

## WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE?

### **TEXT: MICAH 6:8-16**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. The prophet Micah was a contemporary of the prophet Isaiah, and there are many similarities between the two books (cf. Isaiah 2:2-4 with Micah 4:1-3).
2. There are many men in the Bible with the name of Micah, but the author of this book is identified in Micah 1:1 as, “Micah the Morasthite” because he was from Moreshethgath (1:14).
3. His name means, “Who is like the LORD?” (cf. 7:18).
4. In Matthew 10:35, 36, the Lord Jesus quoted Micah 7:6.
5. And in Matthew 23:5, 6, the chief priests and scribes quoted Micah 5:2 to Herod the king.
6. Micah’s prophecy relates to the sins and judgments of Israel and Judah, the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem, the return of the Jews from captivity, and the punishment of their enemies.
7. In addition to preaching boldly against the sins of the people, Micah denounced the false prophets who were leading them astray (cf. 2:11; 3:5-8).
8. In Micah 6:8, Micah says the LORD has shewed men, what is good; and what He requires of them.

### **I. THE LORD REQUIRES RECTITUDE**

1. By “rectitude,” I am referring to doing justly, and loving mercy, and walking humbly with God (6:8) – i.e. “what is good” (6:8; cf. 3:1, 2).
2. *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* defines “rectitude” as, “morality, rightness of principle or practice; uprightness of mind; exact conformity to truth...”
3. *Webster’s* says, “Rectitude of mind is the disposition to act in conformity to any known standard of right, truth or justice.”
4. The people of Israel had a known standard of right, truth or justice. Micah 6:8 says, “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good...” They were without excuse. Micah is quoting Deuteronomy 10:12.
5. “And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?” (Deut. 10:12, 13).

6. Micah 6:8 has been described as, “an epitome of the whole law” and “the greatest saying of the Old Testament” (Charles L. Feinberg, *The Minor Prophets*).
7. *Webster’s Dictionary* goes on to say, “Rectitude of conduct is the actual conformity to such standard. Perfect rectitude belongs only to the Supreme Being. The more nearly the rectitude of men approaches to the standard of the divine law, the more exalted and dignified is their character. Want of rectitude is not only sinful, but debasing.”
8. *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* is right – “Perfect rectitude belongs only to the Supreme Being.” Jesus said to the rich young ruler, “Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God” (Mark 10:18).
9. Obeying God’s commandments cannot save anyone. James 2:20 says, “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”
10. Doing good works is evidence that a person has genuine faith.
11. But rather than obeying God, the wicked people kept “the statutes of Omri” (6:16). King Omri was the wicked father of King Ahab.
12. First Kings 16:25 says, “But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that were before him.”
13. His son Ahab was even worse than his father (I Kings 16:33). King Ahab and his wife Queen Jezebel tried to make Baal-worship the official religion of Israel.
14. People often misunderstand Micah 6:8. When Jimmy Carter was inaugurated president, he quoted it to support his liberal politics.
15. But it is debatable if President Carter did justly. And Israel did not do justly. They did not love mercy, and they did not walk humbly with God.
16. Why is that?
17. Because they were uncircumcised in their hearts (cf. Deut. 10:12-16).
18. In the Old Testament, this means they needed to be born again, because to do right, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God is impossible for the natural man.
19. In order to be able to do this there must be the new birth, and the new birth takes place when the sinner believes and expresses his faith in true repentance, which brings us to Micah 6:9.

## II. A CALL TO REPENT

1. The “rod” (6:9) represents God’s judgment.
2. Psalm 89:32 says, “Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.”

3. The Bible says that when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, He shall rule with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:9; Revelation 12:5; 19:15).
4. “The man of wisdom” (6:9) recognizes that the judgment of God will surely come. “The man of wisdom” sees the hand of God at work and acts accordingly.
5. “Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it” (6:9) is a call to repent.

### III. THE LORD WILL JUDGE WICKEDNESS

1. “The treasures of wickedness” (6:10) refers to the wealth that sinners had accumulated unjustly – “the scant measure...the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights” refer to their dishonesty (6:10, 11).
2. This was a theme of the prophets (cf. Amos 8:4-7).
3. God must judge sin (Micah 6:13).
4. God wanted them to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God (6:8), but instead they were guilty of covetousness, extortion and crooked business dealings, lying, deceitfulness, violence, and many other wicked sins (6:10-13).
5. God was going to make them sick (6:13). Some people run from doctor to doctor and they never get well, because God has made them sick, and only God can heal them!
6. First Corinthians 5:5 talks about delivering an impenitent sinner to Satan “for the destruction of the flesh.”
7. First Corinthians 11:30 says that Christians should not take the Lord’s Supper if they’re not right with God because “many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep (die).”
8. Micah 6:13 says not only does God make them sick, He also makes them desolate. Ezekiel 20:26 says, “that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the LORD.”
9. “Desolate” means, “destitute, afflicted, and deserted by God.”
10. We saw last week that one of the ways God judges sinners is to defeat all their plans, and to disappoint them in all of their endeavors.
11. “Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Ye looked for much, and, lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it” (Haggai 1:6, 9).
12. Micah 6:14, 15 says, “Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy casting down (empty stomach) shall be in the midst of thee; and thou shalt take hold,

but shalt not deliver (from danger); and that which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword. Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.”

13. The LORD warned them this would happen if they would not obey His commandments. Deuteronomy 28:38-42 says, “Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for the locust shall consume it. Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them. Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit. Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity. All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume.”
14. To summarize: “Sin always brings retribution, so Micah warned that the wicked would be robbed of their health (6:13), their hopes (6:14), and their harvests (6:15)” (John Phillips, *Exploring the Minor Prophets*).

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Micah 6:8 reminds us of our Lord’s words from the Sermon on the Mount – “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).
2. First Peter 1:16 says, “Because it is written (in the book of Leviticus), “Be ye holy; for I am holy.”
3. But this is utterly impossible apart from God’s grace and the help of the Holy Spirit.
4. Therefore, we must come to Christ for mercy and pardon and salvation. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13).