

MICAH
Message 1
Scripture: Micah 4:1-8
Date: 12/16/2012

INTRO: Well, by now we are getting used to looking at the introductory words of the minor prophets for so much of our understanding of the book centers around who wrote the book and when it was written and to whom it was written. So look at verse 1 (read). We note once more that the Lord's message came through words. I have mentioned before that words are incredible things and communication is such a large part of our existence. And in this book, the prophet the Lord chose to reveal His word to was Micah, of Moresheth which was in the southwest of God's land.

The name 'Micah' means, "Who is Like Jahwey, or Jehovah?" And we are told that he prophesied during the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. These kings were kings of Judah, the southern kingdom, although the book is addressed to both kingdoms according to verse 1 which says that this book is written concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom, and Jerusalem, the capital of the southern kingdom.

As I outline the book it has four messages. Most would say it has three messages. What I have called message 3 most would say is a continuation of message 2, since both are aimed at the leaders of Israel. Let me show you the crucial word that indicates the beginning of each new message. It is the word 'to hear'. The first message then is from 1:2-2:13. So look at the beginning of the message in 1:2 (read). So message 1 is addressed to all the people. The second message is 3:1-8. So look at 3:1 (read). This message is addressed to the leaders. The third message is from 3:9-5:15. So look at 3:9 (read). Again the leaders are addressed and that is what makes most feel that this is a continuation of the message that began in 3:1. The fourth and last message is from 6:1-7:20. So look at 6:1 (read). This message is addressed to Israel.

J. Vernon McGee says, "For many people Micah is the favorite of the minor prophets. It is one of the most remarkable books as to style. If you appreciate beautiful language, if you appreciate poetry, and if you appreciate literature, you will appreciate Micah. The writing is pungent and personal. Micah was trenchant, touching and

tender. He was realistic and reportorial -- he would make a good war correspondent. There is exquisite beauty about this brochure which combines God's infinite tenderness with his judgments."

Well, for me personally, this is not my favorite book and I have found it rather difficult to get a good grasp of it.

I. THE FIRST MESSAGE (1:1-2:13)

A. Judgment of Samaria and Jerusalem announced (1:2-16)

But, we begin with the first message. This message is a word to Samaria and Jerusalem. In verses 2-7, Micah first addresses Samaria (read). Now Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom and Jerusalem the capital of the southern kingdom. And the reason Micah first addresses Samaria is because Samaria committed sins with false gods right from the start. Therefore the words that we just read.

When God speaks of Samaria's harlotry, He is talking about their worship of false gods. You and I might think it is nice that we live in a country where idolatry is not as prevalent as it was back then or as it is in many countries even today. But listen to Colossians 3:5. It says, "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." Wow! Covetousness is idolatry! Now, just what is covetousness? Well, the original word is pleonexia. It comes from two words which mean 'more' and 'to have'. It is the desire to have more, just a little more. There is idolatry. How nice to live in a country free of idolatry, right? And God says it is spiritual fornication! And when you look at the judgment that it says here is about to happen and the reason for it, you can see why God is so serious about it.

Then in verses 8-16, Jerusalem is in view. What happened, Samaria was like a rotten apple in a box, and the rot eventually seeped through to Jerusalem and it was infected as well. The judgment God spoke of here came to Samaria in 722 BC and to Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Verses 8-9 refer now to Jerusalem (read). Now this judgment on Jerusalem would not happen for more than 100 years yet, but it was surely coming. And after this, and we will not take time to read the verses, there are 5 places north of Jerusalem mentioned and 5 south of Jerusalem. And according to Ryrie, in these verses, Micah uses figures of speech in showing God's judgment on the southern kingdom and Jerusalem.

Now verse 8, in the KJV, speaks of dragons and owls. J. Vernon McGee says these are jackals and ostriches, and that is how the NKJV translates it. What is more hideous than the sound of jackals, but I did not know that ostriches mourn. I am told they make very pitiful and mournful sounds. And according to verse 9, Jerusalem will mourn like that for it says her wounds are incurable. There comes a point of no return. Jerusalem was coming to that point. Those who study prophecy feel America is now past the point of no return. It seems Britain has been there for some time already. I might mention here as well that there comes a time in the life of a person when they have hardened their necks long enough and there is no return.

When it says in verse 10, "Tell it not in Gath..." it was a proverbial expression of when Saul and Jonathan were killed and David did not want their enemies, the Philistines to know that Saul and Jonathan were dead. So he said, "Tell it not in Gath..." etc Gath was one of the five main Philistine cities. So the writer is saying that God's judgment will be so disastrous that this proverb will be used, "Tell it not in Gath..."

B. Judgment of the upper class (2:1-13)

The second part of this message, which goes from 2:1-13 is with regard to the upper class people in Judah. In 2:1-2 we have the cause of this judgment (read). Now I remind us that this book is written in a time like that in which we live. It is a time of wealth and prosperity. And the rich are getting richer and doing it by means not approved by God. I wonder, do you see any of this in our community? Someone has a big business, and a small business is trying to get started, but it is squeezed out by various means? I

have heard this said of Christians on a number of occasions, "Business is business." What that means is on Sunday we are one kind of person, but from Monday through Saturday another kind, but that is OK because business is business. If you want to get ahead in business, there are some things you must do you would not do on Sunday." I ask you this morning, are you a business person? Take instruction here.

Then in verses 3-5, we have the consequences (read). I remind us this morning that God keeps track of business people just as well as the rest, nor does He put them above others. And in light of that, listen to James 5:1-6, "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter."

In verses 6-13 we have the concern of this judgment. Notice verse 6 (read). This verse literally read, "Do not drip or drop words, you who prophecy." The people of Israel did not want to hear about a dismal future. They were telling the prophets to please keep quiet. Now look at verse 11 (read). If a prophet would come along and prophecy good things, him they would allow to drip words of prophecy even if the words were untrue.

Well, this first message comes to a close in verses 12-13 and I take these as a prophecy that, though things are very bad right now with regard to the state of Israel, and they will be judged, yet in the future God will bless them once again. So let us read these verses (read 12-13).

II. THE SECOND MESSAGE (3:1-8)

As I outline the book, we have the second message in 3:1-8. Most however, feel that 3:1-5:15 are the second

message. I want you to notice why. So let us read 3:1 and 3:9 (read). It does sound like the message in 3:9 continues to the same people, and in fact it does, But, there is a new thing to factor in. It is the Jerusalem factor. In verses 1-8 Jerusalem is not so much as mentioned but in 3:9 -5:1 Jerusalem is mentioned or alluded to at least 20 times. Then in 5:2-15 though Jerusalem is not mentioned by name, it is contrasted with Bethlehem, that small little bit of nothing, which brings forth the Messiah.

And so now in 3:1-9 we have the judgment of the princes and the judgment of the prophets. We begin with the princes in 3:1-5. So look at these princes as they are described by position in verse 1 (read). They are the heads of Jacob, the leaders or rulers of the house of Israel. And God says, "Is it not for you to know justice?" Justice is righteousness. It is for leaders to know what is right.

And then in verses 2-3 they are described by their character (read). Here are leaders who hate good and love evil. Sound familiar? And the rest of these two verses describe them further. Now I do not think they literally stripped the skin from these people, but financially that is what they did. Now let me tell you how things can operate in the financial world. The well-to-do person can 'appear' good and upright, but underneath it is not pretty. And the results of their finagling is not pretty either, as our verses show. So look at what God says will happen to them in verse 4. Here is a message for those for whom repentance is too late. When the judgment comes, they will cry out, but God will not hear them. He will hide Himself from them. It is too late.

Well, I will leave the judgment on the leaders for you to read in verses 5-7. So we go to the third message beginning in 3:9.

III. THE THIRD MESSAGE (3:9-5:15)

A. The ruin of Jerusalem foretold (3:9-12)

I have mentioned before that many see these verses as a continuation of 1-8. This message extends from 3:9 through 5:15. And though this message is addressed to

the heads of the house of Jacob and the rulers of the house of Israel, just as the previous message, it now has a different concern. In Message 2, the concern was the heart condition of the princes and the prophets. In this section, the concern is the place they lived and were responsible for, Jerusalem.

So let us read verses 9-11 (read). In verse 9 we have this, by now familiar refrain, "Now hear this..." And again, this message is addressed to the leaders. And these leaders abhor justice, and pervert all equity. Now I am sure their business was all made to look upright and just, but in actual fact it wasn't so. Verse 10 says they build up Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with iniquity.

But now notice the groups of Jerusalem's leaders pointed out here. Her heads, the political leaders, the princes, judge for a bribe. Her priests teach for pay. Her prophets divine for money, and lean on the Lord and say, "Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us." Now the concern in this section now, as I have mentioned, I believe is the city Jerusalem. When the leaders live like this, their very land and city is in danger of God's judgment.

So consider now verse 12, and this is a tremendous prophecy (read). When the leaders of the land live in sin, their nation is in jeopardy. And I think this prophecy had a far and near fulfillment. The first time was when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC and the second time was when Titus destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD, some 40 years after Christ ascended to heaven.

Turn with me for a moment to Matthew 24 (read 1-2). The time is just before Jesus ascended to heaven. And the disciples came to show Him all the buildings of the temple. If the temple the disciples showed Jesus that day was still standing today, it would surely be the first marvel of the world. And Jesus said, "Verily, verily I say to you, there shall not be one stone left upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. 24:1). That was about AD 30, and 40 years later that is exactly what happened.

B. Restoration of Jerusalem foretold (4:1-8)

We come now to chapter 4, and in this chapter we will see some wonderful prophecies. And in verse 1 we meet an important phrase, it is the phrase, 'latter days' or sometimes, 'last days'. And verse 1 describes at least part of what these 'last days' refers to (read).

What will happen in the latter days? Jerusalem will be restored in the millennium. I remind you this could be as little as 8 years from now. We know one time period between where we are now and this time and that is the 7 year tribulation, and that could begin at any time. So in verses 1-8, we have Jerusalem's restoration described. You see, the destruction of Jerusalem foretold in 3:12 took place in 586 BC and again in 70 AD. That is about the time the Church began. Then in 4:1 we have Jerusalem's restoration. We know that since people are flocking to the temple. And in between those two times is the Church age which the OT does not speak of.

Now the time of Jerusalem's restoration here refers to the millennium. Now look at verse 3 (read). It says that they will turn their war instruments into farming implements. What we have is a time of peace. But it happens because the first part of the verse says, "He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off..." That, I think, is a reference to the tribulation. And when God has judged those nations, the millennium will begin. The time of peace described in the rest of this verse is what Israel is so desperately longing for today. Look at it in verses 4-5 (read).

Verse 6 says, "'In that day,' says the Lord, 'I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast and those whom I have afflicted; I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcast a strong nation; so the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on, even forever.'" The phrase, 'in that day' refers to more than a single day. And the gathering of the outcasts and the making of a strong nation have been going on for a long time now. And in the end of that gathering together of the remnant of Israel, the millennium will begin.

Now, it is most appropriate that now, as we are approaching the day we commemorate the birth of Christ that we should just now be in Micah, and today in Micah 4:8 (read). I have spoken to you about this verse and the tower of the flock, the Migdol Edar on certain Christmas messages. Let me quote from an internet article I quoted from at that time by Cooper P Abrams III in an article titled, "Where was the Birth Place of the Lord Jesus?" He writes, "The phrase "tower of the flock" is the Hebrew phrase "Migdal Edar" [mig-dawl ay-der] and means a "watch tower of the flock". In ancient times this was a military tower to view into the valley just outside of Bethlehem to protect the city", end quote.

So what we have here is a prophecy to Bethlehem. Here was a military tower that protected Jerusalem. And it says, "...to you shall it come..." I cannot give in detail here the significance of all that is here but to say it is here the kingdom came in the king.

C. Rejection of Jerusalem foretold (4:9-5:1)

Well, 4:9-5:1 speaks of Jerusalem's travail and certainly speaks of 586 BC when Babylon came and took them captive. But it may as well include Israel's travail to our time. For the sake of time I will leave this section.

D. Ruler of Jerusalem Foretold

As I see the book, 5:1 concludes this section and 5:2 and on will prophecy of the coming ruler of Jerusalem, the Messiah, the Christ. And it will speak of both His first and second coming. As I see the book, 5:1 concludes a section of thought and it speaks of Jerusalem, the daughter of troops being besieged and the king being struck by a rod on the cheek. It is a reference to Zedekiah, the Jewish king who is taken captive by Babylon in 586 BC. And the very next verse begins with a 'but'. The 'but' contrasts tiny Bethlehem with the large city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem would be besieged but Bethlehem would be blessed. And in this verse we have a prophecy as to where Christ should be born. So to get this contrast let us read 5:1-2 (read).

When Jesus was born, Herod, a very wicked king, wanted Him killed as soon as possible. So I want us to turn to the NT to read the account in Matthew 2 (read 1-6). The chief priests and scribes had studied Micah. They understood this prophecy and that it referred to the Messiah.

And so, in verses 2-3 we have Messiah's first coming, but in 4-15, we have His second coming. Ryrie says , "In this section Micah again describes the glories of the Messianic kingdom. King Jesus, who is greater than Shepherd King-David , will feed (better shepherd) His people." So let us read verse 4.

I cannot deal with these verses because of time, but I want to show you two things. Note first verses 7-8 (read). Today, and in the past for 2500 years, many Jews have tried to hide their identity. Some of them hid among our people and now we have Jewish names amongst us. Some of you do not know you are Jewish because your Jewish forefathers did all in their power to hide it. But in the millennium people will wish they were related to a Jew, because they will be like a lion. They will rule.

The second thing, God is speaking about how He will destroy Israel's enemies in these verses, and look just at verses 12-15 (read). In Revelation 20:1-3 we find that in the millennium God will bind the devil for that thousand years. And when that thousand years begins, God will see to it that every vestige of Satan's work will be destroyed. Do you know how much clean-up that will take all over the world? India alone will be a big job. Taiwan, Mexico. Think of cleaning up false teachings in China. Roman Catholicism has carved images all over the world. And God will cleanse the world of all this. New Age teachings and books and chakras will all be cleansed away. Satan and his devices will be erased from the face of the earth while he suffers in hell for the duration of the reign of this kingdom. Oh, Lord, "They kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!"

CONCL: And so, we are over half way through the book of Micah. What have we seen? Well, the first message was a message to Jerusalem and Samaria, the capitals of the

southern and northern kingdoms. Also, the upper class people were warned. Then the second message is addressed to the political and religious leaders of the day. What I have called message three, some believe to be a continuation of message 2, since both are addressed to the leaders. But I have pointed out that message three is specifically deals with Jerusalem, and Jerusalem is mentioned over and over again.

We are not yet to the end of the book and already we have been told, "And Israel and God lived happily ever after!"