

## Hope in Judgement Micah

**Picture 1** – Micah lived in a small town named Moresheth in southern Judah, just west of the Sea of Galilee and at about the same time as Isaiah and some 200 years after the nation had split.

Micah warned that God was going to send the Assyrians to decimate the northern kingdom, but also invade Jerusalem in the southern kingdom of Israel. And more than that, Micah warned Israel that after Assyria had fallen, Babylon would rise and destroy Israel.

Or, as Micah summarizes it in 3:8 – *“I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.”*

In the book named after him, Micah expounds the seriousness of God’s judgment but also its purposes.

### First: God is coming in judgement – 1-2

**2:1-4** - *Hear, you peoples, all of you; pay attention, O earth, and all that is in it, and let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple. <sup>3</sup>For behold, the LORD is coming out of his place, and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth. <sup>4</sup>And the mountains will melt under him, and the valleys will split open, like wax before the fire...*

- a) Israel is trusting in other gods

**1:7** - *All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces, all her wages shall be burned with fire, and all her idols I will lay waste, for from the fee of a prostitute she gathered them, and to the fee of a prostitute they shall return.*

- b) Micah spends the rest of chapter naming the particular cities God is going to judge.

*Gath, Beth-le-aprah, Shaphir, Zaanan, Beth-ezel, Maroth, Lachish, Moresheth-gath, Achzib, Mareshah...*

- c) He condemns the rich who have become wealthy through theft and greed, even alluding the story of Ahab stealing Naboth’s vineyard in 1 Kings 21

**2:2** - *They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them away; they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.*

d) He also condemns the prophets who prophesy good things for money

**2:6** - *Do not preach”—thus they preach— “one should not preach of such things; disgrace will not overtake us.”*

**3:11** – *Its (Israel and Judah) heads give judgment for a bribe; its priests teach for a price; its prophets practice divination for money; yet they lean on the LORD and say, “Is not the LORD in the midst of us? No disaster shall come upon us.”*

### **Second: Israel has acted unjustly – 3 & 6-7**

a) Israel is economically unjust

6:11-12 - *Shall I acquit the man with wicked scales and with a bag of deceitful weights?  
 12 Your rich men are full of violence; your inhabitants speak lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.*

How bad is it?

In a world in which God has established family as the primary means of propagating the gospel....

7:2-6 - *The godly has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among mankind; they all lie in wait for blood, and each hunts the other with a net. 3 Their hands are on what is evil, to do it well; the prince and the judge ask for a bribe, and the great man utters the evil desire of his soul; thus they weave it together. 4 The best of them is like a brier, the most upright of them a thorn hedge. The day of your watchmen, of your punishment, has come; now their confusion is at hand. 5 Put no trust in a neighbor; have no confidence in a friend; guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your arms; 6 for the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.*

b) The rich are stealing land

- Israel is primarily an agricultural land and
- The land they have was given to them by God, distributed under Joshua

They have no right to take a person's land, their birthright and their means of life. It is a violation of God's law

**Leviticus 25:23a** - *The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For you are strangers and sojourners with me.*

Numbers 36:7 & 9 - *The inheritance of the people of Israel shall not be transferred from one tribe to another, for every one of the people of Israel shall hold on to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers....So no inheritance shall be transferred from one tribe to another, for each of the tribes of the people of Israel shall hold on to its own inheritance.*

This law reminds the people that they are God's people by his grace and that all they have is by God's grace.

In response to Israel stealing land from its rightful managers (not owners), God is going to take back all of the land from Israel. He is going to exile them from the land so that they will know what it feels like to have your land stolen from you. Of course, God is not stealing the land from Israel

**Psalm 24:1** - The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein

Acts 17:26 - *And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place*

6:11-12 - *Shall I acquit the man with wicked scales and with a bag of deceitful weights?  
<sup>12</sup> Your rich men are full of violence; your inhabitants speak lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.*

### **Third: There is hope in God – 4**

Scattered throughout the book, like 'handfuls on purpose,' God has provided Israel and Judah with glimpses of hope –

**2:12** - *I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob; I will gather the remnant of Israel; I will set them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture, a noisy multitude of men.*

And there's more.

Israel and Judah will bear the weight of their sin. They will be displaced from the Promised Land but after their Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, God will restore them to the land he has eternally promised them

**4:1-7** - *It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, <sup>2</sup> and many nations shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide disputes for strong nations*

*far away; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; <sup>4</sup> but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. <sup>5</sup> For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever. <sup>6</sup> In that day, declares the LORD, I will assemble the lame and gather those who have been driven away and those whom I have afflicted; <sup>7</sup> and the lame I will make the remnant, and those who were cast off, a strong nation and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and forevermore.*

Like much Bible prophecy, there is a ‘now’ and ‘not yet’ aspect to what God says.

God intends to make Israel the place from which he eternally reigns, bringing eternal peace to all the nations of the earth and the earth that place where he dwells among his people forever.

#### **Fourth: Jesus is God’s ultimate hope – 4:1-5**

God is going to establish an eternal kingdom with Jerusalem at its center. But in the center of that capitol, and the means by which God is going to establish his eternal kingdom, is by setting up an eternal king.

**5:2-5** - *But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. <sup>3</sup> Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. <sup>4</sup> And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. <sup>5</sup> And he shall be their peace.*

a) In that day, the “remnant of Jacob” will be God’s people.

*5:7 - Then the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples like dew from the LORD, like showers on the grass, which delay not for a man nor wait for the children of man.*

This is an issue that Paul discusses in Romans 9.

If “for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (Ro 8:28) but not all of Israel entered the Promised Land and all of Israel won’t be in the New Jerusalem, how can all things work together for good?

Paul answers that question in Romans 9:6-8 - *But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, <sup>7</sup> and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be*

named.”<sup>8</sup> This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring

And he uses Jacob and Esau and Isaac and Ishmael as his examples.

More, Paul quotes Hosea who promised “Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’” (Ro 9:27; Hosea 1:10, 2:23).

God’s word has not failed when Israel and Judah are taken into captivity. In fact, God’s word has been proven true; foretold by his prophets. And just as a remnant will return to Jerusalem, God will also save a remnant of Jews and Gentiles for his kingdom.

b) God will execute vengeance to establish peace 5:15

### **Fifth: Our Responsibility in the Midst of Chaos**

a) Do Justice, Love Kindness, Walk Humbly

6:6-8 - *With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? <sup>7</sup> Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” <sup>8</sup> He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

I am personally grieved over the way Americans are treating each other during this pandemic and unrest. The pressure is getting to us and we are not responding well.

Human

be

Kind

(Debbie made a slide for this)

Do Justice

Love Mercy

Walk Humbly

Micah 6:8 is God’s call to us while living in a crisis; Assyria for Israel; Covid-19 and unrest for us. It’s a good message for us and a good reminder for everyone else.

**Note:** E-mail Charlie at [charlie.scalf@hbcjc.org](mailto:charlie.scalf@hbcjc.org) if you would like a T-Shirt with those words on it. We don’t know the exact cost. It will be reasonable and the best price we can get dependent on the number we order.

## b) Gutsy Guilt

As the book ends, Israel is pictured as a single person, bearing the weight of his or her sin, suffering and defeated. He is sitting in his own filth and begging God for salvation.

But why should God forgive:

### 1 – God’s character

*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.*

We, like Israel, have hope, not because of our righteousness, but because of His.

*Psalm 23:3 - He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

*2 Timothy 2:13 – If we are faithfulness, he remains faithful – for he cannot deny himself.*

### 2 – God’s Promises

*7:20 - You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.*

This is why Israel’s prophets and people often prayed, “*Oh God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...*” Those three names encapsulated God’s faithfulness throughout Israel’s history

This leads him to exclaim in hopeful confidence -

*7:19 - He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sin into the depths of the sea.*

And here is his ‘gutsy guilt’ -

*7:8-10 - Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me. <sup>9</sup>I will bear the indignation of the LORD because I have sinned against him, until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon his vindication. <sup>10</sup>Then my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me, “Where is the LORD your God?”*

We, like Israel, have hope, not because of our righteousness, but because of His.

**Conclusion:** Micah is a book of judgement and hope. If God is going to bless the world through Israel, he must judge their sin, for their sin harms them and misleads the world away from God. But, his judgment is redeeming and not destructive. It has a holy purpose.

And so it is with Covid-19. God is using this pandemic, and this national unrest both as judgement and hope: to remind us that he alone is our salvation. It is only as we hope in him that we are really saved!!!

**Community Groups:**

- 1 – How are you doing?
- 2 – How can our CG pray for you?
- 3 – What can we practically do for you?
- 4 – Have you ever heard a sermon from Micah before this morning?
- 5 – How does Micah speak to us in the midst of Covid-19 and national unrest?
- 6 – How could God be using these things as a means of judgement?
- 7 – What sins should our nation confess and repent of?
- 8 – What sins should you confess and repent of?
- 9 – Does economic injustice exist in the United States. Cite examples.
- 10 – Do the rich prey on the poor? Cite examples.
- 11 – Why was Israel forbidden to take land from someone?
- 12 – What was the year of Jubilee and what does it typify?

The word “jubilee”—literally, “ram’s horn” in Hebrew—is defined in Leviticus 25:9 as the sabbatical year after seven cycles of seven years (49 years). The fiftieth year was to be a time of celebration and rejoicing for the Israelites. The ram’s horn was blown on the tenth day of the seventh month to start the fiftieth year of universal redemption.

The Year of the Jubilee involved a year of release from indebtedness (Leviticus 25:23-38) and all types of bondage (vv. 39-55). All prisoners and captives were set free, all slaves were released, all debts were forgiven, and all property was returned to its original owners. In addition, all labor was to cease for one year, and those bound by labor contracts were released from them. One of the benefits of the Jubilee was that both the land and the people were able to rest.

The Jubilee presents a beautiful picture of the New Testament themes of redemption and forgiveness. Christ is the Redeemer who came to set free those who are slaves and prisoners to sin (Romans 8:2; Galatians 5:1; 3:22). The debt of sin we owe to God was paid on the cross as Jesus died on our behalf (Colossians 2:13-14), and we are forgiven the debt forever. We are no longer in bondage, no longer slaves to sin, having been freed by Christ, and we can truly enter the rest God provides as we cease laboring to make ourselves acceptable to God by our own works (Hebrews 4:9-10).

13 – Read some of the ‘hope’ passages in Micah.

14 – According to Micah, what is the basis of Israel’s hope?

15 – How does Micah 5:2-5 play an important part in Israel’s (and our) hope?

16 – What does Micah state our responsibility to be in the midst of national crisis?

17 – What is gutsy guilt?