

The God Who is Just
A Sermon on Micah: Part I
by
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1. Introduction (1:1)

2. Judgment Begins with the Household of God (1:2-16)

a. God reverses their expectations of judgment (1:2-7).

i. In v. 2 we see Micah comes before the people of Judah. He gives a standard prophetic introduction of judgement.

1. The Lord Himself will be a witness against all of creation for her deeds, for He has seen all that happens from above. He has witnessed the deeds of men from His holy temple and He is moved to execute justice.

a. The depiction here is of God Himself suddenly departing from His throne to come down in person upon the earth in all His power and all His majesty to dispense justice.

b. He will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth; v. 4 shows the sheer awesomeness of His presence as nature itself buckles under the weight of His holy wrath.

2. And all the Israelites, at this point, said, “Amen.”

ii. “All this for the rebellion of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the rebellion of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? What is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem?”

1. Micah pulls the classic move of a prophet; if you remember the prophet Nathan sets up David in the exact same way. They know the injustice – and then he flips their world upside-down in an instant.

a. God is not indifferent to the sins of His people.

- b. And if we let it, this is an incredibly powerful warning to us today.
- 2. Micah moves on then and reveals their fate in verses 6-7. Everything's coming down to the ground.
 - a. He tells them that just as they enriched themselves off the earnings of a prostitute, the prostitute will enrich themselves off of the treasures of Israel.
 - b. They were to be a light to the Gentiles but were steeped in immorality; God will still use them as a witness to the world to showcase His love of justice.

b. God's prophet mourns at Israel's funeral (1:8-9).

- i. Micah is absolutely devastated in delivering this message of judgment against his people. His posture is one of incredible grief.
 - 1. He's going to be walking around naked and barefoot, howling like a jackal and wailing like an ostrich, at the prospect of Samaria's judgment.
 - 2. Really, what he's describing here is a funeral ceremony—at least one the Israelites would have been familiar with.
- ii. The reason the prophet wails is simple: he takes no delight in their misfortune and knows they have an incurable wound.
 - 1. The incurable wound here is not speaking toward Israel's sin, but the judgment being brought upon them by the Lord.
 - 2. Israel's incurable wound is not simply devastation and ruin throughout the land, but the removal of the presence of God from her midst, and losing their rights to the Promised Land.

c. God's judgment is upon them and there is no earthly hiding place (1:10-15).

i. Then in v. 10-14, Micah moves from targeting the capital cities of Samaria and Jerusalem to these other cities throughout the land,.

1. Micah uses an incredibly heavy dose of irony in this section; we lose virtually all of it because it doesn't translate well into the English:

2. **V. 10** Tell it not in “tell-town”, weep not at all. At “the House of Dust” roll yourself in the dust.

V. 11 Go on your way, inhabitant of “Beauty-town”, in shameful nakedness. The inhabitant of “Going-forth town” does not [go forth or] escape. The lamentation of “Taking-away town”: “He will take away from you its support.”

V. 12 For the inhabitant of “Bitter-town” becomes weak waiting for good, because a calamity [an evil], has come down from the Lord to the gate of Jerusalem.

V. 13 Harness the chariot to the שָׁרָף (larekesh) which is the Hebrew term for a team of horses, O inhabitant of Lachish. She was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion—because in you were found the rebellious acts of Israel.

V. 14 Therefore you will give parting gifts on behalf of Moresheth-gath; the “House of Lies” will become a deception to the kings of Israel.

ii. Micah is not making light of the situation through his use of wordplay; remember, the prophet is weeping for his people because the extent of God's judgment is total.

1. Everything that is familiar will be gone; every stronghold will be torn down; every single place of familiarity – the place they call “home” will become to them a place of inescapable misery.

2. The Lord's justice is so secure that the names of the towns themselves had prophetic significance.

iii. In v. 15, The Lord Himself says He will put it in the heart of the Assyrian king to come and conquer and take possession of their best military stronghold.

1. He says, “The glory of Israel will enter Adullam.” Adullam is the place where David hid in the system of caves when he was persecuted by Saul.
2. These men who are now going to flee into the caves just like David did, claim to be the glory of Israel, and yet the Lord tells them, “You’re no better than David’s band of miscreants.

d. *God’s means of mercy: mourn at your own funeral (1:16).*

- i. Yet in v. 16, there’s a small glimmer of hope and that hope is found in the means of God’s mercy in repentance.
- ii. There is judgment, there is punishment, there is justice, and yet there is mercy and compassion because the path of hope for them lay in embracing their punishment and turning back to the ways of God.
 1. For the one who is stuck in sin today, for you, I give this same word.
 2. See yourself as you really are this day; turn back to the ways of God; mourn, do what is right. Repent! Weep at your own funeral!

3. God Identifies the Characteristics of the Oppressor (2:1-11)

a. *They are a people who literally dream of new ways to abuse their power (2:1-2).*

- i. Verse one opens up with an oracle of woe against Israel’s rulers for their wickedness—because they work out evil in their beds.
 1. When they wake up in the morning, they then carry out their plans and no one is able to stop them from doing it.
 2. They rule with absolute power and exercise it in the cruelest of possible ways.
- ii. In v. 2 we see their violence and oppression is all driven by covetousness as they rob the people of their inheritance as an Israelite.

1. Their inheritance was not speaking toward what they would be given after a loved one's death, but a parcel of land that was assigned to your family in the Promised Land after they came up out of Egypt.
 2. To lose that inheritance wasn't simply an economic disaster, but a spiritual one.
- b. As they devised evil against their brother, so the Lord devises evil against them (2:3-5).*
- i. As they plan evil against their brother, the Lord plans evil for them. They will experience consequences they consider evil, which exposes the height of their hypocrisy.
 - ii. Vv. 4-5 shows us how they will cry out on that day, like the proverbial fool who spurned wisdom and cried out in the day of his evil, only to be mocked and laughed at with derision by God Himself.
- c. Their deeds are connected to the cry of the false prophets (2:6-11).*
- i. When we get to vv. 6-11 we see even their prophets are bought and paid for by the rich.
 1. The prophets hear the message of Micah and speak against him.
 2. Notice what these false prophets say though in v. 7, "Is it being said, that the Spirit of the Lord is not patient?"
 - a.* All these prophets are doing are crying for peace when there is no peace and inciting the people to idolatry and wicked living.
 - b.* Yet what they're also doing is basically looking at the prophet and saying, "Shut up, Micah!"
 - ii. Now notice the response of the Lord in v. 7; Do not My words do good to the one walking uprightly?
 1. The Prophet lays their hearts bare before them.
 2. Because of their great wickedness against those who are in greatest need, he commands them in v. 10 to rise and flee, because there is no rest for them where they remain. They will go into exile.

- iii. Yet just as this section began with the false words of the lying prophets, so too does it end with it because they fail to listen to the Lord's true prophet.
 - 1. The false prophet reassures the people that the doom-bringer and nay-sayer of a prophet is wrong to speak of God's judgment.
 - 2. Micah is the prophet these people so badly need, but instead they will listen to the false prophets they deserve because their itching ears cannot handle a God who is just.
 - 3. To be sure, Micah is drawing out a correlation between faithful preaching and faithful living; but he is also drawing out a connection to those who hear the Words of the prophet and yet reject them.

4. God Identifies the Deliverer of the Oppressed (2:12-13)

- a. *He is the Good Shepherd who gathers His people together (2:12).*
 - i. Right after Micah promises these people judgment, he gives them a message of a future hope.
 - ii. It is important to know that Micah has in mind both an immediate and future fulfillment here.
 - 1. The ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy of hope for the exiles is that they will once again be united as one people of God.
 - 2. He is referring to that time where the removal of Israel's hard-heartedness takes place and all of Israel will be saved.
- b. *He is the Warrior-King who goes before them to conquer their foes (2:13).*
 - i. Yet He is also referred to as the "Breaker" – or the One who breaks forth in judgment.
 - ii. He will go before them as their King; He will pave the way ahead of them—and the language here is reminiscent of when He led the people out of Egypt in the book of Exodus, except it is explicitly referring to Him doing so bodily.

5. Conclusion

a. God is just and will not spare His own people from the scope of His judgment.

- i. When we consider the message of Micah and the warning it gives us today, one theme rings clearly through the whole of the book: God is a just God and therefore He requires that His people act justly.
 1. We've seen what happens when rulers and prophets abuse their positions of power, influence, and authority.
 2. What I don't want to be lost on us though is that the root of their incredible rebellion and pride is the same as our own.
- ii. What becomes clear in this then is that our status as children of God does not remove the potential for judgment in the here and now.
 1. It is not enough that we say the right words, believe the right things, and preach the right message.
 2. Micah calls us to be a people who love justice, who love truth, and who love our neighbor.

b. God is just, and therefore requiring that all men everywhere repent.

- i. To be sure, the message I bring today to both the Christian stuck in sin and the unbeliever is that you must repent.
 1. For the Christian, you must flee from your sin and turn back to God.
 2. For the non-Christian, you must see yourself for who you are and turn to God for the first time.
- ii. If you would cast yourself upon His mercy this day, you shall no pronouncement of woe against you.

6. Closing Prayer

Community Group Questions

1. When we consider the implications of what it means for God to be a “just” God and that His judgment begins within the household of God, what kind of response does that solicit in you? Fear? Comfort? Anxiety? Then take a look at Micah 2:7b and discuss further.
2. Is there a time you presumed upon the grace of the Lord and felt His hand of discipline upon you? What was that like?
3. How do we reconcile this intense justice of God with the incredible mercy of God?
4. We can easily find examples of teachers in our own day and age that push a message of peace when there is no peace, and others who will not give the hard words the people need to hear – but that is thankfully not the case at Missio. However, there is always a temptation to be a people who hear the Word and do not do it; what are some ways you are not “doing” the Word currently, and what are some specific steps to take where you can be found obedient? How can your group help you be accountable?