

**Who Is a God Like You?**  
**Micah 7:8-20**

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David Roseberry shared his experience of going to the doctor. *I went to see a doctor for a pain in my shoulder. My shoulder was just hurting all the time, whenever I moved it. The doctor examined me and he diagnosed the problem as “frozen shoulder.” It comes from just being my age, and from use. The doctor said, “There are a couple of things we need to do. The first is physical therapy,” and he wrote me a prescription for that. “And I can give you a steroid shot, a cortisone shot, right into the joint of that shoulder.” I said, “Go for it.”*

*As the doctor’s getting ready to do the injection, he says, “What do you do for a living?” I say, “I’m a minister. I preach for a living. Do you have a church?” He said, “No, I gave that up long ago. ... Now listen, just relax a little bit here, and we’ll get that joint all loosened up so you can continue to point your finger at people.”*

When we read the minor prophets, including Micah, we can get the impression that all they do is point fingers. We have heard Micah give specific and sad indictments of the sins of the people. We have listened to scathing rebukes of idolatry and injustice. We have heard ominous messages of disciplinary doom. We have to admit that the prophets were good finger pointers.

But we need to be sure we listen closely to their messages. We have also heard glorious descriptions of restoration. We have heard messages of promise and hope that ring with joyful clarity and encouragement. Micah’s finger certainly points outward toward the sins of the people. But it also points upward to the promises of God.

As we come to the end of the prophecy of Micah, he concludes with a majestic hymn of praise. He declares to the guilty sinners of Judah that there is also the hope of mercy, compassion, and forgiveness. He points his finger upward to focus our attention on the incomparable God who mercifully forgives sinners, restores them, and transforms them by his faithful love.

In the final section of Micah we will discover **four expressions of hope grounded in the goodness of God.**

**I. Hope expressed through a proclamation of personal trust (vv. 8-10).**

A. The people of God will be vindicated.

1. Though their enemies may gloat over them now, the people of God will rise from their fall and God will shine light on their darkness.
2. They will bear God’s anger toward them for their sin. But he will one day plead their case and execute justice against their enemies. God will vindicate them.

B. The enemies of God’s people will be judged.

1. Those who shamed God’s people and treated them with ruthless injustice will see that God has raised them up and vindicated them.
2. These enemies (Assyrian, Babylon) will themselves be judged. Those who taunted them asking “Where is your God?” will be covered in shame.

Hope is supported by personal trust in the living God who takes up the cause of those who trust in him. Like the people of Israel suffering the shame of exile, God's people often suffer the taunts and insults of their adversaries. Where is your God? Why doesn't he help you? Why does he seem to be inactive and disinterested? Maybe he isn't powerful enough to help you.

But God has promised to ultimately and eternally save those who trust in him. As Micah's contemporary Isaiah said, "But Israel is saved by the Lord with everlasting salvation; you shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity." Those who trust in the Lord will not ultimately be ashamed. But those who refuse to trust in the Lord will be ultimately ashamed.

As we have already seen in Micah, the way things are now is not the way things will always be. Now, God's people may suffer at the hands of their persecutors. Others may taunt you and mock you and shame you because of your faith. But in the end, when the Lord returns and sets all things right, it will be the unbeliever, not the believer, who will be covered in shame.

Listen to the words of Paul from 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10:

**5** This is <sup>f</sup>evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be <sup>g</sup>considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— **6** since indeed God considers it <sup>h</sup>just <sup>i</sup>to repay with affliction those who afflict you, **7** and to grant <sup>j</sup>relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when <sup>k</sup>the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven <sup>l</sup>with his mighty angels **8** <sup>m</sup>in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those <sup>n</sup>who do not know God and on those who <sup>o</sup>do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** They will suffer the punishment of <sup>p</sup>eternal destruction, <sup>q</sup>away from<sup>2</sup> the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, **10** <sup>r</sup>when he comes on <sup>s</sup>that day <sup>t</sup>to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our <sup>u</sup>testimony to you <sup>v</sup>was believed.

All who believe/trust in Jesus Christ will one day be vindicated when Jesus comes. No matter what the unbelieving world may think or say about you as a Christian, your life and your eternity are in the hands of the just Judge of all the universe. All who trust in him will not be ashamed. This confidence supports our hope.

## **II. Hope expressed through a promise of future restoration (vv. 11-13).**

A. In the future, God's people will be restored.

1. The walls will be built. The boundaries of the city will be extended. This might refer to the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the exile under Nehemiah and Ezra. It probably also refers to a future time when the kingdom of Christ is established.
2. The nations will come to Jerusalem. As we have already seen in Micah 4, the nations of the world will come to Jerusalem to participate in this renewed city.

B. In the future, the unbelieving will experience desolation.

1. The unbelieving are represented here by the contrast "but the earth." So we have Jerusalem/God's people experiencing restoration while the unbelieving/earth are experiencing desolation.
2. This desolation is the fruit of their deeds. They are being judged for their sin.

As one writer put it, *The oracle is the counterpart to the Christian doctrine of the Last Judgment. In traditional language which Israel could understand it expresses the assurance that deficits in the moral balance sheet of the world are eventually to be paid, while the kingdom of God is to be established in triumph.* (Leslie C. Allen, NICOT)

Here God reminds his people that there is a promise of a glorious future of restoration. What has been broken down and overrun will be rebuilt and restored. The people of God will be restored to their city and the nations will come to it. It is nothing less than the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:3).

### **III. Hope expressed through a prayer for divine provision (vv. 14-17).**

- A. A prayer for God to shepherd his people.
  - 1. The shepherd imagery has been used in each of the three sections of hope in Micah – 2:12, 5:4, and 7:14.
  - 2. The prayer asks God to come and shepherd his people.
    - a. Take them to the lush pastures of Bashan and Gilead. This speaks of God's provision for them.
    - b. Show them marvelous things like during the time of the Exodus.
- B. God's provision for his people will impact the nations.
  - 1. When the nations see God's wonders on behalf of his people, they will be ashamed of their own power. The once-boastful nations will be speechless before the power of God who shepherds his people.
  - 2. They will be humiliated in defeat. The imagery of licking the dust indicates utter humiliation before God.
  - 3. They will turn in trembling fear to God.

Micah has already indicated that the ultimate Shepherd Ruler is the one prophesied to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). In other words, Jesus is the Shepherd King. The provision of God for his people reaches its zenith through Jesus, the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep.

In the same way, the ultimate submission of the nations is the moment when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil. 2:10). The day will come when every person who ever lived will recognize the Lordship of Jesus and acknowledge his unrivaled power and position. The Good Shepherd who willingly laid down his life so that we could be saved is also the Exalted Lord who will reign supreme over all the universe.

### **IV. Hope expressed through praise for complete forgiveness (vv. 18-20).**

- A. Hope is grounded in the character of God.
  - 1. Who is a God like you? The name Micah means "who is like God?"
  - 2. The book ends with a focus on the character of God which is the foundation of hope. Note the aspects of God's character that are emphasized.
    - a. Steadfast love (vv. 18, 20) –

Alec Motyer says it is a term "combining the warmth of God's fellowship with the security of God's faithfulness." Ralph Davis says of this term, "it is not merely love, but loyal love; not

merely kindness, but dependable kindness; not merely affection, but affection that has committed itself.”

b. Compassion (v. 19) – comes from a parent noun that means “womb.” It refers to God’s tender mercy like that of a nursing mother for her child. It is that urge to help the helpless.

c. Faithfulness (v. 20) – firmness, certainty, dependability. This refers to the trustworthiness of God and his commitment to his promises. He will keep his word.

B. The character of God is expressed in his forgiveness.

1. He pardons iniquity and passes over transgression.

2. He does not retain his anger forever.

3. He treads our iniquities underfoot, he casts all our sins into the depths of sea.

In 2006 a group of people started a new holiday around New Years. It's called Good Riddance Day. Participants write down unpleasant, painful, or embarrassing memories from the past year and throw them into an industrial-strength shredder. Or if you prefer, you can also take a sledge hammer and smash your good riddance item, like a cell phone, for instance.

One of the Good Riddance Day organizers said, "It really is this need we have, even when the world is crazy, to say, 'You know what? I'm gonna let go of the things that have been dragging me down and going to look forward with a sense of hope and the possibility of change. Either for myself personally or the world.' So this is a chance to detox in a big way."

We all understand that impulse. We all want a sense of hope. We all want a pathway to a different life that is not weighed down with the past. But there is no industrial shredder that will erase the results of sin. There is no sledge hammer that can demolish the consequences of our rebellion against God. The only true “good riddance day” is the day that we recognize we are sinners, turn to Jesus Christ who died and rose again, and trust in him for the forgiveness of our sins. Only then can we really say “good riddance” to our old life and start living a new life.

Because of who God is (loving, compassionate, forgiving) we can have hope. We began our study of Micah talking about sin – the righteous judgment of a holy God against sin. We end the book of Micah talking about sin – the mercy of a loving God in the forgiveness of sin.

## **Conclusion**

We might be tempted to ask, “which one is it? Is God holy and judging or is he loving and forgiving?” This is where we must understand the good news of the gospel. The answer is that God is both holy and judging and loving and forgiving.

God is holy and he will not overlook sin. He will judge sin. All of us are sinners who deserve God’s judgment. But God is also loving. He wants to rescue us from the consequences of our sin and forgive us. How does he do that?

He did it by sending his Son Jesus Christ. Jesus died on the cross suffering the penalty and judgment that our sins deserve. Paul says in Galatians 3:13 that Jesus was cursed for us by hanging on the cross. Peter says in 1 Peter 2:24 that Jesus bore our sins in his own body on the tree (cross). Jesus took the judgment of sin on the cross.

Jesus was buried and then God raised him from the dead. His resurrection was God's exclamation point on the truthfulness of who Jesus is and what Jesus did. It demonstrated that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, and that his sacrifice on the cross paid the price for sin.

Now, everyone who turns from sin and trusts in Jesus Christ will be forgiven.

- Matt. 26:28 – For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.
- Ephesians 1:7 – In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses.
- 1 John 1:9 – If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to purify us from all unrighteousness.

One day every one of us will stand before God. Will you stand before him subject to judgment with a record of sin and rebellion which you have accumulated throughout your life? Or will you stand before him forgiven with your record of sin and rebellion canceled because you trusted in Jesus Christ?

Today could be a true “good riddance” day in your life. Will you trust in Jesus and be forgiven?