

## Micah 7:1-20

### "Who Is Like Our God?"

In Micah Ch 7, we find the prophet both grieving & glorifying God. He sees the faithfulness of God as a light shining in the darkness. There's a hue of Job 13:15 found w/in this Ch, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."<sup>1</sup> "Regardless of what comes my way, I know that God is good. Therefore, I will trust *in* Him & be careful to give glory *to* Him." Or perhaps overtones of Habakkuk Ch 3, "*Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*"<sup>2</sup> It's an overarching resolve to trust in the Lord, a refusal to turn *from* Him, I will only & forever trust *in* Him.

Let's remember that in Ch 6, it was as if God had called His people into the courtroom. In the end the case was clear. God had only been good to them & they had sinned increasingly/abundantly toward Him. The short is that His righteousness would be vindicated & judgment was coming.

As Ch 7 opens, we see the prophet's concession & confession that God is just & accurate in His accusation. The result essentially being a grievous lamentation. Micah is not an unfeeling kind of man. He's not unmoved or unmotivated by the judgment which is to come upon the people of God. So he shares his sorrow & his wail of woe...

### Vs 1

You get the idea, don't you? In Vs 10-12 of Ch 6, the Lord speaks of the lack of integrity w/in the nation. The deceitfulness, the violence, everyone seeking to exploit & take advantage of others. In Vs 16 He speaks of the idolatries & the wicked works of 2 of the most ungodly kings in all of Israel's history & how they've adopted their ways collectively.

So now Micah cries out, "Woe is me!" The people, the prophets, the politicians & the priesthood are all polluted by the pursuit of prosperity & paganism. But rather than disconnect or disassociate himself through 2 degrees of separation, he's allowing the impact to pain him personally.

He's seeing the situation through the eyes of God. The problems w/in the people & the pain their pollution is causing. He says, "I'm like those who gather summer fruits, gleaning vintage grapes, there's no cluster or 1<sup>st</sup> ripe fruit..."

<sup>1</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Job 13:15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Hab 3:17-18). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The idea is that he's looking for something (someone) good/godly w/in the nation & he's not finding *anyone*. There's nothing good remaining in the fields during the summer, even so there's no one good remaining in Judah, no "fruit" left to glean or gather in... Sin has left the nation completely/totally desolate.

Notice, "...there's no cluster to eat, or the 1<sup>st</sup> ripe fruit which my soul desires." Ladies & gentlemen, this is the deceitfulness of sin. It promises luxury but will leave you in poverty (inwardly). Sin always leaves you unsatisfied & looking for something more. Oh it may leave you *temporarily gratified*, but never *truly satisfied*. It never fulfills; it leaves us empty & desolate.

### Vs 2-4

"Punishment & perplexity", the idea being that the time of judgment is upon them... We're almost reminded of the Lord speaking to Ab about Sodom. Abraham had interceded before the Lord such to the extent that if He could find even 10 righteous men in all of Sodom, He would spare the entire city for the sake of only 10 who feared God... But judgment fell, why? Because as we read here in Vs 2, "The faithful man has perished from the earth, & there is no one upright among men." The nation has become so wicked that he can't find so much as a single honest man...

He says, "They all lie in wait for blood, every man hunts his brother w/a net." Or another way to understand that? "You can't trust anybody."

Dishonesty & greed rules the land. "The prince asks for gifts, the judge seeks a bribe, the great man utters his evil desire... so they all scheme together." When he says that they successfully do evil w/both hands, today we might say it like this, "They're going at w/both hands!" They're "all in". They're giving it all they got, not to do good or honor God, but to gain through deceit & bribery. Favor in the justice system is being bought.

It's the Jeremiah 4:22 syndrome, "*They are wise to do evil, But to do good they have no knowledge.*"<sup>3</sup> Truth be told, this is exactly the opposite of where God would have us to be as His people. To the Romans Paul made it plain, "*I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple* (innocent) *concerning evil.*"<sup>4</sup> If we would learn what it means to seek 1<sup>st</sup> the kingdom of God ½ as much as we pursue our own gain we would change the world...

He says, "The *best* of them is like a brier, the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge." The princes, the judges, those you should count on to be upright...

<sup>3</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Je 4:22]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>4</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ro 16:19]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

They're like briars & thorns, they wound you, they tear & ensnare their unsuspecting victims. If this represents the best of the land, what does that say of the rest?

But there's a principle that the Bible makes clear. God holds in His hand a wine cup of His wrath. & When the sin/iniquity of a people fill that cup to the brim, He will press it to their lips & they will drink it down to the dregs. Here in Vs 4 God says, "That time is upon you." People feel like they're getting away w/sin. They interpret the patience of God as the approval of God. But the time will come. "The day of your watchman & your punishment comes; Now shall be their perplexity."

### Vs 5-7

Micah is highlighting here the fact that sin/selfishness has become so rampant that even personal relationships had crumbled among the people of God. You couldn't trust a friend, you couldn't come to a companion in confidence, even personal relatives were at war w/one another.

Quick question; how do you feel about the culture to which you've been called? Do you believe that today you can (as a general rule) take a person's word for something? Can you believe what the media is reporting to you? If you hear it on the radio, is it true? If you find it on the internet, can you trust it to be fact?

Listen, we live in an agenda driven, self-serving culture. I wouldn't encourage you to take anyone's word for anything! Yes, there are folks out there who still have integrity (I trust I'm w/some of them today) but they're few & far between comparatively. Even pastors/preachers. Listen, don't believe it just because I say it, search the word of God for yourself, make it your aim to understand the precepts/principles of the Bible w/in their context. It will serve you well. To the positive you'll be blessed, to the negative it'll keep you out of all kinds of trouble.

But the point in this passage is that sin will separate friends & can even fracture the family unit. Now, that's the basic interpretation. But I want to draw out an application here for you from the end of Vs 5 where we read, "Guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your bosom." He's speaking here of the fact that they couldn't even depend upon their own spouse to hold their best interest at heart.

But I want to segue from that into something I think is worth addressing for just a minute. & That is the tendency that some people have, to place their spouse up on a pedestal or set them in such a place in their heart that they expect them to be for them something they can never be.

They place expectations upon them that are simply impossible to live up to & then blame them when they fail. In brief they want their spouse to meet the deepest needs of the inner recesses of their heart & that's something that no one can ever do for you. Only Christ can meet that need. If you look to your spouse to be for you what only Jesus can be for you, then you're setting yourself up for failure in your relationship, you'll feel let down, disappointed & neglected leading to frustration & exasperation.

So you'll read this marriage book, go to that marriage seminar (all of which have their rightful place w/in the appropriate context). But you'll hear about all these wonderful marriages, you'll read of these loving relationships & it only makes you think your relationship is all the worse. The harder you work, the more frustrated you become. Why? Because your spouse can never truly satisfy you anymore than anything else in this life can. Yes, you'll share more intimate things w/them. You'll allow yourself to be vulnerable w/them & those things will help fortify your bonds together. But don't lose sight of the fact that only the Lord can truly satisfy & bring fulfillment/contentment to your heart.

Pray for your spouse, but look to the Lord. Learn as a husband, as a wife to seek 1<sup>st</sup> the kingdom of God. Love the Lord 1<sup>st</sup> & foremost w/all your heart/mind & strength & then you can enjoy one another (w/all your faults & frailties) as you travel together toward heaven... But if you're expecting your spouse to be God & your marriage to be heaven... ☺ you're destined for disappointment & disillusionment.

Now, if this section sounds familiar it's because Jesus referred to Vs 6 when He spoke of what commitment to Him could cost you. Christ divides people. Can 2 walk together lest they be agreed? No. If you're headed one way (in Christ) & your friends or family are headed another, then though you may remain near to one another physically, spiritually you'll divide.

But Micah is so taken aback, so blown away by the fact that he can't look *to* or trust *in* anyone, he says, "Therefore I will look to the Lord... my God will hear me." Question: Is this a good or a bad thing? The right answer here is, "Yes". ☺

It's not a *good thing* when there's not so much as a single honorable or trustworthy person for you to lean on or go to. But God can take something bad & turn it for good because it's driving him to seek the Lord exclusively. It's not a bad thing to turn to the God of your salvation. *He* will hear you, *He* will be there for you. *He* will fulfill you because He is *faithful* to you.

## Vs 8-10

What's the point here? It's a principle we find displayed throughout the scriptures & that is this, God's man may fall, but God will always raise him up. When we sit in darkness the Lord will be a light to us...

But notice Micah recognizes something we might call "contingent" to the restorative work of God & it's in Vs 9. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him," What we have here is a heart of confession & repentance. Was Micah the one in sin? Not specifically, but he was willing to bear the responsibility, he would identify personally w/the people's sin. He's confessing on behalf of the nation, Daniel did much the same thing. He's abandoning himself to the truth & the consequences of their sin.

Here's something I want you to see & consider. Micah wasn't under God's judgment *personally*, but the nation was *collectively* of which he was a part. Here's my point, people like to think that their sin doesn't affect anyone else, that's a lie, it most definitely does. There were godly people in Israel when it was carried off into captivity. There were godly people in Judah as they were taken into Babylon. But the overall sins of the people were so overwhelming that when God's judgment *nationally* it impacted the remnant that was *godly*. Our sin always impacts others, even if it's inadvertently.

But what an example that Micah sets for us even as we're in the thick of an ungodly, sin infested culture. You may not personally contribute to the pornography industry, or sex trafficking, you may not be selling meth, dealing drugs or be about some kind of illicit, illegal activity or the abortion of babies... or whatever. But we're in the midst *of* & associated *with* a nation that is about those things! Calling good evil & evil good in the name of unbridled "freedom". How we need to confess our sins, turn from our wicked ways & cast ourselves upon merciful, redeeming work of God!

Micah had confidence in God's *salvation* & their *vindication* before their enemies. Their situation was dark, but the Lord would be their light & bring them out of that dark place through His redeeming work.

Then those who gloated over them would be ashamed, the tables would be turned. God will punish the nations that abused them... Isn't that question in Vs 10 interesting? Whenever the child of God is going through tough times, the world is quick to mock, "Where is the Lord your God?" The Psalmist said, *"My tears have been my food day and night, While they continually say to me, "Where is your God?"*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Ps 42:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

“You’ve always talked about how great God is, where is He now? Why isn’t He helping you, why would He allow this to happen to you?” On & on... But the natural man can’t discern spiritual matters... God is at work & He will vindicate His own & deal decisively w/the ungodly.

### Vs 11-13

God will restore His people. He will regather them from all over the earth. Ultimately, I believe this will be fulfilled in the millennial kingdom of Christ.

### Vs 14-15

Micah implores the Lord to Shepherd His people once again, to lead them into green pastures & feed them once again as in the days of old. In Vs 15 God assures the prophet that He will. That the day is coming when He will regather Israel once again & He will be recognized & realized as a God of wonders once more as in the days of the Exodus. Again, He’s pointing the time of the Messianic reign of Christ over the earth.

### Vs 16-17

When God restores the nation of Israel, those who opposed them will realize the error of their ways. Seeing God’s greatness & His restoration of the nation will cause them to respect the Lord in a way they previously did not. They’ll see the power & love of God at work in & on behalf of Israel.

### Vs 18-20

If Vs 18-19 aren’t underlined in your Bible, make it so. “Who is a God like You?” It’s a rhetorical question. The answer is, “There is no one like our God...” BTW it’s a fitting end for the book, the name “Micah” means, “Who is like God?”

& He points out 6 attributes of God in this incredibly rich but brief passage of scripture. #1 “He pardons iniquity & passes over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage.” This is the whole point of the gospel, it’s the reason Christ died for you & for me. He paid the debt He didn’t owe because we owed the debt we couldn’t pay. Christ shed His blood that we might receive the pardon & find forgiveness in Him. Who is like our God? Who gave His only begotten Son. God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us! Why? That He might pardon our iniquity. God’s justice demanded the price be paid & in His love & through *His* perfect righteousness He paid it.

Ladies and Gentlemen: This is pardon/forgiveness on a whole other level than what man affords to others.

#2 He does not retain His anger forever.

& These are elements of His forgiveness. #1 He pardons (or takes away). #2 He passes over. That is He doesn't gather up our sins so as to use them against us later, He passes by them, passes over them, doesn't collect them for later ammunition. #3 He doesn't retain, or hang on to... When God forgives you, He doesn't stay angry at you or sort of smolder behind the scenes, His forgiveness is complete.

But why? Why is He so gracious, so forgiving? Is there just something about you or something about me that compels Him to act w/such kindness? No. The reasons for God's great forgiveness aren't in us, they're in Him. "Because" (#3 in our list of characteristics) "He delights in mercy." Aren't you glad that you serve a God who *delights* in mercy?

He doesn't have to *develop* it, *discipline* Himself to do it, or *determine* w/in Himself to show it. He *delights* in it. He's well pleased to extend it. Jesus paid the price demanded of His righteousness, now it's His *delight* to show mercy. God *wants* to be merciful to you. But you have to receive His mercy. We receive it in Christ. If we won't receive Christ than we not only resist but *reject* His mercy.

Next Micah highlights the *compassion* of God. He has compassion upon us, has provided a way of salvation for us. #5 He will subdue our iniquities. He *loves us* as we are but won't *leave us* as we are. He grants us victory over those sins that bind us & casts our sins into the depths of the sea. There's no probationary period w/God. When we're forgiven that's it, our sins are gone, never to be held over our heads.

& Finally (#6), "You will give truth to Jacob, mercy to Ab, which You have sworn to our fathers." God is as truthful as He is merciful & we need both. Mercy & truth (which You have sworn). We may fall, we may fail, but God is faithful to His word. If He has said it He will do it, if He's spoken it, He'll make it good.

If you've not known God's forgiveness, you can receive it today. The blood of J.C. cleanses us of all sin. Repent of your sin, confess to God, believe on the Lord J.C. & receive the promise of salvation... Who is like our God?

### Prayer Points:

God there is no one like You. Pardoning iniquity, delighting in mercy, casting all our sin into the depths of the sea. We thank You for the promise of Your word. Refresh our spirits, renew our hearts & we'll give You praise.

If you've not given your life to Christ & God is speaking to your heart. Turn from your sin today, receive the promise of His word that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Leave here a new creation.