

“God’s Judgment”
Micah 1
(Preached at Trinity, January 8, 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. Last week we begin a journey through the Book of Micah. It is the sixth book among the twelve Minor Prophets. The Book of Micah is actually a summary of Micah’s preaching that spanned a generation. Jeremiah lived 100 years after Micah and yet still recalled Micah’s powerful 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.""
2. Micah’s 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.
3. As I stated last time, 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.
4. Last week I focused on the first – the threat of God’s judgment.
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."
 - A. In **Verse 1** Micah’s message was focused upon Israel – both north and south.
“concerning Samaria and Jerusalem”
 - B. 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.
 - C. God has warned all the earth of His fiery judgment upon sin. It is a warning that is continuing. God demands submission to His Law. He demands that all men worship Him alone.
 - D. Micah describes God as coming down from His holy abode. He is not distant. He is intimately involved in His creation. He knows and observes all of our thoughts and deeds.

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. In the New Testament hell is described as a “lake of fire which burns with brimstone.” Jesus describes it as,
Matthew 8:12 NAU - "the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
 - a. But we should never dismiss any of this as mere symbolism that is not real. God’s judgment is very real. It 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. Should the fires of hell be taking literally? I believe they should. But even if is symbolic we need to understand something about Biblical symbolism.
 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.
 The bronze serpent in the wilderness wasn’t Christ. It was design to point to Christ. The symbol was much less than the reality.
 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 the Great Harlot of Revelation:

“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.”¹

2. **Verse 6** – describes God’s judgment. They will become like a heap of ruins. The picture is the annihilation of an altar built for the worship of God being crushed into a worthless heap of stones because of their idolatry.
Or a wall surrounding the vineyard which has become a worthless pile of rubble leaving the vineyard unprotected.
3. Micah’s point in **Verse 7** is that all of Israel’s precious idols will be smashed and burned with fire. In other words, they will be completely destroyed.
Micah 1:7 NAU - "All of her idols will be smashed, All of her earnings will be burned with fire And all of her images I will make desolate"
4. We scoff today at God’s judgment upon idolatry. Who would be so foolish to bow before a god carved out of wood?
We are no less prone to idolatry. Our idolatry may be more sophisticated but is no less real.

The last word John gave in 1 John is:

1 John 5:21-1:1 NAU - "Little children, guard yourselves from idols."

- a. John Calvin wrote: “From this we may gather that man’s nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols.”²
John Calvin: “Everyone of us is, even from his mother’s womb, expert in inventing idols.”³
- b. This is a warning to all people. 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!”
- c. 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!”
- d. It may be pleasure. People have committed suicide when their health fails. They have nothing else to live for.
- e. It may be power or prestige or recognition.
It may be family—children or spouses.
- f. Or it may be idols of the heart.
What makes you angry? Is it because you feel a loss of control? Or is it because of an attitude of entitlement—that others owe you. Or that you deserve more from God?

¹ 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.

² Calvin, John, *Institutes of the Christian Religion, vol.1, Book 1:8*, Edited by John T. McNeill, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), Page 108.

³ Calvin, John. *Calvin’s Commentaries, Vol 19*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003). Page 413.

- g. What treasures have captured your heart? Do you find it difficult to let go. Is Christ Lord of all? Do you love Him with all your heart, soul, and mind?
Matthew 22:37-38 NAU - "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." ³⁸ "This is the great and foremost commandment."
- h. We must listen to the words of Micah. Every idol will be smashed.

III. **Verses 8-16** – Micah's woeful lamentation over God's judgment - the destruction of 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. Micah 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.