

33 – Micah: “Who Is Like God?” Judgment and Restoration

- Micah means "who is like Jehovah?" The word has the same derivation as Michael (the name of the archangel) which means "who is like God?" There are many Micahs mentioned scripture, but this man is identified as a Morasthite. He is not to be confused with any other Micah of Scripture. Micah uses his name to make a point about God in his prophecy. One of the most comforting messages of Micah addresses the nature of God: *“Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy.”* (7:18) This verse has comforted believers throughout history. There is NO ONE like God, especially in his mercy, which we all desperately need.
- Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (kings of Judah). However, his **prophecy concerns both Samaria and Jerusalem.** Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, while Jerusalem was the capital of the southern kingdom of Judah. These prophecies are to both kingdoms. The dating of Micah’s message is between about 756 to 697 BC, about 30 years prior to the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel, and 150 years prior to the captivity of the southern kingdom of Judah.
- Micah was a **contemporary of three other prophets: Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos.** Micah has been called a miniature Book of Isaiah. There are many striking similarities between the two. This book is known for its literary style, beautiful language and poetry. It combines God’s compassion and tenderness with His judgment. Micah wrote about the future redemption of Israel.
- **Jeremiah quoted from Micah,** validating the importance of Micah in his day. *“Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, And the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest.”’* (Jeremiah 26:18, from Micah 3:12) The people paid no more attention to Jeremiah than they had to Micah. What Micah prophesied happened to Jerusalem exactly as he said it would.
- Micah pronounced judgment on the cities of Israel and on Jerusalem in Judah. These are the capitals of each of the northern and southern kingdoms and represented all of each kingdom. Micah **condemned violence, corruption, robbery, covetousness, gross materialism, spiritual bankruptcy, and illicit sex.** Sounds very much like today. Man’s nature has not changed.

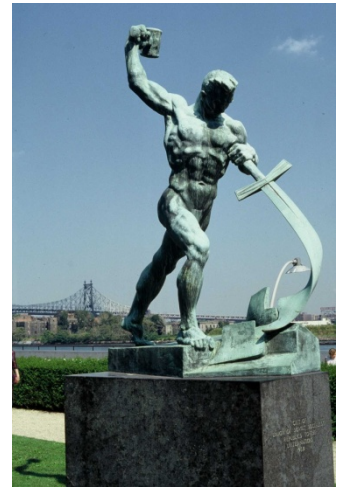


Highlights

1 st Message Judgment is Coming (Chapters 1-2)	2 nd Message Blessings After Judgment (Chapters 3-5)	3 rd Message Convicted of Sin, Promise of Blessing (Chapters 6-7)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coming judgment (1:2-7) ▪ Lament over the people (1:8-16) ▪ Judah’s sins (2:1-11) ▪ Promise of future regathering (2:12-13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Judgment on nation’s leaders (chap. 3) ▪ Kingdom blessings for the nation (chs. 4-5) ▪ Ruler of the kingdom (5:2-15) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ God’s indictment (6:1-5) ▪ Response of Micah for nation (6:6-8) ▪ God’s judgment because of sin (6:9-16) ▪ Micah pleads with God (chap. 7) ▪ Micah bemoans nation’s sins (7:1-6) ▪ Micah has confidence in God (7:7-13) ▪ Micah prays God would again shepherd His flock (7:14) ▪ Promise to show miraculous things to His people (7:15-17) ▪ Micah’s affirmation that God is unique (7:18-20)

- The most natural division of this book is to note that **Micah gave three messages**, each beginning with the command, "Hear" (1:2; 3:1; 6:1). The first message is addressed to "all people," the second specifically to the leaders of Israel, and the third is a pleading to Israel to repent and return to God.

- Micah begins with a reminder of the Almighty nature of God: *“Hear, all you peoples! Listen, O earth, and all that is in it! Let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, The Lord from His holy temple. For behold, the LORD is coming out of His place; He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth. The mountains will melt under Him, and the valleys will split like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place.”* (1:2-4)
- Micah is generally considered a prophet of judgment. However, although the **first three chapters are judgmental, the last four chapters are comforting.** In the first three chapters: Who is like unto God in **proclaiming**? In chapters 4 and 5 it is Who is like unto God in prophesying, in **consoling**? In chapter 6: Who is like unto God in **pleading**? Finally, in chapter 7: Who is like unto God in **pardoning**? The main theme of the book is God's judgment and redemption—both are there. The ultimate message is "Who is like God in proclaiming, in prophesying, in pleading, and in pardoning?" **No one can match God. He is ultimate judge, and ultimate comforter.**
- Key passages in Micah reference the **prophet's confidence in God's restoration:** *"In that day," declares the LORD, "I will gather the lame; I will assemble the exiles and those I have brought to grief. I will make the lame a remnant, those driven away a strong nation. The LORD will rule over them in Mount Zion from that day and forever."* (4:6-7) and *“Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; When I fall, I will arise; When I sit in darkness, The LORD will be a light to me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD, Because I have sinned against Him, Until He pleads my case and executes justice for me. He will bring me forth to the light; I will see His righteousness.”* (7:8-9)
- God's standard of measurement was the Mosaic Covenant God made with His people when they were delivered from Egypt. The people were expected to obey these covenant laws (the Law given by Moses). If they didn't they were judged, to be eventually sent into captivity out of their land. If they did, they would be blessed (*the blessings and cursings from Deuteronomy 28*). Micah showed how the people failed to meet their covenant obligations, and now God was judging them. **But despite His judgment, God would restore them.**
- A **“remnant”** is mentioned in each of his three messages (2:12; 4:7; 5:7-8, 7:18) (*“I will surely gather the remnant of Israel;...”*) (2:12) Micah promised that although judgment would come, God would again gather His remnant of people and bring them back to their land, prominent among the nations under the Messiah's rule (*the Millennial Kingdom*).
- One of the most well known passages concerning the Messiah's birthplace is in Micah 5:2 - *“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.”* This is quoted in the New Testament (Matthew 2:5-6). Another verse from Micah 7:6 is quote in Matthew 10:35-36. **Micah wrote about the Messiah's birthplace, his lineage, and his origin and reign.** He referred to the Messiah as Israel's King and Ruler.
- Micah 6:8 essentially gives us **God's expectations for us,** His people: *“He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?”* There is quite a lot packed into this one small verse, but it very compactly and concisely shows us how God expects us to walk with Him. It makes a good self check! Basically, we are no different than the people of God that Micah prophesied to. Our natures, and our tendency toward rebellion against God, are the same. Do we match up to the requirements of this verse in Micah? It is worth the time to consider it often.



Statue at the UN Building in NY dedicated to the verse from Micah 4:3 (and Isaiah 2:4, as quoting Micah) *“He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.”* It has become a well known scripture representing ultimate peace in the world. (It is ironic that this statue was donated by the USSR in 1959.) What is misunderstood by this verse is the fact that peace will only come when the Messiah reigns on earth. There is a passage in Joel that is the exact opposite of this verse: *“Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, Let all the men of war draw near, Let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, ‘I am strong.’” Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD.”* (Joel 3:9-11) These verses reference Armageddon.

