

“Hear, Listen!”
Micah 1
(Preached at Trinity, January 1, 2023)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Tonight we begin a brief journey through the Book of Micah. It is the sixth book among the twelve Minor Prophets. **Verses 1-2** gives us a brief summary of the Book of Micah. **Micah 1:1 NAU** - "The word of the LORD which came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem."
The Book of Micah is actually a summary of Micah's preaching that spanned a generation. My purpose in preaching through Micah at this time is for us to remember God's judgment upon the sins of Israel. Having just concluded 1 & 2 Kings it is fresh upon our minds. Micah draws our attention to this judgment. But he also directs our attention to God's covenant faithfulness. We'll see the promise of God's Redeemer and the Gospel of grace.
2. Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah ministering during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Their reigns span between 750-687 B.C.
Jerusalem would fall to Babylon 100 years later in 586 B.C.
Although Micah frames his prophecy around the reigns of these three kings of Judah, his focus was also upon the Northern Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom fell to Assyria in 721 B.C. during the reign of Hoshea which was in the sixth year of the reign of Hezekiah in the Southern Kingdom. The Southern Kingdom's fall was postponed because of Hezekiah's prayer.
2 Kings 19:19-20 NAU - "Now, O LORD our God, I pray, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, O LORD, are God." ²⁰ Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah saying, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Because you have prayed to Me about Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard you.'
Jeremiah implies it was the preaching of Micah that had a powerful impact upon Hezekiah. Jeremiah lived 100 years after Micah yet still remembered his preaching.
Jeremiah 26:18 NAU - "Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah; and he spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, 'Thus the LORD of hosts has said, "Zion will be plowed as a field, And Jerusalem will become ruins, And the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest."

3. Unlike other prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, Micah's call as God's prophet is not recorded. In fact, he is never explicitly called a prophet. However, **Verse 1** makes a powerful statement. This is the Word of God which was given to Micah. The Word of God is the authority of God, authority that must be heard and received. "Hear, Listen." Matthew Henry: "What is written in the Bible, and what is preached by the ministers of Christ according to what is written there, must be heard and received, not as the word of dying men, which we may be judges of, but as the word of the living God."¹
4. And, unlike other prophets, he is identified by his place of origin rather than by his family ties. He identifies himself as Micah of Moresheth. This probably indicates that he was not from Jerusalem and his family would have been unknown.
 - His message was clear. The same God who condemns and scatters His people for their transgressions is also the God that maintains covenant faithfulness, gathering, protecting, and forgiving them.
5. Chapter 1 has a clear outline:
Verses 2-3 – the threat of God's judgment.
Verses 4-7 – The severity of God's judgment
Verses 8-16 – The great lamentation over God's judgment - the destruction of Israel.
6. **Verse 2** sets the tone for the chapter. In fact, for the entire book –
Micah 1:2 NAU - "Hear, O peoples, all of you; Listen, O earth and all it contains, And let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, The Lord from His holy temple."
 It can be summarized with two words: "Hear, Listen!"

- I. **Verses 2-3** – the threat of God's judgment.
 - A. In **Verse 1** Micah directs his focus upon Israel – both north and south. "concerning Samaria and Jerusalem"
 But in **Verse 2** there is a universal quality to his warning – "Hear O peoples, all of you." "Listen, O earth and all it contains."
 1. Micah is calling upon all the earth to give ear, to listen intently. What he is about to declare is of infinite importance.
 2. God isn't just the God of Israel. He is the only, one true God. God is supreme over all of creation, Lord over all. His Law is given to all and all are accountable for keeping it. All will stand before His throne of judgment.
 3. The judgment of God upon the idolatry of Samaria serves as a paradigm against all idolaters; a model of God's future judgment upon the nations.²
 4. In our country we celebrate our religious liberty, but before God men do not have religious liberty. We do not have the liberty to practice our religious preference. God commands all men to worship and serve Him alone. In our day of hyper-tolerance, God shows Himself most intolerant. He demands absolute allegiance to Him.

¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1532.

² Waltke, Bruce K., *A Commentary on Micah*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans's Publishing Company, 2007 – page 57.

Exodus. 20:5-6 NAU - "I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶ but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

Isaiah 42:8 NAU - "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images."

The tragedy is we have not given God the worship He demands and all men are under His just condemnation.

5. This reality should have a solemn impact upon us. Our lost family, friends, neighbors, coworkers—fallen humanity all around us are in great danger. Eternity stands before us. Can you smell the brimstone? Can you hear their cries.

B. Micah is reminding us that God is transcendent – above, and apart from creation. And yet, He is intimately involved in space and time, in our world and condition.

1. Micah describes God as judging from His holy Temple – from His holy abode. The earthly Temple was only a small representation of God’s holy, heavenly throne. We pray, “Our Father, which art in heaven.”
2. Then he describes God as coming down.

Micah 1:3 NAU - "For behold, the LORD is coming forth from His place. He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth."

 - a. This demonstrates God’s forbearance, His mercy. In an act of His great compassion He gives warning.
 - b. God is in no way compelled to speak. He isn’t compelled to give warning. If He so chose, He could have withheld all interaction with man until He came with the sword of judgment. Instead, He has come down and has given us warning.
3. Most people are fine as long as God stays “above.” They don’t want Him too close. They don’t want Him in the affairs of this world. They don’t want Him in their lives—in their adulterous affairs or promiscuous lifestyles that result in unplanned pregnancies that can be terminated by the murder of abortion. They don’t want Him defining life, sexuality, marriage. They don’t want God’s standards.
4. The truth is, God is not distant. He is active over every detail of His creation. There isn’t a thought that enters into the mind of a man that God isn’t intimately aware of. Jesus said we shall be held accountable for every idle word that we speak.
5. Micah portrays Him as “coming forth from His place.”
"He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth."

II. Verses 4-7 – The severity of God’s judgment.

A. God coming down in judgment is fearful to consider.

1. We read of the sixth seal in **Rev. 6 Revelation 6:15-17 NAU** - "Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶ and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"
2. Micah also speaks with apocalyptic language. The mountains will melt under Him. Mountains seem unmovable, solid like a rock. Micah says under the judgment of God they melt like hot wax. (**Verse 4**)
3. When God judges, He is omnipotent, devastating. On one hand, the Bible describes God’s judgment using figurative language. We read of mountains crumbling and valleys splitting. Hell is described as a lake of fire, burning brimstone.
 - a. But we should never dismiss any of this as mere symbolism. God’s judgment is beyond our comprehension and meant to be terrifying.
 - b. It is far more than mere symbolism. They point to realities that should cause us to tremble.
 - c. A sign is always less than the reality it points to. A sign on the highway announcing a city is not the city itself. It only points to the reality. The reality is always larger and greater. Lake of Fire may be a literal description of hell, or it may point to a reality that is far beyond anything we can imagine.
4. Micah describes God’s judgment as universal. None shall escape.

B. Micah then turns specifically to Israel

Micah 1:5 NAU - "All this is for the rebellion of Jacob And for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the rebellion of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? What is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem?"

1. On one hand, Micah is referring to their religious corruption, idols and pagan temple prostitutes. On the other hand, it refers to the totality of their corruption. Their hearts and minds were intoxicated by worldly corruption. In Revelation 17 we read of the Great Harlot that seduces the world. Simon Kistemaker describes her:

“This woman is the great temptress, seducer, and liar in the service of Satan and the beast. She has been in this service not only during the days of John but from the time of the Fall and will be until the consummation.”³
2. **Verse 6** – describes God’s judgment. They will become like a heap of ruins. The picture is the transformation of an altar for worship crushed into a worthless heap stones. Or a wall surrounding the vineyard which has become a worthless pile of rubble leaving the vineyard unprotected.

³ Simon J. Kistemaker and William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, vol. 20, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 460.

3. **Verse 7** – all of her precious idols will be smashed and burned with fire. In other words, they will be completely destroyed.
 - a. This is a warning to all men. We all have our treasures, worldly objects that have attracted our affections. They consume our thoughts. We treasure them and devote ourselves to them. We can hear Gollum’s words, “My Precious!”
 - b. It may be material objects—the things we would hate to lose. We see it often during natural disasters. People cry out, “I’ve lost everything!”
 - c. It may be pleasure. People have committed suicide when their health fails. They have nothing else to live for.
 - d. It may be power or prestige or recognition.

III. **Verses 8-16** – Micah’s woeful lamentation over God’s judgment - the destruction if Israel.

- A. God’s prophets were given a fearful message, but (with the exception of perhaps Jonah) they brought their message with sorrow and tears.
 1. There is no pleasure to be found in God’s condemnation upon the wicked. God takes no pleasure in His judgment, although it vindicates His holiness.
Ezekiel 33:11 NAU - "As I live!" declares the Lord GOD, "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?"
 2. Jeremiah has been called the weeping prophet
Jeremiah 9:1 NAU - "Oh that my head were waters And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people!"
 3. Wasn’t this the heart of Jesus as He wept over the hardness of Israel and the coming destruction of Jerusalem.
Matthew 23:37 NAU - "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling."
Luke 19:41 NAU - "When He approached *Jerusalem*, He saw the city and wept over it,"
 4. Micah expressed sorrow over the devastation of his people.
Micah 1:8 NAU - "Because of this I must lament and wail, I must go barefoot and naked; I must make a lament like the jackals And a mourning like the ostriches."

5. He describes his mourning both in terms of sight and sound.
 - a. Barefoot and naked – Micah might be describing the marching captives stripped to humiliate.
Isaiah 20:3-4 NAU - "And the LORD said, "Even as My servant Isaiah has gone naked and barefoot three years as a sign and token against Egypt and Cush, ⁴ so the king of Assyria will lead away the captives of Egypt and the exiles of Cush, young and old, naked and barefoot with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt."
 - b. Jackal – known for their mournful howling—a high pitched cry that pierces the night.
- B. Evangelism should always be motivated by a high sense of grief over the condition of lost humanity.
 1. Sin has resulted in untold misery upon the earth.
How terrible it is to see human beings reduced to animals who do not recognize their creator. They fail to comprehend the lofty privilege of being created in the image of God.
 2. And the thought of eternal damnation should cause us to weep for them.
Dale Ralph Davis writes: "A prophet is a man who fearlessly threatens God's people with God's judgement and stands against them—and then goes home and weeps shamelessly over that judgement because he cares so much for the people who are to be judged."⁴
That should describe each of us.

Conclusion:

1. And so we find the reality of this fallen world. It is at the heart of our Gospel message. It is a message that warns of the threat of God's judgment. It will be a judgment that is terrifying. It is a judgment universal. Multitudes are under God's condemnation.
2. And it is a judgment that demands from us compassion, feelings of sorrow. We must join Micah with great lamentation, lamentation over God's judgment upon the lost. This should drive us to evangelize with compassion.

⁴ Dale Ralph Davis, *A Study Commentary on Micah*, EP Study Commentary (Darlington, England; Carlisle, PA: Evangelical Press, 2010), 28.