

Christ in Prophecy
Jesus in the Old Testament 40
Waiting Expectantly for the Lord (Micah & Nahum)
Key Verses: Micah 6:8, 7:19; Nahum 1:7

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Part 1

Tim Moore: Welcome to Christ in Prophecy. I'm Tim Moore, the senior evangelist at Lamb & Lion Ministries. My co-host is Nathan Jones, our Internet evangelist. We've hit the home stretch in our Jesus in the Old Testament series, as we explore the last few remaining minor prophets.

Nathan Jones: We'll be focusing on two Old Testament books today, Micah and Nahum. These prophets are minor only in the sense that their books are a fairly short, seven and three chapters respectively, but they're just filled with insights into God's character and interaction with His creation and with prophetic references to the Messiah. And bear in mind that the Bible isn't laid out chronologically in the English version, as in the Jewish version it would be, so these might seem a little out of order.

Tim Moore: You know, that's right. Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah and likely completed his book of prophecy before Isaiah's ministry ended about 740 to 686 BC. Because Westerners think much more chronologically, we have to keep this timeline in mind. But Micah's name is actually a shortened version of Micaiah, which means who is like the Lord? Boy, Nathan. That'd be a great name for a child, even today.

Nathan Jones: Oh, it's an excellent name, and it's actually a form of Michael, so a lot of people are named, who is like God? It's like a question, who could possibly be like God?

Tim Moore: Yes. Well, what does Micah have to say not only to his contemporaries in his day and age, but to us today, what was the focus of Micah's message?

Well, let me give you a little background first. I love the Minor Prophets. I wrote a book, *12 Faith Journeys of the Minor Prophets*, and I think I captured the time period pretty well. Micah was a prophet during the reign of three kings, you can read about him in the 2 Kings 15-20 and 2 Chronicles 27-30. It begins with Jothan; nobody knows much about Jothan but he was a warrior king.

It's his son, Ahaz, that sets the stage for Micah's time period, though. He was, Tim, an immoral monster, he showed nothing but contempt for God. He stripped the temple of its valuables. He set up the worship of the gods of his enemies. He robbed his own people blind, and he even sacrificed his children to the pagan sacrifices. Corruption oozed out of everything about this guy. And because of that, the priesthood, the prophets, the nobility, they'd all become corrupted.

And so, we have Micah coming into the scene of complete governmental corruption. Matter of fact, in this chapter here, I call him the Prophet of God, because this is what he says in Micah 3:8 says, "But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." So, the Lord here is giving Micah a call. And what's he called to do? He is called to be God's lawyer. If you look at Micah 1:2, "Hear,

all you peoples! Listen, O earth, and all that is in it! Let the Lord God be a witness against you, The Lord from His holy temple.” So, the whole book of Micah is set up like God has come to accuse Israel and Judah of being wicked. And he's sending Micah, like His lawyer, to bring condemnation against the people for their sin.

Tim Moore: I like how you emphasize that it's both to Israel in the Northern Kingdom, and Judah in the Southern Kingdom, because even in verse one of chapter one, he says that he's talking to both Samaria, the Northern Kingdom capital, and Jerusalem. So, this really is for all the people, and he is presenting a case. Now he's going to present both the condemnation, the calling out of their wickedness, their apostasy, but he's also going to give oracles of hope and also clarity on what God really would expect of His people then and today.

So, one of our key verses already is in chapter six, verse eight, talking about Micah asking a question, “Who is like the Lord with his name? He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?” And so, we today even can follow that model of what does God expect of us, and Micah is very clear in presenting that principle for all ages.

Nathan Jones: And that was God's charge against the people. They weren't doing that. They weren't doing justly, they weren't loving mercy. They weren't walking humbly with their God. Matter of fact Micah ended up having to bring a few accusations against the people because of their sins. For one, he pointed out their oppression of the poor, they treated the poor people horribly. They were actually evicting the farmers off their land in order to sell their property. Matter of fact, Micah was from Moresheth near Gath, so he's in the Philistine border. And Ahaz wanted to sell Moresheth to the Assyrians to protect them from the Syrians who are bothering them at the time. And in the Israeli system, as you know, God's covenant land belongs with the people. And so really Ahaz was stealing the land from God.

So, they were oppressing the poor, throwing them out of their land. He had an unscrupulous use of power. I mean, he was a total dictator. They had a complete lack of integrity in all their business ethics. They had greed, especially the prophets, but in the name of God, they spoke in God's name but were greedy.

The fifth charge he had was that they heeded the false prophets who lied to them all the time. And so, between those five major sins God had condemned it, and you see a judge with a gavel in front of them and he's going guilty, guilty, guilty, because the whole society had become corrupted. And so, we're very close to 722 BC, and, you know, what is that famous date in Israel's history?

Tim Moore: Yeah, well, the famous date is when Assyria is going to come in and wipe it out, especially the Northern Kingdom. And so, yes, he's giving warning. If they had heeded God, perhaps would have relented of His wrath at that time, and stayed. You know, hearing about Ahaz reminds me of another king, one letter difference, at least in English, Ahab who looked down upon a particular vineyard and said, “Boy, I wish I had that piece of property, that land.” And his wife, the very evil Jezebel, said, “Why are you so downcast? You could have that land? Just make a false accusation against the landowner and seize it, it is your right as a king.” And following her very wicked advice and counsel, he did just that and seized that land.

So, the things that we see happening throughout scripture, even today, nothing is new under the sun.

Nathan Jones: No, and that really captures the essence of it. I mean, we here in America, and I'm sure people in other countries are constantly saying our government has gotten just so corrupt at every single level, it's just appalling. But it's no different here, it was just as corrupt in this time period. And yet, so God's going to judge the Northern Kingdom. He's going to send Assyria down. They're going to exile the ten tribes out of the northern region and spread them out. And that was the message that Micah had along with his contemporary Isaiah. But what's wonderful about the book of Micah is even though you think, okay, this is the end, it's time for God to punish the people, He gives some messianic prophecies.

Tim Moore: He certainly does.

Nathan Jones: We're doing this Christ in Prophecy, Christ in the Old Testament series. I love if I could bring up this messianic prophecy in Micah 5:2-4.

Tim Moore: Sure.

Nathan Jones: And it just blows your mind. It says, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting. Therefore, He shall give them up, Until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; Then the remnant of His brethren Shall return to the children of Israel. And He shall stand and feed His flock, In the strength of the Lord, In the majesty of the name of the Lord His God; And they shall abide, For now He shall be great, To the ends of the earth." So, you know, when we look at government, we say government is so corrupt. Human government is a failure at every level. It can't protect its people. It's always robbing them or stealing from them. It glorifies in power. But it's promising that one day the Messiah will come, He will defeat and destroy human government, just like the statue in Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar statue. And he will set up his kingdom of peace and righteousness and justice, and we will finally know government that is meant to be.

Tim Moore: Exactly so. And you know, when you mentioned Bethlehem Ephrathah, the people would say, why is the little tagline Ephrathah? Because we always call it O Little Town of Bethlehem, but the Ephrathah is very specific. It's like saying Springfield, Missouri versus Springfield, Illinois. So, it's telling you the exact region, because there was more than one Bethlehem. The very name Bethlehem means House of Bread. And we know that much of the breadbasket, even of the ancient world and still today is up in the Galilee area. So, there was more than one Bethlehem. But Micah is very specific, which is why move forward to Matthew when the Magi came from the east to Jerusalem and said, "Where is he who is born king of the Jews?" The scribes and the Pharisees knew that Micah had foretold the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, specifically the little city of Bethlehem, just south of Jerusalem. So, the Magi, the Wisemen went to that city of David. But of course, the scribes and the Pharisees, they couldn't be bothered to walk just a few miles to see if what they were expecting was coming to pass right before their eyes.

Nathan Jones: Yeah, it's truly sad because Bethlehem, as you know, is only a few miles south of Jerusalem. But it's amazing here is that we're given the exact location of where the Messiah was born. And Mary and Joseph weren't even from Bethlehem.

Tim Moore: No.

Nathan Jones: The family line came from Bethlehem for Joseph. But because of the census by Augustus, he had to take Mary and travel down to Bethlehem Ephrathah in order to have this prophecy fulfilled. So amazing that God would move an emperor, you know.

Tim Moore: A pagan emperor.

Nathan Jones: A pagan emperor to create a census to make sure that Joseph and Mary got down to the place where Jesus was supposed to be born.

Tim Moore: It's a beautiful fulfillment of a prophecy, that not any word in Scripture will go unfulfilled in the providence of God. We can go back to the previous chapter, chapter four of Micah, and he gives an extended description of the kingdom that will exist in the latter days. It's called the peaceful latter days. And it says, "That the mountain of the house of the LORD, Will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, And the peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, 'Come and let's go up to the mountain of the LORD, And to the house of the God of Jacob, So that He may teach us about His ways, And that we may walk in His paths.' For from Zion will go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between many peoples, And render decisions for mighty, distant nations."

You know, we have not yet seen the fulfillment of that passage, but prophetically we know it will come to pass when Jesus returns to reign. From where? From the throne of his father, David, there in Jerusalem.

Nathan Jones: And before that needs to happen, there's another prophecy in here about the regathering of Israel, Micah 2:12 & 13 "I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold." Then skipping down, "Their king will pass before them, With the Lord as their head." Now, their king right now was one of the most corrupt officials ever, now he's followed by Hezekiah, which was a good king, though didn't make the best decisions.

Tim Moore: No, not always.

Nathan Jones: But here this is just before Israel was banished out of the Northern Kingdom, and the Southern Kingdom, obviously it would be a long time before then that they'd be banished. And yet here it's prophesying a return of a remnant and the king ruling over them.

Tim Moore: Wow. You know, I'm so encouraged to read these ancient prophecies and really to dig into the Minor Prophets. And Nathan, you've written a book and we've stressed this before, but why is it so important to read these minor prophets if they're minor, it would suggest that they don't have very much to say, and yet that is not why we call them Minor Prophets. What is the definition of a Minor Prophet?

Nathan Jones: Before any actor gets on stage there has to be a set. There has to be a setting, there has to be a script written. And the Minor Prophets provide the infrastructure, the set, the script, they point to the Messiah. And if you don't know the prophecies like Bethlehem Ephrathah, or that Jesus will be ruling from Jerusalem one day, all these prophecies established for when Jesus came, He could point to them and people could, we could look at Him and say, He's the Messiah. All of these are pointing. So, when you hear of church leaders today, especially big names saying we need to disconnect or unhitch the Old Testament or something, that's the most foolish thing I've ever heard, because the Old Testament sets up the New. It

establishes why salvation and grace are so important because we don't have to live under the Law like they did at the time. And it tells us what the future is. We're not going to live under this corrupted system. The Church Age will end. Someday Jesus will rule and reign from Jerusalem forever. That is exciting, exciting things.

And we learn about the Lord's character too. For instance, Micah 7:7-8 "Therefore I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; My God will hear me. Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; When I fall, I will arise; When I sit in darkness, The Lord will be a light to me." Isn't that amazing? Here the people in Micah's time had rejected God and they had lost the power. Matter of fact Ahaz lost tremendous battles because the Lord didn't lead his armies; 120,000 died just in one particular battle. If he had followed the Lord, the Lord would have been a light and made him successful. So, it's also an application point.

Tim Moore: It certainly is. And so really what we're saying is they may be called Minor Prophets, but not because of the significance of their impact or of their prophetic word pointing to Jesus Christ. They've been labeled Minor Prophets because they tend to be shorter than the major prophets, although that's not always the case. In some instances, the minor prophets are actually longer in terms of chapter length than one or two of the major prophets. So, the point is, these are not minor in their significance, they're minor only in the length, which is why they've been grouped toward the end of our Old Testaments but still very important, especially as they point to Jesus, our Messiah.

And I love the passage you just read from chapter seven, verse seven, because Micah, even as he's witnessing all these terrible things happening within his nation, the leadership gone awry and proclaiming God's judgment about to fall, he said, "Yet for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord." Well, isn't that a theme that we should be sounding? That's really the message of our own Lamplighter magazine on a regular basis that we should be expectantly watching for and waiting for the Lord.

Nathan Jones: Look up and be watchful for our redemption is drawing nigh. That's the message of Christ in Prophecy every week, folks.

Tim Moore: It sure is.

Nathan Jones: It also shows us too, the loving forgiveness of God, it brings the element of salvation. Micah 7:18-19, "Who is a God like You," here we go Micah's name. "Pardoning iniquity, And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy. He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. He will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." Isn't that wonderful? Here we get to people who had gotten so evil that God sent a prophet to him saying, I am judging you, you will be exiled, but I will bring a remnant back. He will forgive your sins and He will be king over you. The whole message of salvation can be found just in the book of Micah, if you look for it.

Tim Moore: It sure could. Yes, it could. And as a matter of fact, I love that verse, that's another one of our key verses out of chapter 7:19. In my translation, The New American, it says "He will have compassion on us and he will tread our iniquities underfoot." You know, many of the false gods of this world, religious systems will tread people underfoot. If you fall under the disdain of a particular god or don't meet his standard, he will crush you underfoot. But our God sent His own son to be crushed on our behalf. He sent Him to take on His back, our iniquities. And so, He

was bruised, He was crushed for us. And it's not us who will be crushed, it is our iniquities that He is totally trod under His own feet and we are to be saved.

You know, I find myself oftentimes feeling sorry for Micah, mainly because he was spiritually discerning, and yet he had to witness idolatry, apostasy and wickedness, not unlike the state of the world today. But even as he did, Micah expressed, yes, great angst over the period he lived, but he also expressed confident hope waiting for his Messiah.

Part 2

Tim Moore: Well, in addition to Micah, let's talk a few minutes about Nahum, because that's another important of the Minor Prophets. So, Nathan, tell us a little bit about Nahum and his message.

Nathan Jones: Okay. Well, we're going to now move 110 years forward. So, Micah was during Isaiah about 700, so now we're getting a little farther. We've got Nahum. And Nahum is going to be a prophet and he's going to proclaim the destruction of Nineveh or the Assyrian army.

Now, remember, folks back in Jonah, God sent Jonah, even though he was very unwilling to go, but he had a message. He finally got there after taking a fishy detour, and he went to Nineveh, he proclaimed a five word message, and the Ninevites repented and he couldn't believe it. And for almost 150 years, the Lord had forgiven them and allowed them to exist. But then Ninevites had again fallen into tremendous evil. I mean this was a people that if you remember ISIS when they were tearing across Iraq, murdering and killing people and crucifying people, this same land area, these people were just as evil. Matter of fact, when they conquered a people, they would stick a hook through the nose or through the skin in the back. You would be naked, they'd line you up, and then they'd march you hundreds of miles into exile. And so, they were terribly cruel people.

So, we get to the time period now where the Northern Tribes have been exiled and, you know, they saw their brethren, Judah saw their brethren being terribly mistreated. And now God's sending a message to Nahum, and he's saying Assyria will fall. And you can imagine this is actually a very hope filled book because the judgment isn't on Israel for a change, it's on Israel's persecutors. So, it's actually a message of victory and a message of hope.

Tim Moore: It certainly is a message of hope. And yet you have to look at it in the context for the Ninevites the hope has been relented of. In other words, God relented of his judgment previously, but now he's withdrawing that relief, and he's saying there is no relief in store for you. As a matter of fact, in chapter three, verse 19, God specifically says through his prophet Nahum to the people of Nineveh, there is no relief for your breakdown, your wound is incurable. In other words, the judgment is locked in.

And yet we talked about Micah's name, Nahum's name also has a meaning, it means comfort or consolation. In this case, as you pointed out, Nathan, not comfort or consolation for the people of Nineveh, there is no longer a cure available for them, but comfort and consolation for the people of Judah as they see what will happen to this pagan evil kingdom. And yet it also becomes a warning. If they do not heed God, then they could go down the same path to the point of their wound being incurable.

Nathan Jones: And the prophecy was fulfilled, by 612 BC, both the Babylonians and the Medes had teamed up. It's interesting the Medes will then overthrow Babylon later along with the Persians, but Assyria was destroyed. Nineveh, matter of fact Nineveh was so obliterated that they weren't even able to find it for hundreds and hundreds of years. So, the Lord, when He said He would destroy them, He would destroy them. Besides the fatal injury, Nahum 1:14 says that he would just obliterate the name of Nineveh. He said, "The Lord has given a command concerning you: 'Your name shall be perpetuated no longer. Out of the house of your gods I will cut off the carved images and the molded image. I will dig your grave, For you are vile.'"

Now, bear in mind, too, that God is dealing with the people who dealt with the Northern Tribes. He allowed a more evil people to destroy the evil people up north. But He always will come back around and give His judgment upon them.

Tim Moore: You know, that's a warning for any who would pour out wrath or indignation toward Israel, who would scoff at them because God's judgment fell even on nations that said, aha, when Israel was being disciplined. I think Nahum captures better than anyone else in a short series of verses.

Nathan Jones: Yes, three chapters.

Tim Moore: The character of God, because we often hear people say today, oh my God wouldn't do that, or my God's not like that. And yet they ignore various characteristics of God. So, Nahum in chapter one, says, beginning in verse two, "A jealous and avenging God is the Lord; The Lord is avenging and wrathful. The Lord takes vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies." So, we have this side of God that will not tolerate wickedness and His judgment will be poured out, His righteous indignation. And yet, just five verses later in verse seven, he says, "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him." And so, you can almost think, well, which is it? And the reality is it's both. God is both righteous, and His indignation is righteous. Unlike you or me, I cannot get angry and maintain a righteousness I give myself over to an unhealthy anger and indignation. But God is always righteous in His anger, and yet He also shows grace and mercy to those who put their faith in Him. So, both characteristics of God are manifest right here within a 5 to 6 verse passage of Nahum.

Nathan Jones: Yeah. And we learn too, that God's jealous. Like, well, wait a minute, isn't jealousy a sin? If you are like Oprah Winfrey, who in her earlier days assumed that when it said God was jealous, he was jealous of her. She misunderstood.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Nathan Jones: God's jealousy isn't that He's jealous of us. He has the zeal for what is best for us. And what's best for us isn't a knock off, it isn't a cheap god, it isn't an idol, it isn't self, it's Him. He is the only best for us. And so, we read throughout the Bible, especially the Old Testament. I am a jealous and avenging God. Well, He's not jealous of you. He's not jealous of me. We're like tiny nothings compared to the God of the universe.

Tim Moore: Right.

Nathan Jones: He's jealous because He loves us so much, like a husband for his wife. I would be jealous if a man started hitting on my wife. You know, I might be a little wrathful, too, if it's needed.

Tim Moore: I understand.

Nathan Jones: God's the same way. It shows again His great love. So, I hear people after people, I'm sure you hear that, Tim all the time, "Oh, the Old Testament, God is always angry, He's so wrathful, He's so mad. Well, He was in the middle of a breakup, so to speak, during that time. The letters of the Minor Prophets show a time where the people for hundreds of years had so rejected the lover of their hearts, that He finally had to bring judgment upon them. But there was always, and again Nahum has the same element, there's always a promise of redemption and restoration and a Messiah.

Tim Moore: And a Messiah. You know, I always think back to the words of Habakkuk, another one of the Minor Prophets who upon realizing the judgment that was about to be poured out on his people, prayed, "Oh Lord in wrath, remember mercy." And it always makes me shake my head because you're speaking to God who is all merciful. Yes, His wrath, His judgment is righteous, but He is also merciful. So, he cannot forget mercy, and Nahum affirms that. In another Messianic passage, I believe this points to our Messiah, chapter one, verse 15, he says, "Behold on the mountains, the feet of Him, who brings good news, who announces peace." And so, Jesus Christ is our Prince of peace. He has come. He is coming again. We know His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives and He will go up to the throne of his father, David, to reign and to make sure that the whole earth is flooded with peace, righteousness and holiness.

Nathan Jones: And that's a fantastic verse because it's also quoted in Isaiah 52:7 and Romans 10:15. So one of the arguments against, well, the Minor Prophets, yeah you don't need to read them, it's like a dusty old attic you never visit, is the fact that Jesus quoted the Minor Prophets many times. The apostles as well would quote the Minor Prophets many times, because the message is all coherent. It's all one thing. It all points to Jesus Christ and His coming to forgive us of sins. And then beyond that, to when He sets up a kingdom over the remnant who has put their trust in Him.

Tim Moore: You know, in a nutshell, that really sums up the whole theme of our Jesus in the Old Testament series. It all fits together and everything builds on one another to point to the Messiah, not only his first Advent, but His glorious Second Coming. And yet in these two ancient books, there's also a very strong word of application for us today.

Part 3 Application

Tim Moore: So, Nathan, what would be an application point? You said these are books that some people relegate to the dustbin because I don't have any use for them, but they have application to us today, even in our day and age. I already mentioned how we're living in a time when we have to witness apostasy and wickedness and corruption amongst our national leaders. But what is the word of encouragement and impending judgment that these two prophets would give us?

Nathan Jones: I say that they would show exactly that God keeps His covenants. God is a covenantal keeper. He made a covenant with Israel. They agreed back, and the Israelites broke it. And so, God had to keep the judgments side of that covenant. The same, we live by John 3:16 but also by John 3:36 that if we reject Jesus, the wrath of God abides on us. So, we need

to accept Jesus Christ as our Savior. So, He doesn't just give us a covenant, He also gives us an opportunity for repentance to return back to that covenant with Him. When we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, the wrath of God is satisfied, like that old song.

Tim Moore: Amen. Amen. You know, I think it's also indicative that, yes, many of the prophecies in Scripture do point to Israel, the people of God, the chosen people of God, but Nahum demonstrates that God also has provision, even for the other nations surrounding Israel, other nations in this world. And so, the principles apply to us even today. And if we will follow the admonition that Micah gave in chapter six, verse eight, to do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly before God, to model the very Christian principles, at one time this nation professed then blessings will flow upon our nation. But if we do not, if we like the Ninevites reject even those principles, and we flaunt our wickedness, then God's judgment will be poured out on us, just as it was the evil people of Assyria, and even as it was for the people of Judah and of Israel. So those principles still apply. We have warned many times that God's judgment is about to fall, but really that the mercy exists for all who put their trust in Jesus Christ.

The title of this episode is Waiting Expectantly for Our Lord. Our current Lamplighter Magazine conveys the same theme. If you do not already receive the Lamplighter electronically or in print, please visit our website or call the number on the screen to subscribe.

Nathan Jones: And as we look forward to Christmas and the celebration of Messiah's birth over 2,000 years ago, we want to make a very special offer today. For only \$10 we'd be glad to send you a copy of Dr. Reagan's children's book, pointing to Jesus Soon Return. It makes a wonderful Christmas gift for young children in your life. If you call the number on the screen, you can inquire about discounts available if you purchase multiple copies.

Tim Moore: Our key verses from these two books are Micah 6:8, and 7:19, and Nahum 1:7. Hopefully you've been following along and picking out your own key verses and keeping a record of them throughout this series.

Nathan Jones: You can tell from our discussion today that there are so many other verses that resonate in our hearts. Altogether different verses may leap off the page and into your heart. Just record the insights the Holy Spirit gives you as you read and be ready to pull them all together along with us in just a few weeks.

Tim Moore: So, as we prepare to wrap up our Jesus in the Old Testament series and another year of our Lord, we pray that you are looking up, watching expectantly for the Lord and waiting for the God of Your salvation, the constellation of Israel, and the light of revelation to the Gentiles. Until next week, I'm Tim Moore.

Nathan Jones: And I'm Nathan Jones saying, Maranatha, come quickly, Lord Jesus.

End of Program