were short measure. Deceitful weights were dishonest weights. God’s word was clear regarding dealing honestly in business:

"Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt." (Leviticus 19:35-36)

"A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight." (Proverbs 11:1)

"Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good." (Proverbs 20:23)

Their punishment would be that all that they coveted after would be ripped from their possession. Notice that they will still be working hard, but their hard work will be fruitless:

"Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes." (Haggai 1:6)

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts." (Malachi 3:8-12)

He also mentions in v. 16 their apostasy and corruption in following after Omri and Ahab, the wicked kings of the northern kingdom. (See 1 Kings 16:23 – 33)

B God's Restitution of Israel (Chapter 7)

In this chapter, we see a wonderful picture of salvation. You have to know that you are sinner deserving of judgment in order to get to the place where you can humbly seek the mercy and forgiveness of God. But, once you do that, God begins to bless mightily. Israel had to learn this lesson over and over again in their history; and, they will have to learn it once more before God will save them and deliver them into His Millennial Kingdom.

1 Israel's Present Condition (7:1 – 6)

Notice that the man (Micah) in verse one has been stripped clean, and there is nothing left for him. He compares his situation to a vineyard that has been harvested and then picked clean. In the Bible, the vineyard is a picture of Israel. (See Isaiah 5)

The spiritual condition of Israel described here in vs. 2 – 4 of this passage is utterly detestable. Israel has sunk to an all-time low. They are hitting the bottom, but you know what they say, "You have to hit the bottom, before you can get up." This is reminiscent of the days of Noah:

"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5)

At this time, however, the leadership in Israel was very corrupt, taking terrible advantage of the poor. (v. 3) The best men in Israel and Judah were nothing but scoundrels. (v. 4)

This is reminiscent of the spiritual condition of mankind described in the first 3 chapters of Romans. (See Romans 3:10 – 18)

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." (Isaiah 64:6)

Notice vs. 5 – 6 - Jesus refers to these verses:

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law." (Luke 12:51-53)

"And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matthew 10:36-39)

You just can't trust anybody! We can trust the Lord and we can trust the Word of God. But, most people we will have to keep an eye on.

2 Israel's Future Contrition (7:7 – 10)

Israel will experience a lot of pain and suffering as a result of her sin, but she will eventually turn to the Lord. A New Testament parallel can be made to the backsliding Christian that returns to God, or to the lost sinner that turns to God in faith.

Read Luke 15. God is always looking for His lost sheep, and He is always willing to save those that will humble themselves and come to Him in faith for salvation.

Notice v. 8 – When God's people fall, God will pick them up:

"For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief." (Proverbs 24:16)

Notice also in this verse, when it is dark outside, God will provide the light. We need to stay very close to God and His Word in these perilous times that we are living in.

You will notice that Israel (personified) will make no demands of God. He recognizes that there were consequences to his actions. (v. 9) Israel is throwing herself on the mercy of the court.

3 Israel's Final Restoration (7:11 – 20)

At the time of this writing, the Northern Kingdom had already been removed from their land by the Assyrians. The Assyrians are now threatening the Southern Kingdom. (See Isaiah 36 – 37; 2 Kings 18 – 19; 2 Chronicles 32) God will deliver Jerusalem, but only after many of the small

surrounding cities and villages are taken into captivity. Eventually, however, God will be forced to judge Judah, and they will be taken into captivity by the Babylonians. Seventy years later, they will be released, and will eventually come back into the land and rebuild. Once again, however, Jerusalem will be destroyed, this time at the hands of the Romans in 70 AD. Today, Israel is rebuilt and rebuilding, but the time will come when she will once again be surrounded by enemies, and she will suffer greatly. But, when she turns to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith, God will restore her permanently, and Israel will dwell safely, and her barren land will blossom as the rose and bring forth abundantly. God will bless Israel mightily, and God will judge Israel's enemies.

Phillips says this regarding Israel in the Millennial Kingdom:

With great patience, remarkable acumen, and resourcefulness in the face of constant opposition and harassment, the reborn state of Israel has in our day cleared marshes, irrigated deserts, built cities, established industries, and forged a nation. But it will all be swept away, for Micah could see ruins and rubble everywhere. The Russian invasion, the malignant enmity of the antichrist, wars, bombings, and terrorism will take their toll. However, there will be a final turn in the long lane of troubles. Zion will be rebuilt and her boundaries will be greatly enlarged.⁴

You will notice in this passage that the nations, like Assyria, that were once enemies of Israel will tread very softly around them. They will fear Israel, and Israel's God.

Notice in v. 18 that God delights in mercy. Mercy is the other side of the coin of grace. God is merciful. Jonah was not happy about the fact that God is merciful, but Micah is.

⁴ Phillips, J. (2009). Exploring the Minor Prophets: An Expository Commentary (Mic 7:11). Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp.