

The God Who is Just
A Sermon on Micah: Part II
by
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1. Introduction

2. God Reveals the Identity of the Oppressor (3:1-12)

a. The rulers in the seat of power who eat their own will not be heard (3:1-4).

- i. The first group of people that Micah focuses on in this section of the book are the rulers of Israel.
 1. They are the people God has charged with upholding the Law, which was given to Moses at Sinai, yet they have perverted justice all the while.
 2. At the end of v. 1 Micah asks them a rhetorical question: “Is it not for you to know justice?”
 - a. Micah is still approaching this with the courtroom motif in mind.
 - b. Notice how he describes them in vv. 2-3, “You who hate good and love evil...”
- ii. Notice then in verse four what their judgment is: they will cry out for mercy and relief, yet God will not give it.
 1. They presumed upon the Lord’s patience, believing that on the day of judgment they could cry for help and He would respond.

2. I can't help but think of these men as the proverbial fool who rejects the cry of lady wisdom.

b. The prophets who are bought and paid for by the rulers shall be silenced (3:5-7).

- i. Lest we think the only fools here were the rulers, in vv. 5-7 Micah's focus turns to the prophets.

1. We find out in verse five that they are using their position to line their pockets with the money of the corrupt rulers.

- a. Their pronouncements are tied to what they can get out of it through extortion.

- b. The rulers are biting and devouring their own people; the prophets are standing behind the rulers muttering threats of war sent by God if they don't get a cut.

2. At the same time, these rulers had so hardened their heart against God that they have their own personal team of prophets on the bankroll.

- a. If the message of doom comes from one of the false prophets, you slip him money and move on.

- b. They have this whole scheme set up together; the rulers rip off their own countrymen, the prophets rip off the rulers, and neither call one another out for their sin.

- ii. As a result of their wickedness, we see in vv. 6-7 that God will judge them equally as harshly as the rulers.

1. Verse six speaks to the fact that in the very near future, they are going to turn to the Lord with an earnest desire to hear from Him, yet they too will experience a deafening silence.
 - a. The darkness brought upon them speaks to the idea that though these men were once able to prophesy and have visions, there would now be nothing.
 - b. Micah preaches judgement and lady wisdom is crying out in the gates with him, pleading for repentance—and they will not listen.
 2. Verse 7 then lays out this reality all the more clearly; these false prophets will be seen for precisely who they are.
 - a. One of the things that might slip by here though is that the second half of verse 7 plays off of the first half of verse 4.
 - b. Whatever honor they had in their role will be stripped away because they won't have a word from God to deliver.
- c. God's prophet delivers the words they truly need to hear (3:8-12).*
- i. Now Micah stands in sharp contrast to these men here in v. 8; He, on the other hand, is filled with the power of the Spirit, meaning he's one who truly comes with the Word of the Lord.
 1. He is filled with justice and courage—and this is a direct knock against these corrupt rulers and prophets.

2. In other words, Micah comes to the table with this intellectual, physical, and spiritual strength, to stand in the midst of perverted generation and speak the truth, regardless of the cost to himself.
- ii. In vv. 9-12, Micah stands by his proclamation, in the power of the Spirit, and he condemns them for their wickedness.
1. They are a people who hate justice, they twist everything that is straight; In other words, they're committing vile crimes against their brother and God and saying that God is blessing everything they do.
 2. As a result, in v. 12 he declares God will bring the capital cities down the ground and the temple, the very dwelling place of the Spirit of God, will be destroyed—which very simply means that God will no longer be among His people.

3. God Will Bring True Peace on Earth – Yet for Now They Must Be Afflicted (4:1-5:1)

a. In the latter days, God will usher in the Millennial reign of Christ (vv. 4:1-8).

- i. It's important to know that in this chapter, Micah is looking both at their current situation, yet also this far off, future point where there will be actual, lasting, world peace brought on by the Messiah.
 1. What we are speaking of here is the millennial reign of Christ.
 2. In v. 1 Micah is focusing on this far off, future point where the temple will be rebuilt, and the people of the earth will flock to it in droves.
 - a. In v. 2 the prophet speaks of people coming from far off nations so they might come to sit at the feet of God Himself and learn from Him.

- b. In v. 3 Christ will stand as judge and arbiter between all nations; great superpowers of the world will subject themselves to His decision because from His mouth will flow supreme truth, equity, and justice.
 - c. V. 4 shows that each man will live in truly utopian state; they not only have the right to their inheritance, but they will live without fear.
 - d. In v. 5 Micah then brings his hearer's back to their present reality; though the foreign nations follow after their false gods now, the Israelites will not.
- ii. In vv. 6-8 then, God speaks of this future remnant that is to be brought in and established to a greater glory than they had under the reign of David.
- 1. Notice that though the promises of future glory, renewal, provision, and everything attached to it is very real, but is out of their reach.
 - a. Look at the description of these people that God will restore; they are the lame, they are the outcasts, and they are the ones afflicted by God. They are a people being punished—but to what end? Restoration.
 - b. They are a weak people, yet a people the Lord will make into a strong nation, one where He will dwell in their midst, but again, as the true Prophet, Priest, and King.
 - 2. Vv. 7-8 speaks of their former dominion under King David being restored to them, but at an even greater capacity.

- a. It is not for a season only for them to be cast out of the covenant later—it is a condition of God’s own work and faithfulness to His promises, not the faithfulness of the Israelites.
- b. Yet it is also a condition of the time when the Lord Himself will reign from Jerusalem as the true and better David.

b. *God will bring the Israelites through captivity and affliction and establish her might (vv. 4:9-4:13).*

- i. For now though, notice Micah switches back to their present reality in v. 9; he asks them “Now, why do you cry loudly? Is there no king among you, or has your counselor perished, that agony has gripped you like a woman in childbirth?”

1. They are mourning the loss of their king.

- a. The kingship of the Israelites meant so much more to them than simply having a king—he was representative of the promised Messiah, King Jesus. If a king remained, the promise remained.
- b. To lose your earthly king as an Israelite is a direct threat to the covenant made with David, that his house and kingdom and throne will endure forever.

2. Yet Micah commands them in v. 10 to writhe in labor—and if you’ve given birth, you know exactly the type of pain he’s talking about here.

- a. This process will not stop; you will be cast out of the land, you will no longer live in your homes, but you will be brought under the oppressive rule of the Babylonians, and you will not have a king.
 - b. Yet just as there is the blessing of a beautiful child attached to the intense pain of labor, there is the promise of rescue for the Israelites attached to the intense pain of their exile and bondage.
- ii. In v. 11 Micah now draws attention back to the nations who stand against Israel and desire to see her come to defilement and open shame.
- 1. Yet notice in v. 12, Israel's enemies do not know the thoughts and purposes of God
 - a. He has gathered these nations like sheaves to the threshing floor.
 - b. The image being used here is that God has gathered the nations for judgment—that just as the seed is separated from the chaff, so too will Israel be separated from her enemies.
 - 2. What's more than this is that in v. 13 we find He even promises the reversal of her fortunes.
 - a. The language used of the iron horn and bronze hoofs in v. 13 speak of the power and endurance Jerusalem will have to conquer her enemies.
 - b. From this crushing defeat, Jerusalem will devote the spoils of war to the Lord, even that of the whole earth.

4. God's Messiah Shall Come for Salvation and Judgment (5:1-15)

a. *From insignificant Bethlehem, the ideal King shall come forth to deliver His people (vv. 1-9).*

i. As we move to chapter 5, we see that Micah follows the same pattern he's used so far.

1. V. 1 here is essentially a summary of all that has been said thus far concerning their judgment.

a. The use of the rod to strike his cheek here depicts the utter hopelessness of this earthly king to deliver his people from the hand of the oppressor and even to escape judgment himself.

b. We see this happen in 2 Kings 25, where Nebuchadnezzar's troops come and take king Zedekiah away to captivity.

2. Yet the adversative [but] in v. 2 introduces an incredibly sharp contrast between the powerless earthly king of Jerusalem and the Messianic King who is to come.

a. Bethlehem is home to the birthplace of Israel's greatest earthly king, David, and now it is promised to be that the One greater than David shall also come from Bethlehem.

b. God here reminds His people that indeed, He will fulfill His promise to king David that One will sit on his throne forever and reign in perfection and usher in actual, lasting, world peace.

3. Yet notice in v. 3 that God will give them up, that is, they will be afflicted, punished of God, until the time of this Promised One's birth.

a. Micah switches back, again, to this very far off promise of restoration of the remnant of Israel.

- i. The idea here going back to the promise we saw at end of Micah 2, where the Lord Himself will gather the whole of Israel back to Himself and go before them as their Shepherd.
 - ii. As He goes before them as Shepherd, He will do so with divine strength and rule with a regal authority befitting of His great promises to them.
- b. At the end of v. 4 then we find this beautiful portrait of God's restoration of His people.
 - i. They will remain with Him in security, because the Messiah will go before them as they conquer their enemies.
 - ii. Yet notice when he says they will remain in Him it is because He will great to the end of the earth, and this brings us right back to the beginning of chapter 4.
- ii. In vv. 5-9, Micah takes this idea of their Shepherd-King going before them and applies it to the whole.
 - 1. Micah calls them to look to this Messiah as their peace in the time of invasion from foreign enemies.
 - 2. Micah's message then is that when the Messiah's kingdom comes in all its fullness, the people of God will no longer be subjugated to an oppressor.
- b. *God will destroy their true enemy: anything that becomes the object of their trust and worship other than Him (vv. 10-15).*

- i. The final five verses stands mainly as a marker of what God will destroy among His own people in order to bring about a purity of affection and worship.
 1. In everything that is listed in vv. 10-14, we find the essentials of idolatry.
 2. The reason for this is incredibly simple: they trusted in their own might to save themselves, and they loved that which was created rather than Creator Himself.
- ii. Notice then in the final verse that He moves to pouring out His vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations that have not obeyed Him.
 1. It is here then that we find two disparate ends of the spectrum in God's judgment.
 2. It is important for us to know that God will judge the unrepentant believer and the unbeliever alike, but to two very different ends.

5. Conclusion

a. The unbeliever is judged unto eternal damnation, through a consuming judgment.

- i. For the one who does not profess Christ here today, I earnestly beg you to consider what you've heard now and entrust yourself to the saving work of Jesus Christ.
- ii. Until you do so, the wrath of God rests upon you and will not depart until you throw yourself upon His great mercy.

b. The unrepentant believer is judged unto eternal life, through a restorative judgment.

- i. For the Christian here today who remains in sin, I also plead with you to consider the example laid before you.

- ii. The hope in the midst of your punishment is not that you would avoid the consequences of your sin, but that through God's grace, you would be restored to a place of covenant loyalty and singular devotion to God.

6. Closing Prayer