

MICAH
Message 2

INTRO: 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 have now come to the fourth and final message of the book of Micah. The fourth message is set forth as a court case and God is against Israel. The Wycliffe Bible commentary says, "In these last two chapters the prophet describes the sin of the people, as well as Jehovah's striving with them and His judgment upon them; he also foretells that the people will confess their sin and receive the promised blessings. All this is set forth in the form of a lawsuit. The prophet is represented as the prosecuting attorney for Jehovah, with the mountains and the hills (perhaps symbols of unchangeable justice) as the court and the judges. Jehovah pleads through the prophet; the people reply; the mountains and the hills sit in silent judgment" (p. 859).

Years ago, when I outlined this book I viewed this court case as having two sessions. The first session I saw as a brief session of 8 verses, from 6:1-8. Then I took the view that the court takes a break and in reconvenes in 6:9 for the second session which then goes to 7:10.

In restudying this I now view it as one session and with what I viewed as the second session as giving the results of that session. The charge is given in 6:1-5. It is followed by the confession of guilt and an unwillingness by Israel to meet the requirement. Then in 6:8-16 the judgment is given, and in 7:1-10, Israel is bearing judgment that has been meted out to them. So we will look at it like that. Then in 7:11-20, we have the conclusion.

IV. THE FOURTH MESSAGE Israel's court case (6:1-7:20)

A. The Charge (6:1-5)

Let us begin this court session then, by reading God's complaint against Israel (read 1-5). Let me reduce the charge as I see it, Israel has forsaken God. God brought them up out of Egypt from the house of bondage, and shortly after He had brought them out, He made a covenant with them. We know it as the Old Covenant. It was made at Mount Sinai. It was an agreement, and both signed up to it. God gave them the conditions of the covenant and signed it in blood. They agreed to the conditions, and they were sprinkled with blood.

And then God brought them into the land of Israel, blessed them and blessed the land and gave them a king and Israel became proud and began to commit fornication with false gods. And God warned them through the prophets time and again, and now He has finally taken them to court for breaking their agreement with Him.

And one of the things God says here several times is 'Remember'. May I remind each of us this morning, that if we are believers, we too have made an agreement with God. IT is called the NC. May I ask this morning, is there anyone here that made the new agreement with the Lord and you repented of your sins and He saved you and now you are dabbling with sin? May I ask you to remember? Remember when He saved you. Remember, it was from sin he saved you. Israel was to remember how God delivered them out of Egypt and how He further delivered them from Balak. And if they would but remember, they would remember God's righteousness. If you are living in some sin, remember, and if you do, you too will remember His righteousness.

B. The Confession Of Guilt (6:6-7)

And then, in verses 6-7, Israel replies (read). Here is the answer. A while ago 'Chic Filee' in the US, a restaurant was given the charge that they were against gay marriages. And the owner said they were, "Guilty as charged." Israel here is saying, "Guilty as charged." But here the offense is bad. They are saying, "We are guilty." And then they say something

like this, "Lord, tell us how to take care of our sin. We will sacrifice anything to You, You desire. You name it, we will give it. Even if you require a child sacrifice, we will do that too."

Israel, like we in our day, was no stranger to sacrifice their children. Today we do it prior to birth, Israel did it after birth. It was painful for them no doubt, because they had to have loud drums and music to drown out the cries of the babies as they were being offered. And Israel shows here just how far off the mark they are spiritually. They are willing to do anything or sacrifice anything, but they are not willing to repent. Repentance, ah, that is harder than most other things. All they needed do was repent and walk right.

We are like this too. We say, "What do You want Lord? Oh, baptism. Then I will get baptized." Or, "Oh, You want church membership. Ok, then I will join a church." And just there we show our ignorance of what God wants. Baptism and church membership are well in order, but not to satisfy God with regard to our sins. There, repentance and faith is required.

C. The Verdict (6:8-16)

So, in verse 6:8-16 we have, as I see it, God's answer to their willingness to sacrifice, if necessary even their children (read verse 8). Now let me tell you what I understand God is saying here. They are asking what kind of sacrifice would be sufficient for their sins. Now I want you to turn to Psalm 40 (read 6-8). I cannot begin to get into the difficulties of these verses. I just want to make a point here. God never wanted sacrifice and offerings. God never set up the sacrificial system because He loved a blood sacrifice. These sacrifices never did atone for sin. He wanted obedience. And when man sinned, He sought for repentance, and that is what these sacrifices spoke of. So verse 6 says, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; my ears you have opened; burnt offerings and sin offering You did not require." God had opened this Psalmist ears. God had given him a body that had the ability to hear and obey. It is obedience that God always wanted. A sacrifice speaks of sin. God does not want sin. If there is no sacrifice, that is the way it

should be. That means no sin. BUT, BUT, when sin has taken place, repentance is indicated by a sacrifice. That is the only value of the sacrifice. So Scripture says, "to obey is better than to sacrifice" because obedience requires no repentance and thus no sacrifice.

And in our passage now, God says, "It is not a sacrifice I am looking for. I am looking for obedience. You made an agreement with Me and you need to keep your agreement." We made an agreement. You have failed. And now you talk about sacrifice. And then Micah says, in defense of God, I will show you what God wants and it is what He always wanted since the day Israel made their agreement with Him. So Micah says, "God has shown you, O man, what is good." In other words, "Do not ask, what you should sacrifice, ask what you should do. And this you have already been told." And then it is spelled out ever so clearly, "And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, that is live right; to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God!" That is all. Now do it, just do it. It's that simple; 'Do it!'"

And their answer has been in verses 6-7, "If it comes to living right, please don't bother us further. But if we could give you some sacrifice, even if it were sacrificing one of our own children, then we will do it. But change our ways? Don't even think it."

And so God says in verse 8, "You have been shown O man, what I want now we must move on." So look at verse 9. The verdict is coming. The NKJV says, "Wisdom shall see Your name" referring to the name of the Lord. But I think Keil and Delitzsch have a better translation of a very difficult verse to translation. They translate thus: "The voice of Jehovah, to the city it cries, and wisdom has thy name in its eye..." In other words, if Jerusalem was wise, it would look to the name of the Lord.

And I think the idea in the rest of the verse is, "Hear the rod, and Him who appoints it!" God will chastise Israel, and He encourages them to obey that chastisement, and the One who is doing the chastising. If they do this, they will go back to verse 8, repent and live right!

So let me read for you why they will now experience the rod, or the judgment of God (read 10-16). Now I will remind us of something the prophets mention over and over, and it is the injustice of the rich. You see, the NT will say it is the love of money that is the root of all evil. Are you a business man? May I encourage you to memorize Micah 1:8? Do you work for someone? Well, memorize this verse too. No matter who we are, this verses is most applicable.

D. The Bearing of Judgment (7:1-10).

And now, in 7:1-10, we are told how Israel will bear their judgment. Let us read these verses (read). In these verses we now have the response of Israel to the judgment that has been meted out to them. Now this is not truly what they say. This is what happens to them. "Woe is me! I am like one that gathers summer fruits." Summer is over and the last is being gathered. It will now be winter, and it will truly be a long winter for Israel. Then Israel says she is like one who gleanes vintage grapes. The gleaners are those who get the left over's. That is what marks Israel's history from when this prophecy went into fulfillment just over 100 years after this prophecy is given, and has marked their journey for 2500 years, all the way from the Babylonian captivity until today.

Israel is saying, "Do not rejoice over me, my enemy. When I fall I will yet rise again. I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned. And I will bear this indignation until He pleads my cause." What this is saying is that Israel and God will meet again in court. And this time God will not pronounce judgment but God will plead Israel's cause. Israel is saying, prophetically here, "God will execute justice and He will bring me forth to light and I will see His righteousness." And Israel is saying that when that happens, and I quote, "Then she who is my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me, 'Where is the Lord your God?'" And then Israel says of her enemy, "My eyes will see her; now she will be trampled down like mire in the streets."

Well, so much of this prophecy has been fulfilled already, but this last part is yet to be fulfilled.

You see, for many years Jews sought to hide their identity. I have no doubt that in many of our Mennonite people who came through Russia, Jewish blood flows. But they do not know it because their forefathers were ashamed to be known as Jews and they hid their identity, and the last thing they ever wanted you to discover is that you are Jews. When we were in Yad Vashem in Israel, just a few years ago, and went through the children's memorial, our son-in-law checked for the name Unger and there was a whole list of them. Where do you think we got these names; Abe and Jake and John?

But I want to tell you something that is as true as can be. There is coming a day when people will try to find if in some way they do not have Jewish blood. And when they find they do, their neighbors will look up to them and wish they could prove they are related to this person. I always say that all you have to do to find you are related to anyone of our heritage, is have faspa together. Faspa is an afternoon snack and often takes the place of supper. And the day is coming when, at faspa, people will trace genealogies to see if they are not related to some Jew. That may seem a little incredible. The day is coming when it will be considered a huge honor to be a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So we come to the conclusion of this book in 7:11-20.

E. The Conclusion (7:11-20)

Charles Ryrie calls these last verses the epilogue. An epilogue is a short section given at the end of a book kind of giving a conclusion to the whole account. And he calls this epilogue, 'Blessings For Israel.' What we have in these verses, I believe, is the millennium. In verse 11, mention is made of a day when Jerusalem's walls are to be built (read). I believe this is the millennial Jerusalem. And the NKJV says, "In that day the decree shall go far and wide." In the margin it says, "Or boundary shall be extended." I think the idea is here that in the millennium Jerusalem's borders will be greatly extended. Right now Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister is in trouble with the rest of the world because he said he was giving permission for some 3000 new housing units just outside of Jerusalem. The world is up in arms. Mahmoud

Abbas is enraged, and it is not his land nor is it the land of other nations.

But in the millennium, no doubt, the nations will say, "You want to extend Jerusalem's limits? By all means. We are with you. Build as many as you wish." Notice verse 12 (read). Those enemy nations around Israel, and people from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain will come to Israel. They will long to be in this place of blessing.

Today I have time to tell you a little story, and when I say 'story' I mean a true story. In a previous message I told you about the death in Paris, France, in January 1895, of Captain Alfred Dreyfus. His only crime, the one for which he died was being born a Jew. So I quote from the previous message, "And among the spectators that day that Captain Alfred Dreyfus died, there was present a man by name of Theodore Herzl. And what Theodore Herzl heard all around him that fateful day was, 'Kill the traitor. Kill the Jew.' And all of a sudden he realized this man was going to die simply because he was a Jew, and Herzl realized he too was simply a Jew, something he could do nothing about. And there, on that day, in the heart of Theodore Herzle, Zionism was born. Life in the land of Israel was born in the heart of one Jew while another died simply because he was a Jew. Something was born that day that is unexplainable, and it kept going and growing in a way that is also unexplainable. And it still lives today, and that too is unexplainable. That is, of course, if you don't have God in the picture."

Well, Hertzl, who lived from 1860-1904 died without seeing what would transpire in the next 50 years. But he convened the "First Zionist Congress" in Basle, Switzerland on August 29-31 in 1997. He would only live a few more years. But he said later, "In Basle I founded the Jewish state..Maybe in five years, certainly in 50, everyone will realize it." It was almost exactly 50 years later, that David Ben Gurion read Israel's declaration of statehood.

Arthur U. Mickelson, a missionary to Israel in those early years says that when Herzl died at age of 44 many Jews were in great distress and said, "Has God forgotten us?" And the rabbis reminded them the Lord's

words of Isaiah 44:21, "Oh, Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me."

Well, WW 1 came along. Michelson says when this seemingly endless war broke out, Jews lost all hope (32). At the end of 1916 England and France were in desperate straights. But there was a Russian Jew named Chaim Weizman who was a professor of chemistry and he had discovered the most powerful explosive ever invented before called T.N.T. When the government asked him what he wanted for it he said, "I do not want any money, just liberate Palestine and secure it for Jewish occupation. That is all I ask of you."

Well, in November 2nd, 1917, Lord Balfour of Britain wrote to Lord Rothschild, of the famous rich Rothschilds you may have heard of, who was also a Jew, and this is what he wrote, "I have much pleasure in conveying to you on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with the Jewish Zionist aspirations, which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet: "'His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country. I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation." Yours sincerely, Arthur James Balfour.

Now what I am telling you took place a number of years before Israel became a nation, but all these things had to happen to ultimately fulfill all the prophecies that speak of the millennium. Well, when General Allenby approached Jerusalem on his horse, he feared having to shoot inside the holy city. And when he made camp he telegraphed King George as to how to take this city without destroying it. And King George cabled back and said, "Pray about it." Well, Allenby claimed to be a Christian and he did just that.

It is amazing what happened. A rumor reached the city that 'Allah Be' was coming. This meant to the Turks,

who had possession of this city for 400 years, that Allah, the prophet of God was coming and they surrendered the city without firing a shot. Allenby counseled with a rabbi about when to officially take the city. They recommended to him to take it on December 11th, of that year, 1917. This was Hanukah, the Jewish feast that commemorates a day in the 400 silent years when Judas Maccabeus, a Jew, recaptured Jerusalem from that very wicked Antiochus Epiphanus.

Well, I am out of time for stories and we go back to Micah 7. We are in verses 14-15 (read). In verse 13, we had the years intervening between Micah's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and the millennium. In verse 14 we are back in the millennium and God is speaking to the Messiah, the Christ. Israel is resting securely as in days of old, when they first had rooted out the enemies and settled the land after they arrived from Egypt. And in verse 15 it says, "I," that is the Messiah, "will show them marvelous things." In the last 100 years this world has seen some marvelous things. Look at the present cell phone. It is absolutely incredible. But I suppose, "We ain't seen nothin' yet."

And what is not revealed, at least, as I see it, in these OT prophecies is the part the Church plays in the latter days. I want to take you to the NT, to Matthew 19, to just show you one revelation Jesus gave to His disciples. The disciples are questioning Jesus what they will receive for following Him. It has been rather costly to follow this rabbi and they are wondering about the benefits. Now this is just before Jesus is crucified and note verses 28-29 (read). The disciples, who are part of the Church, will sit on 12 thrones ruling over the 12 tribes of Israel. This one revelation alone is absolutely incredible. But there is more. Look at Revelation 20 (read verse 4). Now the pronouns in verse 4 are most challenging, but I believe this is a reference to church age believers.

So back to Micah 7. As I see it, verses 16-17 speak of the close of the tribulation which brings in the millennium (read). Here are men like Ahmadinjad or Yasser Arafat, or Putin, and being full of fear they

will lick dust like serpents and crawl from holes where they have hidden from Jesus Christ.

And why will all this happen? Because God has restored Israel. They have repented and received Jesus, Jeshua Hamasheach, and God has restored them and fought for them. He has cast their sins into the sea and extended mercy to His own. So look at verses 18-20 (read).

CONCL: Well, this fourth message in the book of Micah has been with regard to God's court case with His people. He has charged them with breaking their covenant with Him. They have said, "We are guilty. We will do anything You ask, we will even sacrifice our children to You, but do not ask us to repent and live right. That is one thing we cannot give in to." So God has said, "I am going to whip you with a rod, and I advise you to hear the rod and the One who has appointed it." And so, an unknown author has penned these lines:

Scattered by God's avenging hand,
Afflicted and forlorn,
Sad wanderers from their pleasant land,
Do Judah's children mourn;
And e'en in Christian countries, few
Breathe thoughts of pity for the Jew.

Skipped verse here.

And then as years and ages passed,
And nations rose and fell,
Though clouds of darkness oft were cast
O'er captive Israel,
The oracles of God for you
Were kept in safety by the Jew.

Well, to this very day, the Jew, nationally, has not turned. But I can tell you based on God's Word, when God's final rod strikes, that is the tribulation, Israel will repent and we have the results here in Micah. And we close this book like this: And Israel and God lived happily ever after.