

# MICAH 6-7: GOD'S CASE AGAINST SINNERS

## Chapter 6:

### **1. The Lord calls on the mountains to judge whose position was right – his position or the people's position.**

#### **What did the people feel God had done to them? (vs.1-3)**

- *The Lord presents his case before the mountains and hills because they witnessed both God's goodness to his people and the people's unfaithfulness to their Lord. Even though the Israelites had practiced idolatry on many hills in the land of Canaan (the high places), the Lord refused to turn his back on his people. The Lord promised the Messiah and established his covenant of salvation with Israel. He cared for his people and protected them from all their enemies. And yet he brings charges against them because of their sins of idolatry to lead them to repentance. So why were the people saying that God had burdened them? They had broken God's covenant and turned against him. How can we grumble and complain when it comes to keeping God's commands when he gives them out of love for our good. We feel they are too restricting – we can't have any fun. Real translation is the fact that we want to sin and God won't let us. How is God burdening us? We are burdening him with our sin.*

### **2. How does the Lord try to lead them away from that opinion? (vs.4-5)**

- *The Lord presented evidence of his faithfulness to his people. He reminds them how he brought them out of their bitter suffering and slavery in Egypt. He led them into Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey. He provided them with great leadership – Moses their prophet, Aaron their high priest, and Miriam who was a prophetess for the people. When King Balak of Moab tried to destroy Israel by hiring Balaam to curse them, the Lord turned Balaam's curses into blessing. The Lord through Balaam even delivered a prophecy of the coming Messiah – "A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel." Micah mentions Shittim, the last camping place before crossing into the Jordan and Gilgal, the first place Israel set up camp after crossing into the Promised Land. If anything the people were the burden to God because of their constant rebellion. We're no different. We promise the Lord that we're going to change our life and we find ourselves back in the same old sins. But the Lord doesn't change. His mercy and forgiveness are constant. He continues to forgive our sins through Jesus who paid for them all, even the ones we commit over and over again. We pray, "Forgive us Lord for being such a burden."*

### **3. The Israelites were willing to do anything for the Lord except what the Lord wanted. What did the Lord want from them? (vs.6-8)**

- *As the defendants in God's courtroom, the Israelites didn't present much of a case. They had no defense. They were guilty as charged. But did they come to God begging his forgiveness? Not at all! They thought they could appease God with some things he liked and then get what they wanted. They could bring to God their best offerings – year-old calves (sometimes they brought the weak and sickly). They could offer thousands of rams and 10,000 rivers of oil. Better yet, what if they offered their firstborn child to God? Child sacrifice was being practiced at that time by heathen nations. But was this really what wanted? What does God desire, what pleases him? What the Lord wants us to act justly by living according to his commands – having no other gods, not letting anything become more important in our hearts than him. The Lord wants us to worship him in all we do and trusting in him for everything. Acting justly would also include treating our neighbors as we would like to be treated. The Lord desires that we love mercy – being compassionate and forgiving toward one another even as God has had mercy on us and forgives all our sins. Finally the Lord desires that we walk humbly with him. We understand that we are sinners who deserve nothing from God but we want to acknowledge his grace and sincerely strive to live for him, to walk hand in hand with him throughout the day. Have you walked with God today?*

### **4. In contrast to what the Lord wanted, what were the Israelites guilty of doing? (vs.9-12)**

- *Now the Lord was giving his sentence to the guilty Israelites. The godly thing to do was to fear the Lord, to trust in him with a child-like faith and out of awe and respect for his grace and mercy to obey his commands. But the Israelites didn't, so they would be punished. Micah points out some specific sins of which they were guilty. Greedy merchants used dishonest scales to cheat people. Rich landowners used violence and threats to acquire even more property. The people used lies and dishonesty to take advantage of others. This was hardly the justice, mercy and humility that God desired. For this God would punish them with the rod – with Assyria and later with Babylon whom God would use to carry out his justice. We live in a world of dishonesty, of taking advantage of others for personal gain. Even as Christians we have a hard time in our service to others. We like to take care of ourselves first and then if there's anything left of our time and money we'll help others. That's the same greed God was dealing with in Israel. We too need to repent our own greed and selfishness and in mercy and love serve others.*

## **5. The people refused to repent and live in fear of the Lord. What would soon happen to them? (vs.13-16)**

- *The people would see God's hand of judgment against them as their fields became barren. Even the food they ate wouldn't really satisfy them. When Assyria and Babylon did invade the land, they would destroy their fields. This did in fact happen as the prophet Jeremiah in his book reports a horrible famine that occurred. But far worse than a type of physical famine, would be the spiritual famine of not hearing the Word of God. The Lord even reminds the Israelites why all this would happen. It was because they had followed the wicked ways of the Israelite kings Omri and Ahab. It was Ahab who introduced the worship of the false gods Baal and Asherah, making it the national religion of the northern kingdom. The worship of god Baal and the goddess Asherah involved fertility rites promoting all sorts of sexual immorality. Ahab and his wicked queen Jezebel persecuted the true prophets of the Lord and drove them from the land of Israel in the north. As punishment the Lord told his people that they would be exiled, driven away from the land. They would also be ridiculed and taunted. They would have to bear the burden of being God's rejected, forsaken people. It seems silly to suffer God's punishment because of failing to trust in him, to confess him, and to follow his ways. But it's so much easier to join in with our unbelieving world. In the end, though, it only brings shame and guilt. Ironically, that same unbelieving world that coaxed us into their sinful, unbelieving ways are the last ones to truly care about us and probably the first ones to find our shame and guilt somewhat amusing.*

## **6. What are some ways we can act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God?**

- *This is a question we can ask ourselves daily. Our God has done so much for us in giving us everything we have – everything we really need and so much more, not to mention the most important blessings of all, the only ones that matter – our faith in Jesus our Savior and our eternal salvation. He is the most loving, caring, giving God. What he desires is for us to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with him. It's the least we can do.*

## **Chapter 7:**

### **1. The Lord was looking for a harvest of righteousness, but not many righteous people remained. Micah warned the believers who were left. What was his warning? (vs.1-6)**

- *Micah sees his countrymen, God's covenant people, as a vineyard that wasn't producing any fruit. A godly and upright man was hard to find, if not impossible. Maybe the faithful had gone into hiding. There was bloodshed and violence everywhere, like hunters lying in wait to kill another innocent victim. Micah notes that they were good at what they did. Rulers demanded exorbitant taxes. Greedy judges accepted bribes. People in positions of power just demanded what they wanted and they got it. They even became partners in crime. Micah compares this lawless people to thorns in a briar patch. There was no morality at all. They were worthless and deserved to be burned in the fire. Their evil ways were so perverse and they were so lost in their sins that they wouldn't even recognize God's judgment when it hit them until it was too late. Our sinful world doesn't see the signs of God's judgment either. It will be too late when they see Jesus returning in judgment. Micah describes how people's relationships were all out of whack. No one trusted anybody. Husbands couldn't trust their wives. Even parents were suspicious of their children and children looked upon their parents as fools. A man's enemies were the members of his own household. Micah's words read like a modern day newspaper. When society reaches this stage of immorality, God's judgment is not far behind.*

### **2. In the midst of all the wickedness and oppression, Micah expressed his hope and confidence. What does he in faith look forward to? (vs.7)**

- *Micah trusted in the Lord's deliverance. He watched in faith, waiting for the Lord to rescue his people by bringing them back from their captivity. This was despite the fact that what Micah saw and heard was only God's anger to exile his people and send them away because of their idolatrous ways. Yet, God's prophet was completely confident in God's promises to bring his people back to their homeland and fulfill his promise of a Savior. He believed what the Lord had said. Many times the situation looks utterly hopeless, rather bleak. There doesn't seem to be any good in what we are experiencing. But faith sees the picture differently. Faith sees God working on our faith, making us exercise our spiritual muscles of faith that we've neglected and drawing us closer to him. Faith sees the final goal, the eternal glory God has prepared for us. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians, "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."*

### 3. Notice the change in speakers in this chapter:

#### - What hope does Zion (repentant Israel) express in verses 8-10?

- *Even though Assyria and Babylon would gloat over Israel's captivity, God's believing children were confident that the Lord would raise them up again. Confessing their sins they acknowledged that they deserved God's wrath. They accepted their exile as the Lord's discipline. This trust in the Lord would sustain God's faithful believers in their 70 years of captivity in Babylon. In the darkness of their affliction they saw the light of God's salvation in the coming Messiah. The nations who mocked God's people saying, "Where is the Lord your God?" would be themselves be ashamed when God's people were allowed to return to Palestine under King Cyrus of the Medes and Persians. There is always light at the end of the tunnel for the Christian. We know that through faith in Christ we will live in the eternal light of God's presence forever. Such hope is able to sustain us through any suffering.*

#### - What future does Micah see for God's people (the church) in future times? (verses 11-13)

- *Micah sees the day when the walls would be rebuilt, but these are not the physical walls of Jerusalem. These are the walls of the New Testament Church as it also extends its boundaries to include more and more people. Believers of all races and nations will come into Christ's church through faith in him. This is a call to us as Christians today to extend the church's boundaries beyond Appleton, beyond the United States, to the ends of the earth through our mission offerings and our prayers for the gospel to be preached. Jesus' command was simple and it was a command, "Go and make disciples of all nations." Jesus is the best gift we can give to someone halfway around the world through our mission offerings that we send to our Synod for mission work in foreign countries and to train future full-time workers in God's kingdom.*

#### - How does Zion (repentant Israel) respond to Micah's words (verse 14)

- *The believers wanted Micah's words to happen. They wanted more than anything their Messiah as the Good Shepherd to feed them with his Word. The little flock stuck in a forest of unbelievers needs the Lord's help. As Christ's followers we pray that he lead us to the rich pastures of his Word to feed our souls. "Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?' 'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.'"*

#### - How does God respond in verse 15?

- *The Lord's rescue of his people from their slavery in Egypt with so many great miracles became the symbol of his power and love to save his people. But the Lord would show his power and love with an even greater miracle by sending his Son clothed in human flesh and blood to be our Savior. The virgin-born Son of God performed many great miracles, the greatest of all in rising from the dead to assure us that our sins are forgiven and we are God's children forever.*

#### - How does Micah summarize what God will do in the days ahead? (verses 16-20)

- *Unbelievers will be ashamed when they finally realize God's almighty power and his great wonders in Jesus Christ our Savior. They will be ashamed as they realize that they placed their confidence in worldly power, wealthy, military might, technology human know-how all of which cannot save. With hands over their mouths, crawling like snakes in the dust we pray that they abandoned their faith in themselves and in humble fear and respect turn in faith to the Lord Jesus. We pray that many will to the Lord, to the One who is unlike any other god. He is the God of forgiveness, mercy and compassion. It makes no difference what our offenses are or how many they may be. God forgives them all in Jesus by the blood he shed on the cross. God treads our sins underfoot and hurls them into the depths of the sea never to be seen again. They are forgiven and forgotten. There is no record of them to be found anywhere. The Lord kept his promise and sent the Savior as Abraham's offspring.*

### 4. What confidence do we have as we celebrate Jesus' birth in Bethlehem?

- *Jesus' birth in Bethlehem as Micah foretold makes all God's promises real and dependable. We have confidence in our God to do all that he promised, keeping his Word. There's not a lot of things you can depend on these days, except one – the Lord our God. "You will be true to Jacob and show mercy to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our fathers in days long ago.*