

Intro: Micah prophesied of a vision that had concerning two cities: Samaria and Jerusalem. Samaria, because of her idolatry and persistent unbelief was destroyed by Assyria in 722BC, who exiled the 10 northern tribes of Israel into oblivion after utterly crushing the kingdom. The worst of times indeed. Jerusalem was heading down the same road, and the great generals of Assyria had occupied Judah, destroyed its cities and were marching against Jerusalem (there is much archeological evidence of Sennacherib's siege of Lachish, a Judahite city, including the only known Assyrian siege ramp in the Near East and many stone reliefs carved by Sennacherib from Nineveh depicting his battles in Israel). The king, Hezekiah, turned to the LORD and thus Jerusalem was saved (and Sennacherib notes that he never fully took Jerusalem, but locked its king "up like a bird in a cage"). So, thus Micah warns of doom, but he also intermingles such warnings with interspersions of great hope. Not merely hope of immediate deliverance, but the great hope of a Great Ruler who would rise from the hills of Bethlehem, a Son of David, to gather God's people into His fold under His protection and provision. This back and forth between doom and delight characterizes Micah's brief oracles and give us both stern warnings of truth and great songs of hope that the LORD will bring about His glory through the redemption of His people. Thus, Micah sees that though the LORD may bring the darkness of judgment, and even of exile, that God will raise up His people into the Light of His glory when that Great Ruler appears. First comes darkness, then comes the Light of Salvation.

1. Prophets Speak God's True Word at Specific Times

a. Who was Micah?

i. Name means "Who is like God?"

1. See 7:18 - 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.

ii. Served during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah

1. Contemporary of Isaiah
2. Prophesied about 50 years
3. Mentioned in Jeremiah 26:18-19 as the prophet who led Hezekiah to repentance and an avoidance of Jerusalem's destruction for about 100 years

iii. From Moresheth

1. A small agricultural town halfway between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean sea
2. Micah shows an empathy toward the farmers, shepherds, and the smaller landowners who have not been influenced as much by the affluence and power of the city

b. Situation in Life

i. External Concern: Economic, Political, and Social Forces Threatened to Crush

1. Assyria war machine overwhelmed cities and forced them to pay tribute
 - a. Raised a vast mercenary army that crushed all their foes
 - b. Waltke: "the conquered nations supported the international army that raped them"
2. When a nation revolted and did not pay the tribute, Assyria would crush them by force, relocate their upper classes en masse to other Assyrian controlled regions and make their nation an Assyrian province
 - a. This is how the 10 tribes became known as Samaria and was considered racially and socially inferior by the Jews of Jesus' day

ii. Internal Concern: Jerusalem's abandonment of the LORD

1. Empty religion devoid of love for and submission to the LORD led to rampant corruption and injustice through idolatrous worship (1:7)

2. Micah is very concerned for God's desire for justice and mercy in civic godliness, particularly toward the middle class
 - a. Their land was unlawfully seized (2:2)
 - b. Business practice was deceptive and without concern for the other (6:10-12)
 - c. Family life and community life had become self-centered and self-aggrandizing (7:5-6)
3. Micah also lambasted the corruption of the priests and the prophets
 - a. Wanted only "nice" or pleasurable things preached and not holy things (2:6,11)
 - b. Prophesied according to their pay (3:5) – peace when well fed, war when not
- iii. Both of these respects, external and internal threats, we share in common with ancient Judah, leading to fears from without and pride from within
 1. And our response should be in line with Micah's call, for it comes from the Word of the Lord: Repent and Trust in the LORD
 2. We share much more in common with Judah than we at first will recognize

2. Prophet of Doom's Darkness: Three Questions

- a. Does God have expectations of His people?
 - i. 1:2-5; 3:11-12; 6:8
 - ii. God as gracious and compassionate does not imply that He has no expectations of His people
 1. Love demands expectations
 - a. We agree to these expectations out of love for Him
 - b. Though, God does not need our agreement on all things
 - i. Our creaturliness in respect to His Godness is enough to make us responsible to Him
 - ii. This places us in tension b/c we don't meet expectations
 - iii. This tension is only fully resolved in Christ
 - iii. Giving promises of God's presence while embracing sin is not only inconsistent with love for God, but is ugly wickedness
 1. 2:6; 3:11-12
 2. This is similar to the one who says, "So, then, shall we sin so that grace may increase?" (Rom 6:1)
 - a. May it never be!!! For, we have DIED to sin that we might LIVE to GOD
 3. This is a warning that the proper response to God's grace is obedience from the heart, not a pursuit of sin because God has graciously covenanted with us
 - a. Think of this in a marriage: "I love you, but I'm going to be closer emotional and physically with other women"
 - iv. The danger when we read the OT prophets is to make the assumption that they were written merely for the Jews, and we are not like them
- b. Should sin, then, be rebuked?
 - i. 2:1, general purpose of the first half of this oracle
 1. God's purpose is not merely punitive, but is rather transformational
 2. His purpose in this oracle is to reveal sin, move His people to turn from their idolatry and to trust in Him completely, and move to live rightly (6:8) for that is

why He has redeemed them (that they might walk with Him and reflect His glory to the nations)

- a. Do justice, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly with your God (6:8)
 - ii. Our God-given consciences reveal that we believe sin should be rebuked
 1. Penn State
 2. When the offense is deemed “heinous” enough, we demand rebuke
 3. The question remains: What is “heinous” and Who decides?
 - a. GOD decides!
 - b. Because every sin is ultimately a sin against God, the most precious and glorious and innocent
 - i. Sin is unjust because it devalues and desecrates that which is valuable and sacred
 - ii. The grasshopper-puppy-baby analogy
 - c. We tend to view others’ sins as greater than ours and God’s justice to people who are unlike us, but the Jesus reveals that it’s not only our murder that makes us guilty, but our anger; not only our physical adultery, but the selfish desires of our hearts; that to remain embittered toward another means one cannot worship (Matt 5:21-28)
 - iii. God always judges His people with a promise of restoration...of grace!!
 1. 2:12-13
 2. This is the amazing grace of God!!
 - a. Man doesn’t judge like this, particularly with heinous crimes
 - i. “He should never walk the earth again!”
 - b. But God’s grace, the Offended Holy, goes so much deeper than that, even to the point where as He proclaims judgment He is giving hope of restoration by HIS OWN POWER
- c. What are the effects of sin?
- i. Sin brings discipline that is miserable
 1. 6:13-15
 2. God brings His own effects, the consequences of rebellion
 - ii. God also brings the misery of sin itself
 1. God removes His grace to reveal that sin never satisfies, never delivers on its promise and actually destroys what we were made for (see Jonah)
 2. The misery of sin’s empty promise permeates our existence
 - a. Wealth, sexual promiscuity, angry words/wrath
 - b. These things never accomplish the “righteousness of God”, i.e. the way things are supposed to be
 - c. It is only righteousness, the way things are supposed to be, that satisfies our own souls because it honors and treasures God, that for which it was made
 - i. “bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh”
 - ii. United with God in Christ, the marriage analogy’s object
 - iii. Ultimately, God deals with sin in a final judgment
 1. 2 Thess 1:9; Matt 25:41

3. Prophet of the Light of Hope:

- a. God has promised a way of salvation from external and internal threats
 - i. God promises to gather His people to Himself, 2:12 (Hezekiah’s repentance during this time, 2 Kings 18-20)

- ii. He will be our shepherd who leads us, protects us, provides for us, and restores us to be what we were created to be (worshippers who trust in Him and treasure Him – Aaron)
- b. God is Gracious and His Salvation is of Grace
 - i. 7:18-19/Acts 13:39/Rom 8:3-4
 - ii. 2:11-12 – God as the leader who leads into His own fold a “multitude of noisy men”
 - iii. 4:1-6 – God makes things the way they are supposed to be, with Himself as the reward, assembles the “lame” and “outcasts” whom He has afflicted to be the remnant and strong nation
- c. God Promises to Send an Ultimate Savior
 - i. 5:2-5; 7:8/Acts 2:36; 3:19
 - ii. This Ruler from ancient days will free them, gather them, and rule them in the strength and majesty of the LORD, for He will be great:

“Every good thing we could think or desire is to be found in this same Jesus Christ alone. For he was sold, to buy us back; captive, to deliver us; condemned, to absolve us. He was made a curse for our blessing, sin offering for our righteousness; marred that we may be made fair.

He died for our life; so that by him fury is made gentle, wrath appeased, darkness turned into light, fear reassured, despisal despised, debt canceled, labor lightened, sadness made merry, misfortune made fortunate, difficulty easy, disorder ordered, division united, ignominy ennobled, rebellion subjected, intimidation intimidated, ambush uncovered, assaults assailed, force forced back, combat combated, war warred against, vengeance avenged, torment tormented, damnation damned, the abyss sunk into the abyss, hell transfixed, death dead, mortality made immortal.

In short, mercy has swallowed up all misery, and goodness all misfortune.” —John Calvin

Conclusion: Micah carried a message that could have been presented today, to this nation of arrogant entitlement and lustful desires. To my kinsman who pursue injustice when it favors them, but bemoan it when brings them loss. Where do I run when things go wrong, get stressful, or just plain hurt? Really, honestly, where do we run?

Jesus asked an interesting question of His disciples after giving them a promise of God’s speedy answer to their cries for help: “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18) He asked this of His own followers. Those who knew Him and loved Him. God speedily delivers those who cry out to Him day and night. Shall we cry out with that kind of faith when pressures from without and fears from within threaten our joy in the Lord?

I am a disciple of Jesus. I know Him and love Him (though I want to do both more and more). Where does my trust truly abide and to whom or what do I cry to day and night? What is the LORD teaching me about Himself by bringing heat and thorns upon me? What promise has He made for my salvation, which if I believed would lead me to cry out to Him and find speedy deliverance and joy? Micah ends his prophetic oracle with these elegant words of hope in a future King...the Anointed Ancient of Days. Read 7:7-20

BENEDICTION:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us¹ for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved One.

Ephesians 1:3-6