

Title: **MICAH**
“WHO IS A GOD LIKE UNTO THEE?”

Text: Micah 1:1

Subject: *The Distinguishing Greatness of God*

Date: Sunday Evening — July 10, 2010

Tape: Micah #1

Readings: *Bob Poncer and Bobbie estes*

Introduction:

(Micah 1:1) “The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, [and] Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.”

Micah, whose name means, “Who is like God?” was raised up by God to be a prophet to Israel during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. He was contemporary with Isaiah and Hosea.

The prophecy of Micah deals with two subjects. It is both a lamentation of the woeful condition of Israel and a celebration of God’s abundant mercy to sinners who fully deserve His wrath.

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The people of God were, in Micah’s time, passing through a very painful trial. The nation of Israel was plagued with the incurable wound of empty, meaningless religious ritualism and idolatry. **The political leaders** of the people were men who devised iniquity and worked evil. **The priests** were men of hire. And **the prophets** prophesied for money. Yet, all that they did was done in the name of the Lord.

Religious hucksters were in the majority and the people followed them eagerly. With confidence, they said, **“Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us”** (3:11). The Word of the Lord was precious in those days. There were only a few who truly spoke as prophets of God. And very few heard them. When the Lord did send a faithful prophet to them, the vast majority of the people said, *“prophesy ye not”* (2:6).

All this caused Micah great pain and much sorrow. But he was a man who knew God. He had a vision of God’s majesty and mercy. He had received a word

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from the Lord. **And with confident joy he spoke of the latter day glory of this Gospel age, when the majesty mercy of God would be revealed in Christ the Messiah.**

(Micah 7:7-9) “Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me. (8) Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD *shall be* a light unto me. (9) I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, *and* I shall behold his righteousness.”

DIVISIONS — In the Book of Micah, our translators have given us an excellent outline of Micah’s prophesy by the chapter divisions.

Chapter 1 — In chapter one the Lord God gives His witness against the nations, particularly against Samaria, the capital of Israel, the ten Northern Tribes.

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Because of “*the sins of the house of Israel*” (1:5) doom was a matter of certainty. The Lord God declared that He would disinherit the nation, because “*her wound is incurable*” (1:9, 15). **Let us be warned** (Romans 11:21-22).

(Romans 11:21-22) “For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee. (22) Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”

Chapter 2 — In chapter two God’s prophet tells the people plainly that the cause of the wrath coming upon them is their own sin. They rose up as enemies against God. — “*Therefore, thus saith the LORD; Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks*” (v. 3).

Chapter 3 — In the third chapter the Lord God exposes the self-serving princes, hireling prophets, and covetous priests as the men who had led Israel

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into apostasy and doom. They abhorred righteousness and perverted equity, in the name of God, and brought the people they claimed to serve under the sentence of Divine judgment (vv. 9-12).

(Micah 3:9-12) “Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity. (10) They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. (11) The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, *Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.* (12) **Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed** as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.”

But Micah, being a faithful man, caring as he did for the souls of men, moves rapidly from announcing God’s wrath upon His enemies to the proclamation of grace and salvation to chosen sinners.

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Chapter 4 — In the fourth chapter, he speaks of a better Prince, a better Prophet, a better Priest, and a better Kingdom. **This fourth chapter speaks of the coming of Christ and the establishing of His spiritual kingdom, Mt. Zion, the Church of the living God, and the gathering of sinners out of every nation into His kingdom.** — “*The Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even forever*” (7). This kingdom shall triumph and prevail over all her enemies (v. 13). The gates of hell can never prevail against it!

Chapter 5 — Chapter five begins with an announcement of our Redeemer’s death at the hands of His enemies, as if to indicate that His death would be the means of Israel’s deliverance and the cause of His exaltation and glory. He Who was to be born at Bethlehem (The House of Bread), Who must be smitten by His enemies, shall stand in glory. — “**And this man shall be the Peace**” (v. 5). He will both gather and save His sheep, who have been scattered “*among the flocks of goats*” (margin v. 8).

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Chapter 6 — In chapter six, the Lord God pleads with us to remember His goodness, His wondrous works of grace, “*that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD*” (v. 5), teaching us that God looks on the heart (vv. 6-8), and calls us to repentance (vv. 9-16).

Chapter 7 — In the midst of the Lord’s rebuke and indignation, Micah cries, “*Woe is me!*” (7:1). But the hope of Christ’s coming shines like a bright star in the dark sky in the seventh chapter. The prophecy closes with great joy and with eager anticipation of that day when God will cast Israel’s sins into the depths of the sea.

(Micah 7:7) “Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.”

(Micah 7:15-17) “According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will **I show unto him marvellous things**. (16) The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might:

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they shall lay *their* hand upon *their* mouth, their ears shall be deaf. (17) They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee.”

(Micah 7:18-20) “Who *is* a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy. (19) He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. (20) Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.”

PROPHECIES OF CHRIST

None of the Old Testament prophets spoke more clearly than Micah of our blessed Savior. **When we**

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read Micah’s prophecy, we must not fail to see that this is a prophecy of Christ our Savior and God’s great salvation in Him. Let me just pull out a few jewels from Micah’s magnificent prophecy; and, as I hold them up in the light before you, may God the Holy Spirit allow us gaze upon them with the wonder of faith and joy.

- Our Savior is spoken of in **Micah 2:13** as “**THE BREAKER.**”

“The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them.” — Without question, this text of Scripture has specific reference, historically, to the nation of Israel. If you read chapters one and two, you will see that the Lord threatened severe, but just punishment upon them because of their relentless ungodliness, idolatry, and eagerness to follow false prophets rather than those men sent of God who spoke the Word of God plainly.

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Yet, in wrath our God remembers mercy. He promised those disobedient Jews deliverance, undeserved, merciful deliverance, miraculous deliverance, deliverance which had the unmistakable stamp of divinity upon it. **The entire story is a clear picture of God’s free grace in Christ to His elect, the true Israel of God.**

1. Like the Jews of old, we have turned aside from our God, His Word, His way, and His worship, and went whoring after other gods, according to our own lusts.
2. The Lord God, in His Word, has threatened a severe, but just and everlasting punishment to be executed upon us for our sin.
3. Yet, in wrath, our God remembers mercy. He has promised that He shall save some of Adam’s fallen race by His almighty, free grace in Christ.
4. That One Who is our Savior and Deliverer, God’s dear Son, our all glorious Christ, is here called

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“*The Breaker*”. Christ is “*the Breaker*” and all who are saved by Him are described as “*the broken up*.” Blessed are those who are broken by Him in mercy, because He is determined not to crush them in His wrath!

- The fourth chapter of Micah describes **THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST**.

The destruction of Israel does not mean that God cast off His people, whom He foreordained unto everlasting salvation (Romans 11:2). Not at all! In fact, the destruction of the physical nation of Israel and of that physical kingdom made way for Christ’s more glorious spiritual and everlasting kingdom, His church.

1. This kingdom of grace is “*established in the top of the mountains...exalted above all hills,*” in heaven itself (v. 1).

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2. This kingdom is made up of God’s elect from many nations. It is in this place, Mt. Zion, where our God teaches us and guides us (v. 2).
3. The church and kingdom of God is a kingdom of peace and security. Here, and here alone, men and women live together in peace, as one, because we walk together in the name of “*the LORD our God*” (vv. 3-5).
4. This is a kingdom of poor, halting sinners, gathered by Christ, healed by Christ, and ruled by Christ, a tower for sheep, a strong hold for the daughter of Zion, the place built by our God and Savior for His redeemed ones, whom He has delivered (vv. 6-10).
5. Though all the nations of the earth are perpetually gathered against the church and kingdom of our God, the kingdom of our God, the church of His elect, shall prevail over Babylon. Indeed, our God has consecrated all the substance of Babylon and the whole earth to the glory of Christ our King (vv. 11-13).

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(Micah 4:11-13) “Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. 12 **But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.** 13 Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.”

- In chapter 5, verse 1, Micah speaks of **CHRIST’S HUMILIATION AND SUFFERING** (5:1).

(Micah 5:1) “Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.”

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Our blessed Savior came here to be smitten by the rod of His enemies, and smitten by the sword of justice as our Substitute, that He might give to us such a kingdom of grace and glory, of righteousness and everlasting salvation as is described in chapter four.

- Micah 5:2 declares **OUR SAVIOR’S INCARNATION.**

(Micah 5:2) “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.”

1. Here is the exact place of His birth. — “*Bethlehem.*” — There was another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulun (Joshua 19:15).
2. Here is His eternal pre-existence. — “*He shall come forth.*”
3. Here is the Deity of this Man Micah has been describing as the Man of peace, our Savior. —

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“Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

- Then, Micah speaks of **THE MAJESTY OF CHRIST** in His glorious exaltation (5:4).

(Micah 5:4) “And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for **now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.**”

GOD’S DISTINGUISHING GREATNESS

Though the people were turned aside unto vanity, Micah’s heart was fixed upon God’s promised Deliverer. He said, ——— “*Therefore I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me*” (7:7). With the eye of faith fixed upon Christ, believing the promises of God, Micah’s heart began to swell with joy, gratitude, praise, and expectation. **Unable to contain himself, the prophet of God raises his voice in exultation, closing his**

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prophecy with a declaration of our God’s distinctive greatness as God. What is it that distinguishes the true and living God from all the imaginary gods of men? Read Micah 7:18-20, and see.

(Micah 7:18-20) “Who *is* a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy. 19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. 20 Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.”

O fallen sons of Adam, did you catch that phrase? **Here is the thing that distinguishes our God as God** — **“He delighteth in mercy!”** Clap your hands and rejoice before Him, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

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This good news is pure Gospel truth. It should raise a universal shout of “Hallelujah!” The God of heaven, the God whom we have offended, the God in whose hands we are, is a God Who delights in mercy! — “*Who is a God like unto thee,*” O Lord? Micah not only declares that God is merciful, but that He delights in mercy.

I am sure that every attribute of God gives Him pleasure in its exercise. But, here, mercy is singled out by Inspiration as His favorite. And though all the Divine attributes are eternal, mercy was the last to be revealed.

- His wisdom and power are seen in the creation of the world.
- His wrath is seen in the damnation of Satan and the angels who fell.
- His justice is seen in the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden when His law was broken.
- But in mercy He spared their lives, in mercy He promised a Redeemer, in mercy He provided a sacrifice.

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Spurgeon suggested — “You might say that, mercy is God’s Benjamin, and He delights most of all in it. It is the son of His right hand. But it might also be called the son of His sorrow, for the mercy of God came to be revealed in the sorrow and death of God’s well-beloved Son.”

Who is a God like unto Thee, O LORD? He is gloriously sovereign. He is infinitely just. He is perfectly holy. He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, incomprehensible, and eternal. And “*he delighteth in mercy.*” **It is the glory of God and the pleasure of God to show mercy to sinners for Christ’s sake.**

In Christ, for His sake, God delights in mercy. It is His glory and pleasure to be merciful. And God’s mercy is active, operative, and effectual. God’s mercy in Christ is gloriously effectual. Now, watch this. — Listen to what Micah says God will do for sinners, because “*He delighteth in mercy.*” —

FOUR THINGS.

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1. **He will pardon iniquity, because “He delighteth in mercy.”**

(Zechariah 3:1-5) “And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. 2 And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: *is* not this a brand plucked out of the fire? 3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. 4 And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, **Take away** the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, **I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee**, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. 5 And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.”

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This word “*pardoneth*” means that He lifts up sin and takes it away. He lifts sin up off of us and lays it upon Christ, the true Scapegoat Who takes it away.

2. **The Lord God passes by the transgression of His elect remnant, because “He delighteth in mercy.”**

Having put away sin by the sacrifice of His Son, God passes by it, taking no notice of it, as if He did not see it, because He does not see it! — “**He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel** (Numbers 23:21). He will not impute sin to His people nor call them to account for it (Romans 4:8). Through the blood of Christ it is covered, atoned, and washed away.

Spurgeon said, “Our sins are so effectually removed that we shall not ultimately suffer any loss or damage through having sinned.” And Spurgeon was right!

Because “*He delighteth in mercy*,” I know that God forgives sin, and that He forgives sin...

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- Positively!
- Comprehensively!
- Justly!
- Irreversibly!

3. **God will not retain his just anger against his people, because “He delighteth in mercy”** (Isa. 12:1-2).

(Isaiah 12:1-2) “And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. 2 Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and *my* song; he also is become my salvation.”

God’s anger, wrath, and justice, being fully satisfied in the sufferings and death of Christ, are turned away from His people.

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4. **God** **almighty** **will** **turn** **toward** **us** **in** **compassion,** **because** **“He delighteth in mercy”** (19-20).

Micah 7:19-20 “He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. 20 Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.”

- He will subdue our iniquities by blood and by power.
- He will cast all our sins into the depth of the sea.
- He will perform His covenant of mercy and truth toward us (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

(Jeremiah 31:31-34) “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day [that] I took

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them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: 33 But this [shall be] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

*“But God, Who is **rich in mercy**, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).”*

God, Who delights in mercy, is willing to be merciful, even to all who call upon Him (Ezekiel 18:31-32; 33:11).

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Ezekiel 18:31-32 “Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye.”

Ezekiel 33:11 “Say unto them, *As* I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

Why will you die?

- When God is willing to show mercy (Micah 6:2-3)?

Micah 6:2-3 “Hear ye, O mountains, the LORD’S controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the LORD hath a controversy

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with his people, and he will plead with Israel. 3
O my people, what have I done unto thee? and
wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.”

- When Christ is willing to save?
- When the Gospel proclaims salvation free and unconditional in Christ?

The only place to obtain mercy is at the throne of mercy, at the feet of King Jesus, the Son of God. Go to Him, go to Him now, and cry, “*God, be merciful to me, a sinner.*”

Illustration: The Artist and The Beggar

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Here is a lesson for Gospel preachers — If God delights in mercy, let His servants proclaim His mercy. — Let every word of human merit be

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accounted as blasphemy; and let the pulpit ring with mercy!

Here is a lesson for all who profess faith in Christ — If God delights in mercy, see to it that you delight in mercy too (Matthew 6:12, 14-15; Ephesians 4:32 - 5:1).

- Be merciful to the ignorant.
- Be merciful to the poor.
- Be merciful to the guilty.
- Be merciful to one another.

Here is a lesson for you who need mercy — If God delights in mercy, you have no reason to fear seeking His mercy. — There is not one hard, forbidding word in all the Bible to a sinner coming to Christ for mercy. The door is open. The invitation is free. Come to Christ for mercy. Are you willing to have His mercy? If you are, you may! Come, then; sinner, come and welcome to Jesus.

Lord, Thou hast won, at length I yield,
My heart by mighty grace compelled.

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Surrenders all to Thee.
Against Thy terrors long I strove,
But who can stand against Thy love?
Love conquers even me.

If Thou hadst bid Thy thunders roll,
And lightening flash to blast my soul,
I still had stubborn been.
But mercy has my heart subdued,
A bleeding Savior I have viewed,
And now I hate my sin.

AMEN.