

ABIDE

DISCOVERING YOUR OLD TESTAMENT



WHO IS LIKE JEHOVAH

MICAH

It has been said that the book of Micah reads like a court document. Imagine you are on trial. You sit there, you have no defense except yourself, and though you had convinced yourself that you were innocent, though you convinced yourself that what you were doing was fine, that it was the law that unreasonable, and that you were fully justified in all of your actions, as you finally hear all of the mounting evidence against you, your hands start to get clammy, your mouth dry, and your muscles start to tremble as you realize you were dead wrong and the judge would soon demand a response from you.

That is a lot like the book of Micah. His book is all judgment and so it is not filled with anything joyful or exciting as far as the main message is concerned. As in the case with some of the other prophets, the message that Micah carried was not to any other nation except God's people.

Micah was a prophet who was in one of those unique positions where he was able to see Jerusalem in its good times, and then was brought down with sorrow as he witnessed her destruction.

Aside from his name and where he was from, not much is known about this man of God. His name means "Who is Like Jehovah" and the whole of this book is bound up in the meaning of this name. Who else would be able to bind up an entire nation, set them in the courtroom, and then bring the entire earth to bear witness of their terrible offenses? None but God; there is none like Him.

Another piece of information we are given is that Micah was from a place called Moresheth-Gath, which was about twenty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem. It appears that, like the prophet Amos, Micah was a prophet who was far removed from the moral filth and sludge that was prominent in Jerusalem and Samaria.

Although Micah's message was at times directed both to the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, it would appear that his central focus was on the Southern Kingdom of Judah and was commissioned by God to attack their social injustices and religious indifferences in that day.

How to Think About Micah

The book of Micah is made up of three sermons that can help you determine what is occurring in this book. Each sermon is easily identified because each of these sermons begin with the word "Hear."

Hear of My Judgments to Come (Micah 1-3): These chapters show God handing down the specific indictments of the people for their sins, and then the leaders and false prophets who were perpetuating this evil and oppression. Once again, we see that God tells these people that there would be no place to hide once this judgment comes.

The Judge is Coming Against the Nation (1-2)— Verses 3-4 of chapter 1 hold a particularly chilling picture of what was about to happen to this nation, “For, behold, the LORD cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountain shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place.”

The Almighty was on His way to judge the people. The same God whom the lands and mountains cannot stand before, the same God who melts the very terrain of the earth with His footsteps, was about to come down and take up His seat of judgment against the nation for their sins.

The Judge is Coming Against the Leaders (3)—The heads of the families and the princes of Israel are specifically named here. God reveals the whole of their character and when His divine light shines down on them, there is only a black ugliness that exists. They were abusing and exploiting all of the people that were under their charge. Their main character trait, God said, was that they hated good and loved evil. They became so depraved and so abusive that the analogy God gave to describe their behavior was that these leaders were skinning their people like an animal, field stripping them, and putting them in a stewpot.

The second group of leaders spoken against were the false prophets. These individuals were the ones teaching error and perpetuating the injustices. It appears that this was a top down corruption operation. The leaders would act against the people and justify it all along the way, and this made its way down to the behavior of the people in how they treated each other. For this crime of false teaching, God told them He was going to silence His message completely, and that every single one of these individuals would be brought down to such shame, that they would be silenced completely.

Hear of My Restoration to Come (Micah 4-5): This prophecy of Micah is not for the immediate nation, but instead spans across the ages and provides one of the most shockingly beautiful Messianic prophecies about the second coming of the Messiah in the entire Bible, and ends with how we might identify Him.

Behold the Kingdom (4)— In verses 1-4 we are confronted with that grand kingdom to come that will be ruled by the Messiah to come. Unlike every other ruler the world has ever known, this ruler will know how to rule in absolute godliness, and because of His reign, the people of earth will forget how to war against each other and will turn their weapons into instruments of agriculture. A perfect kingdom maintained by a Perfect Ruler.

Behold the King (5)— Chapter 5 answers the question, “Well, how will we be able to tell who this king is? How will we find Him?” And that is answered in verse 2, “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 told from of old, from everlasting.”

If you remember, 700 years later when King Herod asked his priests where this king would be born, they knew exactly what to say; they quoted from this passage. And just as the prophecy stated, Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Behold the King.

Hear of My Call to Come (Micah 6-7): These chapters highlight the fact that God wants His people to be restored back to Him. He gives correction that needs to take place, and says that judgment would follow, but His heart’s desire is that they would repent and come back to fellowship.

God’s First Call to Repentance (6)— God is leading His people to once again understand what it means to be godly. He calls on His people to testify against Him and see if they can bring any accusation against Him. Of course, they cannot. So in a passionate plea God reminds them what He required for a right relationship with Him.

God's Second Call to Repentance (7:1-6)— God causes them to look at themselves for a moment. If you have children, perhaps they say something or do something that is obviously wrong, and as a parent, you stop them and have them reflect a little on what it was that they had done. Well, this was God to His people here. They treated each other so poorly. You couldn't trust your wife, husband, brother, daughter, sister, or friends— it was a terrible time to live; a time when you couldn't even trust your own family. So God just wanted them to look for a moment and tell Him if they thought this was normal.

God's Promise of Protection (7:7-20): God will continue to sustain His people and keep His promise to the shock of all other nations. Toward the end of this section, Micah praises God for His mercy in this way.

What to Look for in Micah

Prophecy—

Unfulfilled Prophecy: As stated previously, Micah 4 is a great section on the coming of peace to the world. This is something that is spoken about frequently, and throughout human history. This is because a longing for peace, although ruined by sin, is continually in the heart of men. However, this will never be accomplished until Christ comes to rule and reign upon His second return. But when He does institute His rule, peace will be the natural and complete result of His reign.

Fulfilled Prophecy: There are two occasions in the New Testament where Micah is quoted and confirmed as completely accurate, and the first once again is in chapter 3 where the birthplace of the Messiah is stunningly named. Like his contemporary Isaiah, who was given the striking information that Christ would be born by a virgin, Micah was given information that explained exactly where this virgin would give birth.

The second time Micah is quoted in the New Testament is in Matthew 10:35-36. Jesus was quoting from Micah 7:6 describing what would happen to those disciples who chose Him over their family. He was describing relational divides that would occur and that to follow Christ would mean to create enemies that, at one time, did not exist.

Key Words—

Controversy: This sums up the book of Micah. It is God's controversy with His people. This was often used as a technical legal term, and God employs it here as He is describing that His people are being placed on trial, and the entire world will stand witness to this event.

What to Gain from Micah

Listen to God's Plea Before Experiencing God's Punishment— Before real trouble came, God emotionally appealed to His people to come back and serve Him. Once again, instruction was given, once again, He pleaded for their heart, once again He promised to restore them. Sadly, we know the choice that was ultimately made, but for our lives, we can learn from their mistake. If God provides a measure of mercy and saves you from what could potentially be a hazardous experience, it is far better to listen to that and learn, rather than come against God's full punishment.

Leadership Sets the Tone for the People— The People were primarily in trouble because they were simply copying what they were watching their leaders do. Godly leadership is indispensable for health and vitality and it is incumbent upon the people to hold their leaders accountable to God's standards instead of following them down the same dark road they are traveling.

Christ's Rule Will be the Only Righteous Rule— Looking forward to the cross, out of all of the leaders we have discussed, out of all the great men and women of the faith witnessed so far, and out of all those prophets mentioned and still to come, we find that they were either lacking morally, or lacking in their ability to bring about the kind of change needed to turn people toward God. However, in Micah's message we find that there is One hero of the Bible that will accomplish this. He will not only speak law, but will establish peace by it, permanently.



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