

Message #2**Micah 1:1-7**

When we are living in this world that is filled with all kinds of corruption and things that quite frankly make you sick, what can you do? What can one person do? Micah faced that quandary. His solution was I can warn people of the truth of God. I can proclaim God's word. I can point out the evil and challenge people to get right with God and turn back to the word of God to receive the blessings of God. When the book of Micah opens, he does not pull punches. What he writes and communicates is this:

ALL PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS GOING TO JUDGE AND DESTROY ALL PEOPLE, SPECIFICALLY LEADERSHIP, WHO PERSIST IN SIN AND REBELLION AND THE ONLY THING THAT WILL PREVENT THIS IS IF THEY WILL TURN AWAY FROM THEIR REBELLION AND SIN AND TURN BACK TO GOD.

As Micah opens his book, there are two introductory parts:

PART #1 – Micah introduces himself. **1:1**

In **Micah 1:1** we learn seven important facts:

Fact #1 - This is “the word of the LORD.” **1:1a**

This is not some guy sharing religious ideas and fireside chats about what he thinks life should be. This is the “word of the LORD.” This is inspired revelatory messages that are coming directly from God.

The proper noun used for God is LORD, which is Jehovah. This is the covenant name God has concerning Himself, His Sovereignty and Israel. Micah wanted Israel to realize this word I am presenting to you did not originate with me; it came from the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

God speaks to people through words. God reveals many things about Himself in creation, but to know God one must study the words of God, which are found in the written Scriptures.

Fact #2 - This word of the LORD came to Micah. **1:1b**

God used men to write His word and He uses men to communicate His word. Why God chooses some men to unravel it is a sovereign mystery of God. One commentator said that he observed that men God did actually use were men who had the right mental ability, the right moral character and the right qualified habits and skills. But why God chooses some and not another to powerfully proclaim His word is a mystery best left to Him.

But what we can say is that political leaders and people would be very wise to listen to one who can accurately communicate God's word to them. This is how God speaks to men.

Now the word of the LORD came to Micah. In his case, he got direct, prophetic revelation from God. We do not get that today. We have the word of God in print. God gives gifts to the church and it is the job of one with the gift to carefully teach God's written word.

Fact #3 - Micah was from Moresbeth. **1:1c**

It is interesting that when Micah introduces himself, he does not mention any family pedigree. Many of the prophets do give information about their family background. In the 12 minor prophets, seven of the 12 mention their family connection—Hosea, Joel, Jonah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Haggai and Zechariah. On the other hand, five of the 12 don't mention their background—Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Habbakuk, Malachi.

Micah is one of the prophets who doesn't. So apparently there is no important name connection to his family. Amos identifies himself by career: a shepherd from Tekoa (Amos 1:1). Obadiah gives no info about himself in any way. Habbakuk just identifies himself as a prophet (**1:1; 3:1**). Malachi just identifies himself as one who received an oracle of God (**Mal. 1:1**).

Micah identifies himself from the place he lived, which was Moresbeth. Micah is a small town country guy who will have a big city impact. Moresbeth was a small village town in the lowland of Judea, some 22 miles SW of Jerusalem. There was a lot of land and country to see where Micah lived.

Someone years ago said, "God made the country; it was man who made the city." When you live in the country, you see things and sense things that city people never usually see and sense.

I have a niece who is married to a good man who all of his life lived in New York City. Not that long ago they bought a house in Connecticut and got out of New York. He had never seen green grass in a yard and didn't know what to even do with it.

He had never owned a mower and never needed one. But when you live in the country, you have an understanding of things others have not even seen.

Many of the men God calls and uses come from small towns, not the cities of big lights and big buildings.

Fact #4 - Micah lived in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. **1:1d**

Even though Micah will have much to say to the leaders of Israel in the north, he dates his prophecy from the kings of Judah in the south. There were political leaders and religious leaders and very, very few were right with God.

Jotham reigned from 750 BC-736 BC

Jotham was king 11 to reign over Judah as one of the 20 kings that would reign after Solomon. He was a basically a good king and served for a total of 16 years, overlapping with his father, Uzziah, as co-regent king (II Kings 15:32-38; II Chron. 26:21-23).

Ahaz reigned from 735 BC-716 BC

Ahaz was king 12 to reign over Judah and was a bad king. He reigned for 16 years. He imitated the kings of Israel to the north. He built altars in Jerusalem to false gods and worshipped the Baals (II Chron. 28:1-4). Ahaz was a political leader who became more and more unfaithful and even sacrificed to false gods (II Chron. 28:22-23)

Much of the evil that Micah addresses were things specifically happening during the reign of Ahaz. Micah writes in 730 BC and his messages are aimed straight at him.

Hezekiah reigned from 716 BC-687 BC

Hezekiah was king 13. He was the son of Ahaz, but he was a righteous king and did not follow his father's direction. He reigned for 29 years and was good. He restored true worship to Jerusalem and God extended his life (II Kings 16:20; 18:1-20, 21; II Chron. 28:27-32:33; 32:24-27).

Many have observed that Micah's message aimed at political leaders did impact Hezekiah. He was a leader who turned the nation back to God and to the blessings of God.

One historian observed that the kind of world created by these political and religious leaders featured nation of people who were:

- 1) Completely corrupt.
- 2) Religiously formal.
- 3) Utterly unpatriotic.

Fact #5 - This word of the Lord concerned Samaria, the capital of Israel in the north. **1:1e**

Samaria is listed first because in the chronology of judgment, God would judge Samaria first. Eight years after Micah had proclaimed truth, God destroyed Samaria.

Fact #6 - This word of the Lord concerned Jerusalem, the capital of Judah in the south. **1:1f**

Jerusalem is listed second because in the chronology, God would judge her second. As we mentioned, Hezekiah seemed to respond to the warnings and Jerusalem was not immediately destroyed. It turned back to God and she would flourish for another 136 years until 586 BC.

Fact #7 - Micah saw these things. **1:1g**

In the opening verse of the book, this country boy named Micah communicates a point: turn back to God and His word or He will destroy you.

This is a message that needs to be communicated right now. God will only put up with evil in a nation for so long and He will hold leaders accountable for what they did or did not do.

Micah's message to any political or religious leader is that God has given you your position and you had better use your power to point people to the true ways of God's word because He will hold you highly accountable for what you did or did not do.

PART #2 – Micah introduces his opening prophetic messages. **1:2-7**

There are ten messages Micah gives:

(Message #1) - All people on the earth need to listen to the message of Micah. **1:2a**

The opening “Hear, O peoples, all of you” and “Listen, O earth and all it contains” is never used just to refer to Israel. This is a message that all people, everywhere in the world, need to hear. In fact, this is a legal summons that is coming from the LORD GOD.

That combination “Lord GOD” is adonai Jehovah. What that means is this message is coming from the sovereign, covenant God of Israel (Jehovah) and the Sovereign controller (Adonai) over everything and everyone.

Verse 2 begins with a legal summons of the LORD GOD.

God is going to legally accuse leaders and people, including His people, and show them why they are heading to His judgment. He is going to warn them to get back on track and this is no game.

All nations are given an invitation to come to this book of Micah to hear what God has to say. This is not simply some rhetorical device to try and interest the nations, the truth in this book about pending judgment is a warning all nations need to hear and take seriously.

Now it is significant to note that God opens this book by inviting all people to hear this and not just people in Israel.

One of the things that this implies is all people of all nations need to take a look at Israel and what God did to Israel, because He is the God who will do the same kind of thing to any nation.

Every political leader needs to hear this. Every religious leader needs to hear this. Every nation needs to hear this. Every sinner needs to hear this. Judgment is a threat to every person; therefore the message of Micah is relevant to all.

(Message #2) - The Lord God will be a witness against people. **1:2b**

God says people need to know that I will be a legal witness against them. This is not good news and this is not the kind of message you want to hear coming from God that He is a “witness against you.”

If you are a political or religious leader or if you are just a person living anywhere in the world, what you would want to read is that God is for you, certainly not that He is against you.

When it comes to judgment, this is what people need to know—God’s word will be a witness against them. Make decisions contrary to His word and His word will be a witness against us.

People need to understand this. People from all walks of life need to grasp this point. Political and religious leaders think it is so cute to have a Bible in the home. What they do not realize is what is in the Bible will be a testament against them.

(Message #3) - The Lord will come from His holy Temple in heaven. **1:2c**

When Micah wrote this book, the Temple was standing in Jerusalem. It was supposed to be the place of God’s presence and power. So God says I still have a holy temple that is in heaven and this is the place from which My judgments will come.

When we read that God is so upset that He will come Himself to do something about it, things are pathetic. God’s judgments come fully authorized from His Throne and His holy Temple.

Now this reference is to the fact that the Lord’s throne is in heaven and He is carefully watching over what is happening on earth, specifically in capital cities. He will, Himself, at some appointed time come and judge it all.

(Message #4) - The Lord will come down Himself and tread on the high places of the earth. **1:3**

God will not sit idly by and watch evil reign forever. He will come down and do something about it. What he says He will do here is destroy the greatest places and cities of the world. All high places are coming down. He is warning that He is about to bring things down.

God says I will come from My high and holy place and I will walk over and crush the high places of the earth. When political and religious leaders move their nation in ways of evil, God will crush them. That is what Micah is predicting.

These high places were false places of worship that had been sanctioned and supported in His own Promised Land. God will not put up with evil forever.

The work of God is primarily invisible now, but when it reaches this level, it will become visible. The picture that Micah gives here is that God Himself is coming from His heavenly celestial residence to bring His judgment because things have become so horrible.

(Message #5) - When the Lord comes down, the mountains will melt. **1:4a**

This is clearly an eschatological prediction of what Jesus Christ will do when He returns as judge. Mountains are mentioned many times in Revelation as being that which Jesus Christ will rearrange and destroy.

There will literally be topographical and geographical things that will happen to the mountains when He comes to judge (Rev. 6:14, 16; 16:20). This is a majestic picture of the power and sovereignty of God and His judgment.

This is what Jesus meant when He told His disciples that had they believed in who He was, they could have moved the mountains (Matt. 17:20-21). He would have moved them as He established the Kingdom.

(Message #6) - When the Lord comes the valleys will be split. **1:4b**

The idea of wax like fire and like water pouring speaks of God gushing forth His judgment out of heaven.

Fire came out of heaven when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. Water came gushing out of heaven when the flood destroyed the world. God will use a combination of these kinds of things when He physically comes to this earth.

(Message #7) - God will do this for the rebellion and sins of Jacob. **1:5a**

Verse 5 says “all of this” will happen for the rebellion and sins of the people of God. God’s people were godless. They were rebellious against God and His word and they were involved in all kinds of sins. The proper noun “Jacob” or “Jacob’s” is used 11 times in Micah and nine of those times refer to the entire nation of Israel.

The word “rebellion” pishah means to specifically turn away from God’s word in rebellion (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 695).

The word “sins” is a plural noun and it specifically refers to sins that miss the mark and make one liable to a penalty (*Ibid.*, p. 271).

Micah says God has seen the rebellion and the sins of His own people and He has had enough. Now we would naturally expect to read that He will come and judge the heathen Gentile nations first. God says no, I am going to judge my own godless people first. Just like Peter said, “judgment must begin in the household of God” (I Pet. 4:17-18).

Why does God begin judging His own people? Because God's people had God's word and they knew better than to pursue that which is corrupt. They blatantly turned against it and the leaders led the way.

The United States has had more Bibles in it than any other nation in the world. In the average American home there are 4.3 Bibles.

Now two cities are named here in **verse 5** and they were important cities to the people who lived there because they were their capital cities. These are the two cities where God should have been revered and worshipped. These are the places that should have cherished and taught and applied the word of God.

If ever there were a place in this country that should honor God and His word, it should be Washington, D.C.

(Message #8) - The rebellion of Jacob originates in the political capital of Israel, Samaria. **1:5b**

Now we get to the heart of what brought this on. God saw that political leaders He had permitted to be in office were using their power to turn people away from Him. They were eight years away from judgment. Samaria was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 BC. So we know that this had not happened yet.

(Message #9) - The rebellion of Jacob originates in the political capital of Judah, Jerusalem. **1:5c**

This is very sad and very serious. God Himself is analyzing His own people and saying they are rebellious and sinful and heading to judgment. Apparently there was some type of response to Micah because Hezekiah would turn things around and judgment would come about 120 years later.

If we are a believer, we have a responsibility to live a godly life that submits to the word of God. We have a responsibility to make adjustments in our own life in view of Scripture. When we don't do that, God is very much aware of it.

(Message #10) - God will judge and make Samaria a heap of ruins. **1:6-7**

God says I am going to destroy her city, land and idols. All of the religious things they had collected and displayed will be smashed to bits.

What God was going to do was to bring the Assyrians in to begin the work. He was going to cause the Assyrians to burn down the city of Samaria.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS:

- 1. God is the sovereign God and judge over all people.**
- 2. God is going to judge all people.**
- 3. God will hold capital cities and political leaders responsible for His judgment.**
- 4. God's own people need to be warned to stay away from rebellion and sin.**