

I Will Look Unto Jehovah

Baptism

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We turn to the prophecy of Micah, Micah 7. In the very first book of this prophecy, we learn that Micah was a prophet primarily in Judah and he was there when three kings, Jotham, the grandfather, then Ahaz, and then Hezekiah were kings of Judah. Remember that when Hezekiah was king, that was when the Assyrian army came into the land of Canaan and took captive and destroyed the 10 tribes of Israel, and then came and surrounded the city of Jerusalem destroying all of the other parts of Judah except for Jerusalem. Now that came as a judgment of God.

We're going to start to read at 6:9, it brings us to what we find at the first part of 7. Chapter 6, verse 9, Micah.

9 The LORD'S voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it. 10 Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? 11 Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? 12 For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. 13 Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of thy sins. 14 Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee; and thou shalt take hold, but shalt not deliver; and that which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword. 15 Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine. 16 For the statutes of Omri are kept [Omri was the father of Ahab in Israel and the Scriptures note that he was more wicked than any king before him, and then came Ahab and he was even worse], For the statutes of Omri are kept and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people.

1 Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul

desired the firstripe fruit. 2 The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net. 3 That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward [they're looking for bribes]; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up. 4 The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchmen and thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity. 5 Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. 6 For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.

Now here is our text.

7 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. 10 Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the LORD thy God? mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets. 11 In the day that thy walls are to be built, in that day shall the decree be far removed. 12 In that day also he shall come even to thee from Assyria, and from the fortified cities, and from the fortress even to the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain. 13 Notwithstanding the land shall be desolate because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings. 14 Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old. 15 According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things. 16 The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might: 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. 18 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.

May God bless our reading of his word.

The text that the parents have chosen is that which we find in verse 7. Micah 7:7,

7 Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

The word Micah, the name Micah literally means "who is like Jehovah?" It's a question. Who is like Jehovah? Who is like him in his work of creating? Who is like him in his work of sustaining that which he creates? But also who is like him in his judgments? And who is like him in his forgiving and pardoning? The name Micah reflects what Moses sang after the children of Israel were brought through the Red Sea. Again, a verse that I think some of you have already marked in your Bibles, Exodus 15:11, "Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" In Psalm 71:19, that's where we started the service, "Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!" And then the 18th verse of this chapter, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity?" Micah, a rhetorical question, "Who is like unto Jehovah?" And the answer is, "No one." He is excellent. He excels. He is great.

Now when Micah faces this question in this part of the prophecy as he's bringing it to a conclusion, we have him grieving, lamenting really, especially when he starts chapter 7, "Woe is me!" and he speaks not only for himself but he speaks on behalf of the faithful remnant of Israel, the true believers, as they look about in the description that he gives in those first six verses and really the last part of chapter 6 as well, and really earlier in the prophecy, in the midst of a horrible spiritual situation. The 10 tribes are rampant in their sin and idolatry. They're about to be destroyed after 250 years of existence. Assyria is threatening. But things aren't that much better in Judah. They improved with Hezekiah but Jotham while faithful begat Ahaz. Ahaz was a most evil and wicked king. He set up idol worship all over the nation of Judah and on every street corner of Jerusalem. He even sacrificed his oldest child to Molech, cast him down a slide into the mouth, the fiery mouth of Molech.

So that's where Micah was saying, "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams? With ten thousands of rivers of oil? If I give my best or my greatest or the most, shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" That's what the faithful among the children of Judah were facing, that kind of sinfulness but Micah sees it as the rod of Jehovah. So now we want to say as he does in verse 18, "Who is like Jehovah that pardons iniquity as much as what he does?" But he's also describing here earlier, "Who is like Jehovah who executes judgment so perfectly, so righteously and rightly? Who is like Jehovah to be able to express these kinds of judgments?"

So he sees and is describing in these first verses of chapter 7 all kinds of depravity. The authorities are bribe-takers. They wait with their hand out before they give a judgment. Morally everything is deteriorated in the whole of the nation. That's why he refers to, "Thou shalt eat and not be satisfied. You tread the olives but there's no oil you use for

anointing. You tread the grapes but there's no wine to drink. There is no cluster to eat. There's no first ripe fruits to be able to have." That's a judgment of God and it's not just circumstances, that's not just bad weather, he sees the hand of God executing it on the great wickedness that was present in Israel and Judah.

Then he describes that judgment of God even more and this is where it gets rather frightening, even more frightening. You cannot trust a friend, verse 5; that everybody is seeking their own wills. You can't trust a friend. You can't even trust a guide and that's a translation, it's an accurate translation but the reference is if you have a guide that you hire but then you have somebody who's a familiar friend, you know them, they know you but you cannot even trust a guide. Then he says and you've got to watch what you say when your wife is right there. You can't trust your wife, the one in your bosom.

Then the situation is described the son dishonors the father and the daughter rises up against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law, and a man's enemies are the men of his own house. As we look at the morals of the nation in which we live and the world about us, it's not uncommon that the businessmen who treat and do business in the world say even, it used to be a handshake would settle the deal and you could trust them, but increasingly that's not the case, and even when they sign a contract, they will find ways to deny it and get out of it. The morals of the world in which we live is becoming just like this more and more and he shows us that that's not, that increasing wickedness and lack of righteousness in our lives is to be viewed as a judgment of God.

Remember what we read after we read the 10 Commandments? We went to Jesus' summary, this time Mark 12, and he explained that all of God's laws, especially the 10, arise from not one but two, not one but two, not just from a lack of love of God but two is from a lack of love for the brother, the neighbor. 1 John 4 says it's like a coin. Two sides. One side, "I love God." The other side, "I love my neighbor because I love God." When one says, "I don't love my neighbor, my brother," and then he says, "Then you're lying when you say you love God."

Well, that's God's judgment. When they weren't loving God and serving him wholeheartedly, the result of that is that then we don't love each other, and that's the kind of consequence and it will deteriorate to that. Does that exist in the church? There's always maybe a degree of that. That's the reason for fervent prayers that God keep us in righteousness and that that not take place. But the answer to that is be devoted to God, not to the idol of self. The idol of self is an idol that's just as bad as Molech. "I want to do what I want to do. This is what I think. This is what I believe. I want. I don't want." All of that selfishness is a replacing of God by ourselves. God says, "No, you love me." And God says, "If you don't, then what's going to deteriorate and the evidence of your lack of proper love for me is going to be evidenced in your relationships with each other."

But then we have to say, "Who is like Jehovah so accurately to judge? Who is like Jehovah in his judgments?" When we say it that way, then we are recognizing accurately that Jehovah is in control. All the circumstances of life are a part of his sovereign control of all things in all the world, so when we say who is like him to pardon, but also who is

like him to judge, then we're saying this is God's work. God is in control. God is executing, exercising his judgments but he's executing his divine plan. There's no mistakes from God's perspective even if the situation is most hurtful for us, "Thou didst it." And it's then in the darkest situations of life when we can't turn to friends, to family, that then Micah is driven rightly to say, "Therefore I will look unto Jehovah."

This makes us think of the situation about fear and trust. Charles Spurgeon did not live in a day when there were planes, he lived in a day when there were trains, but just like planes today, you can have first class and you can have coach. They both get you there but it sure is a lot nicer in first than it is in coach. And he did it and gave this as the explanation: you're in coach, you're gonna get there, you'll get there safely. Psalm 56:3, "What time I am afraid, I will put my trust in thee." Now first class is Isaiah 12:2, "I will trust and not be afraid." Micah is in coach. Now it's good. Sometimes the circumstances of our life are that which drive us to go back to the God who is our God, "Therefore will I look unto Jehovah." I find out that I can't look for help any other place. I look to Jehovah.

That text, this text is a declaration of intention on the part of Micah, Joel and Jess, for their Micah, to keep the focus on Jehovah. Parallel thought, I will wait for Jehovah. Literally it's more wait on than wait for. Wait for is I'm waiting for him to bring something to pass. Wait on is I'm going to keep serving him. That's the eye, that's the same idea as looking at him and the figure of speech again is that of a maid watching her mistress, been serving her in a loving fashion. So all that she is, is she's anticipating what her mistress will want and she can see it where the mistress looks, where she puts her eyes. She can see it when the mistress is upset. She can see it when the mistress waves her finger or just lifts it up a bit. The maid is so focused on the will of her mistress that she is ready to do it. She anticipates and can see what the mistress will want. "I will look to Jehovah. I will wait on him in my service of him." That's the idea.

Now when we have all these troubles around us and then we from the position of coach say, "I will wait on Jehovah," notice what he doesn't say, "I'm gonna sit in a corner and pout. I'm gonna fall into despair. I'm gonna be surrounded by fears. I'm gonna be consumed with doubts. I'm gonna become angry back. I'll begin to treat everybody else the way I'm treated by them." No. No. "I will look to Jehovah."

Notice children know, can you see God? Can you see Jehovah? No. But he's going look unto him, and that means that we're going to look to him where he has revealed himself. He's a spirit. He has no body form. But we will look to where he has revealed himself. He has revealed himself in his word. He marvelously tells us in his word that he reveals himself in the preaching of the Gospel. He shows himself to us. So to look unto him or to wait upon him, then that begins with our anticipating him and focusing on what God would have us to do.

This concept of looking unto and waiting for is not uncommon. Psalm 25:15, "Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord." Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord. Psalm 123:1, "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens." And again, who can see into the heavens? We cannot physically see it but mine eyes, I will lift up mine eyes, O thou that

dwellest into the heavens." Then it picks up the figure that I was describing earlier, Psalm 123, "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us." Psalm 141, very similar in verse 8, "mine eyes are unto thee, O Lord, O Jehovah the Lord." Mine eyes are unto thee, "in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute."

Gaze intently. Exercise faith to have God to always be a part of your thinking. The economy, a ball game, an argument, a controversy, a happiest moment, a birth, a death of a loved one, work or play, Jehovah is a part of my thinking. When I look at someone who's a professing believer that I want to see God above them, underneath him, behind them and in front of them because he gave them to Christ and he bought them with his own blood, I want to see God. When there's an unbeliever or a professing unbeliever, he's not outside the control of God. Everything that he may do or say to me is a part of God's wisdom in working on me, testing me, trying me, shaping me. God, Jehovah, the self-sufficient, self-existent, unchanging one, especially in his relationship with us.

"I will look unto Jehovah. I will wait upon him." Look to him in prayer. Look to him as a watchman looks for his coming. Imagine how the true believers anticipated his coming in the old dispensation. For 4,000 years they wearied not for the seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent. To look to him and to wait upon him is the activity of putting our confidence in him, contemplating him. Sometimes in a Catechism class or here in our Bible studies, sometimes it becomes an intellectual measure. I think of particularly the Essentials of Reformed Doctrine Catechism book, to know God, but then it has we know him in his works, in his attributes, in his person, in his being, in his persons, in his works and in his attributes. So we look at all those parts of God and it becomes an intellectual exercise.

J. I. Packer in his book "Knowing God" takes it out of the intellectual sphere and starts applying it to us. Know him. Contemplate him. See him for his majesty. One of the infallible fruits of election is called in the Canons of Dort filial fear, and it's a childlike awe. It's the kind of amazement that some people have when suddenly they come to the edge of the Grand Canyon and they look and they can't say a word, and as they watch the sun move and the scene changes right before their eyes, what a God. To stand and climb in the Rockies and see the snow covered ones and then the blissful quiet pond down below. Filial fear. It's the marvel of a parent who wants Jesus to touch their child and then Jesus takes each one of the little children and he holds them, and he gazes at them, and he embraces them, and he blesses them, doing exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think. The knowledge that nothing, a breath, a cancer cell that's multiplying faster than it should, it's all part of God's control. No mistakes. Infinite wisdom in perfect love.

"I will look to Jehovah. I will wait upon him." That waiting implies trust. I will trust him. He knows what I need. He knows what I want but he knows better what I need and he will give me exactly what I need. He makes promises. I will wait upon him because I can trust that he will keep every one of his promises. Not will, he is keeping it. He is. Maybe

not when I want or how I think, but he's keeping every single promise. He will not leave me nor forsake me and he promises a supply of grace that never ends.

All of the sinfulness he says he pardons, and that brings us to the reason for why we're going to look to him and that reason is found in this: he is the God of my salvation. He saves. What did he do to save? He gave me to his Son. He made me an elect, elect of God. He picked. Why? If I would look at other people, he sure could pick a whole lot many better ones. He caused and decreed that his Son knowing the excellency of the divine being and life within the Triune God would come down into the weakness of human nature, bear a wrath he personally didn't deserve, but for my sins, and he would go to hell for me so that when I still carry that depravity that makes me say, "O wretched man that I am," he answers it immediately with the assurance that he pardons iniquity. Is it five or is it six times that he says it in five or six different ways in verses 18 and 19 of this chapter, concluding he cast every sin and all of our sinfulness into the depths of the sea. God, and then instead he beholds us just as he beholds his own Son and all the righteousness that is his. He sees that to be in yours. That's what it means that he is the God of our salvation.

Seven times, seven different times in the Psalms he is called the God of our salvation. When I looked into the Psalter to find Psalter numbers that we could use and I was looking for that expression, once it was used. All the other times it was translated "our Savior." Our Savior, and that's why for the Old Testament prophet to look at God and call him the God of my salvation is in anticipation of Jesus, Jesus, Jehovah's salvation. So to say "our Savior" is an accurate expression of this phrase, "The God my salvation is my Savior." That's Jesus. Jesus is my Savior. He saved. He shall save. He did save his people from their sins.

But then notice this, he's not called the God of our salvation, he's called the God of my salvation and that's where it starts. Not again "ours," no, "my." Lord's Day 1, what is your only comfort in life and death? It blocks out what's happening to your loved ones. It blocks out all the other situations of life and it makes you focus just on him. You and him. Him and You. What is your only comfort in life and death? That I am not on my own but I belong, I belong.

My God. So he says this and this is the beautiful thing, he comes to Abraham in Genesis 17:7 and he says, "I'm going to establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee and their generations," and this is what it means, "I'm going to be your God. Your God. And to your seed." So you want to teach "me or my" in Micah, as we all want to teach the children that God may be pleased to give to us, to fear him, to be in awe of him, to know him. We're driven by the circumstances to look to Jehovah. We want them to be prepared to look to Jehovah and to wait on him and his mercy. His mercy. He blesses, he's determined to bless with all of his being, he's determined to bless even the miserable. But it's mercy. It's not give to those who earn it because no one does. But he will bless.

Now because he can say, "That's my God and the God of my salvation, my Savior," then he can say, "My God will hear me. The ground for his hearing me is my assurance he's mine and he's the God of my salvation." When we can say that, "He is my God," then we can say as I do my little peep, peep, little whispers, groans in size of heart and soul, "His ears are open." Never, well, the devil will want you to think he doesn't care, he doesn't hear, he doesn't know. He hears. He knows. He knows everything about you and he knows your cries. He knows your wretchedness but that's when he says, "But I am the God of your salvation." So the very next verse can say after, "O wretched man, I thank God for Jesus Christ," and he gives us an answer that issues and harmonizes with the work of salvation. This answer enables us to say to those who oppose us, "Rejoice not against me when I fall. I'm gonna fall. I can't help but falling all the time, but rejoice not against me. When I fall, I shall arise because he will lift me up. When I sit in darkness, he gives me light." When he's a part of my life, when I see, see, look to him, then I see his hand and his purpose that I can say, "Jehovah is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear?" He's a light to me because when I see him even in the darkest times and I'm ready otherwise to despair, then he shows me not way ahead but he shows me a light. I know where to put my foot the next step. He's a lamp to my feet and a light upon my path today. Trust in Jehovah with all thine heart. Lean not on thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him to be right there. Amen.

Our Father, we thank thee that we may know that thou art God, the only God. Twice we said that in our stated prayers, the one true living God that thou art. And this morning thou hast called us to look unto thee and to wait in service upon thee. So we give ourselves to thee, Father. Bless Joel and Jessica that they may be with Micah and may all of us be with Micah, and may we live as those who say, "Who is like Jehovah? None. And Jehovah is the God of my salvation." Thanks for establishing that relationship. May we live in that consciousness. Amen.