

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 9-16-12 PM NOTES
MICAH
#35 in Series, "The Glory of God in the Old Testament"

Malachi 3:6 (NKJV) "For I *am* the Lord, I do not change..."

Micah 6:8 (NKJV) "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?"

I. The Message of Destruction (Chapter 1-2)

A. The Revelation of Coming Judgment (1:1-16)

Micah 1:3 (NKJV) "For behold, the Lord is coming out of His place; He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth."

Micah 1:4 (NKJV) "The mountains will melt under Him, and the valleys will split like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place."

Micah 1:6 (NKJV) "Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field, places for planting a vineyard; I will pour down her stones into the valley, and I will uncover her foundations."

Deuteronomy 4:24 (NKJV) "For the Lord your God *is* a consuming fire, a jealous God."

B. The Additional Reasons for the Coming Judgment (2:1-13)

Micah 2:1-2 (NKJV) "¹Woe to those who devise iniquity, and work out evil on their beds! At morning light they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. ²They covet fields and take *them* by violence, also houses, and seize *them*. So they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance."

Exodus 20:17 (NKJV) "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor's."

Colossians 3:5 (NKJV) "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

Ephesians 5:5 (NKJV) "For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."

Micah 2:4 (NIV) "In that day men will ridicule you; they will taunt you with this mournful song: 'We are utterly ruined; my people's possession is divided up. He takes it from me! He assigns our fields to traitors.'"

Micah 2:6 (NIV) "'Do not prophesy,' their prophets say. 'Do not prophesy about these things; disgrace will not overtake us.'"

Micah 2:11 (NIV) "If a liar and deceiver comes and says, 'I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer,' he would be just the prophet for this people!"

II. The Message of Doom and Destiny (Chapter 3-5)

Jeremiah 29:11 (ESV) "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

A. The Message of Doom (Chapter 3)

Micah 3:1 (NKJV) “And I said: ‘Hear now, O heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel: *Is it* not for you to know justice?’”

Micah 3:2-3 (NKJV) “²You who hate good and love evil; who strip the skin from My people, and the flesh from their bones; ³who also eat the flesh of My people, flay their skin from them, break their bones, and chop *them* in pieces like *meat* for the pot, like flesh in the caldron.”

Micah 3:5 (NKJV) “Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who make my people stray; who chant ‘Peace’ while they chew with their teeth, but who prepare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths.”

Micah 3:6-7 (NKJV) “⁶Therefore you shall have night without vision, and you shall have darkness without divination; the sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be dark for them. ⁷So the seers shall be ashamed, and the diviners abashed; indeed they shall all cover their lips; for *there is* no answer from God.”

Micah 3:11 (NKJV) “Her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord, and say, ‘Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us.’”

B. The Message of Destiny (Chapter 4-5)

Micah 4:1 (NKJV) “Now it shall come to pass in the latter days *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it.”

Micah 4:3-4 (NKJV) “³He 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. ⁴But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make *them* afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.”

Micah 5:2 (NKJV) “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.”

III. The Message of Denunciation (Chapter 6:1-7:6)

A. God's Complaint Against Israel (6:1-8)

Micah 6:1-2 (NKJV) “¹Hear now what the Lord says: ‘Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. ²Hear, O you mountains, the Lord's complaint, and you strong foundations of the earth; for the Lord has a complaint against His people, and He will contend with Israel.’”

Micah 6:7-8 (NKJV) “⁷Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression, the fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul? ⁸He 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?”

B. God's Chastisement of Israel (6:9 – 7:6)

Micah 6:9 (NIV) “Listen! The Lord is calling to the city— and to fear your name is wisdom—‘Heed the rod and the One who appointed it.’”

IV. The Message of Deliverance (Chapter 7:7-20)

Micah 7:7 (NIV) “But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me.”

Micah 7:18-20 (NKJV) “¹⁸Who *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. ¹⁹He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. ²⁰You will give truth to Jacob *and* mercy to Abraham, which You have sworn to our fathers from days of old.”

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MICAHA
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The last 12 books of the Old Testament are called "The Minor Prophets". "Minor" refers to the length of the books, not to their importance. The writings of these 12 prophets were at one point all put on one scroll and called, "The Twelve". Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah who prophesied around 700 BC to both the northern kingdom (he calls it Samaria since that is he capital) and the southern kingdom (Sometimes just Jerusalem which was the capital of the southern kingdom). Micah was from the seemingly insignificant town of Moresheth, but he was greatly used of God. Like so many of the Minor Prophets, a major theme of Micah is judgment. What God told Micah to write may seem severe, but sin is severe rebellion against God.

We live in a day where everything has become unbelievably complicated. If you brought a Pastor out of the 1950's or 1960's and made him the Pastor of a church in our culture in 2012, he would be astounded at the complexity of pastoring a church. In the 1950's and 60's the Pastor (even in a larger church) prepared two sermons a week and maybe a Bible study for Wednesday night. He visited the hospitals and made evangelistic visits. He may have a few counseling appointments every once in a while, but it was usually simple things that were easily dealt with. In addition, there were occasional weddings and funerals. Most weeks were fairly similar to the weeks before. Today is a different story. There are IRS regulations (Pastors are being prosecuted for violation of IRS regulations), ways things must be done to avoid lawsuits, and obtaining malpractice insurance. This generation has been called "the therapeutic generation" as counseling and therapy are seen as the cure-all to whatever ails us. The issues in counseling are unbelievably complicated. There are legal issues to be aware of and laws that say that if the counselees confess certain things, the Pastor must report it to the authorities or be in legal hot water themselves, yet there is Pastor – parishioner confidentiality. In addition, the Pastor must have knowledge of accounting, law, trends in culture, fund raising, marketing and public relations. Then there is the whole issue of technology! The Pastor is expected to keep up with technology and use it with a computer crazy generation. No longer must he just prepare messages, it is expected that he is using Facebook to promote the church, writing insightful articles on his daily blog and regularly sending out profound tweets from his twitter account. There is so much more. The same is true of other professions. Medicine has become unbelievably complicated even though the human body has not changed. Small businesses are burdened down with regulation after regulation to the point that a small business owner has to spend as much time on regulations and legal issues as they do on producing their service or product. Everything is getting so complicated! The tendency in this complicated age is to transfer that mindset to our relationship with God. Surely walking with God and pleasing Him must be incredibly complicated. No, its not! Since the Lord never changes and His Word never changes, what pleases Him and what He requires never changes. **Malachi 3:6a (NKJV)** "For I *am* the Lord, I do not change". Before we go into the book of Micah at its beginning, I want to pull out an example of how uncomplicated pleasing God really is. What we are going to look at is not how to be made righteous before God; it is how those who have been made righteous by faith walk in a way that is pleasing to God. Probably the best known verse in Micah is **Micah 6:8 (NKJV)** "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?" Let's look a little more closely at that verse before we focus on the context around it. Notice how uncomplicated what the Lord requires of us is.

- “do justly” – This phrase literally means to act with justice. It speaks of a life with transparent honesty and without reproach. We are to treat others with justice. When we “do justly” (act in a just way), we are reflecting God’s own character since He is a just God.
- “love mercy” – We value mercy, both God’s mercy to us and our showing mercy to others. Jesus reiterated this same truth in the Beatitudes in **Matthew 5:7 (NKJV)** “Blessed *are* the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” We are to be vessels of mercy giving out the same mercy to others that we have been given by God.
- “to walk humbly with your God” – Our walk speaks of the pattern of our life. To walk humbly means to walk without arrogance, self-reliance or pride. It is a surrendered life that esteems others better than ourselves.

That is not complicated; you don’t have a high I. Q. or multiple degrees, or years of experience. Remember that Micah is not talking of how we come into right relationship with God; he is referring to how those in right relationship with Him walk in a way that pleases Him. Unlike everything else, the walk that pleases God is not complicated – do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

I. The Message of Destruction (Chapter 1-2)

Most all of the Minor Prophets start out with the negative message from God and close with a message of hope. Micah is no exception.

A. The Revelation of Coming Judgment (1:1-16)

Have you seen the billboards that are supposed to be from God that says, “Don’t make Me come down there”? That is what He is saying in **Micah 1:3 (NKJV)** “For behold, the Lord is coming out of His place; He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth.” When He comes down, it won’t be anything to chuckle about! **Micah 1:4 (NKJV)** “The mountains will melt under Him, and the valleys will split like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place.” When He visits His people in judgment, it will be devastating. He speaks of His judgment of the northern kingdom in **Micah 1:6 (NKJV)** “Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field, places for planting a vineyard; I will pour down her stones into the valley, and I will uncover her foundations.” What was the primary sin that was bringing this judgment down from God? Primarily it was the sin of idolatry. In verses 3 & 5, Micah speaks of the high places. The high places were where altars were built to worship other gods. In verse 7 Micah speaks of the carved images and idols. Learn this: Our God is a jealous God who will tolerate no rivals. **Deuteronomy 4:24 (NKJV)** says “For the Lord your God *is* a consuming fire, a jealous God.” Don’t get the idea that all idols are made of wood or stone. An idol is anything that we turn to for what God told us to turn to Him for. An idol is anyone or anything that has our supreme love or trust. Our God has a right to be jealous! He made us for Himself and He demands the glory that He is due. Because of their idolatry, God tells them that their judgment is close at hand.

B. The Additional Reasons for the Coming Judgment (2:1-13)

In addition to their idolatry, God gives other reasons for the judgment that is coming. We will see that Israel was consumed with covetousness, greed, and injustice. **Micah 2:1-2 (NKJV)** “¹Woe to those who devise iniquity, and work out evil on their beds! At morning light they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. ²They covet fields and take *them* by violence, also houses, and seize *them*. So they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.” The picture here is of the wealthy scheming to get more and more wealth. He uses the word “covet” in verse 2. This is a word that comes from the 10th commandment in **Exodus 20:17 (NKJV)** “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor’s.” Their covetousness led them to acts of injustice and even violence. To be covetous is to be consumed with material things, to be greedy, and to lust after what others have. The New Testament tells us what covetousness is at its root. **Colossians 3:5 (NKJV)** “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” **Ephesians 5:5 (NKJV)** speaks of a “...covetous man, who is an idolater...” This

covetousness pervades our world system. We never seem to have enough. Covetousness and greed are simply manifestations of idolatry. God's justice against these greedy covetous idolaters is what is commonly called "poetic justice". They had coveted and taken the fields that belonged to others. **Micah 2:4 (NIV)** "In that day men will ridicule you; they will taunt you with this mournful song: 'We are utterly ruined; my people's possession is divided up. He takes it from me! He assigns our fields to traitors.'"

Another reason for God's judgment was the lying prophets and religious leaders. **Micah 2:6 (NIV)** "'Do not prophesy,' their prophets say. 'Do not prophesy about these things; disgrace will not overtake us.'" The lying false prophets were saying, "God wouldn't bring judgment on us!" Micah goes on to bring other indictments against the people giving them more and more reasons why this just God is bringing His judgment. He brings up the injustice against those who cannot defend themselves in Micah 2:8-9. In Micah 2:11 the people long for prophets to proclaim only good things to them. **Micah 2:11 (NIV)** "If a liar and deceiver comes and says, 'I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer,' he would be just the prophet for this people!" God's prophets have never been widely accepted. Look at the evidence today that people want to hear only a "happy positive message". What if we chose our doctors that way? "I will refuse to go to a doctor that tells me I have a disease that necessitates surgery. I will only go to a doctor that tells me what wonderful health I'm in". You would immediately say, "That would be foolish; if I need surgery to save my life, I want a Doctor who will tell me that!" Doctors deal with your temporal body, but God's preachers (prophets) deal with your eternal soul! How much more important that they tell you the truth and God's remedy!

II. The Message of Doom and Destiny (Chapter 3-5)

In this section of Micah, we see a familiar pattern of God's prophets. They prophesy the negatives of judgment and doom, but then they give balance by fast forwarding to the future and assuring God's people that there is a future and a hope for them. He will not permanently cast them off. That is the context of one of the favorite promises of God in the Old Testament. The prophet Jeremiah has detailed the coming judgment of God on His people and then in the midst of the doom and judgment, he fast forwards to the future and says in **Jeremiah 29:11 (ESV)** "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." First comes the doom and then the ultimate destiny.

A. The Message of Doom (Chapter 3)

Though not stated this way in Scripture, there were three branches of Israel's government (some believe that our founding fathers were influenced by this). There was the King and those in his inner circle, the Judges (who were priests) and the Prophets. Israel's doom was sure because all three branches were corrupt. **Micah 3:1 (NKJV)** "And I said: 'Hear now, O heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel: *is it* not for you to know justice?'" Micah is saying, "Where is the justice that you should be carrying out?" **Micah 3:2-3 (NKJV)** "²You who hate good and love evil; who strip the skin from My people, and the flesh from their bones; ³who also eat the flesh of My people, flay their skin from them, break their bones, and chop *them* in pieces like *meat* for the pot, like flesh in the caldron." Micah's point is that they treated the poor like animals to be butchered. They were like cannibals with those they were to be protecting. The King and his inner circle were corrupt. **Micah 3:5 (NKJV)** "Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who make my people stray; who chant 'Peace' while they chew with their teeth, but who prepare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths". The prophets were corrupt. They had become prophets for profit. They would say whatever the people who provided for them wanted them to say. **Micah 3:6-7 (NKJV)** "⁶Therefore you shall have night without vision, and you shall have darkness without divination; the sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be dark for them. ⁷So the seers shall be ashamed, and the diviners abashed; indeed they shall all cover their lips; for *there is* no answer from God." This is the heart of God's judgment on His people. He cut off communication from them. He no longer answered them. How about the Judges (priests)? **Micah 3:11 (NKJV)** "Her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord, and say, 'Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us.'" Corruption permeated every area of

national leadership (the King and his Politicians, the prophets and the priests). The doom is that the justices (priests) were going to cry for mercy and not get it; the prophets were going to cry for a word from God and not get it, and the rulers were going to seek order and get chaos.

B. The Message of Destiny (Chapter 4-5)

In chapter 4, Micah fast forwards to the distant future. He sees past the Babylonian empire, the Persian, Greek and Roman empires. He looks past the Middle ages and the Reformation and even past our day. In his prophetic vision, he sees the coming of the Messiah to perfectly rule and reign. God has not permanently cast His people aside. **Micah 4:1 (NKJV)** “Now it shall come to pass in the latter days *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it.” This section of Scripture takes us forward to the earthly kingdom of Christ when Jesus rules and reigns for 1,000 years (called the millennial reign). Jesus will rule as prophet, priest (judge), and King. He will carry out the function of these offices perfectly! **Micah 4:3-4 (NKJV)** “³ 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. ⁴ But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make *them* afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.” This is the final destiny of Israel. The judgment is for a time, but when the Messiah comes a second time, He rules and reigns as prophet and priest and King perfectly. This will be the end of war among the nations. There will never be peace on earth until the Prince of Peace rules and reigns.

In chapter five, Micah reveals more about this coming Messiah. **Micah 5:2 (NKJV)** "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 the verse that led the wise men to Jesus. The prophets in the Old Testament saw the first and second coming of Christ as being together. Dr. W. A. Criswell compared it to seeing two mountains that look from a distance like they are right together, but as you get closer, they are separated by several miles. Micah saw the first coming and the birth at Bethlehem and His rule in His Millennial as one appearing. The Old Testament prophets did not see the church age. It was a mystery unknown until God revealed it in the New Testament.

In the midst of a message of doom, God reminds the people of Israel that a Messiah is coming. He will rule with justice and wisdom and bring true peace.

III. The Message of Denunciation (Chapter 6:1-7:6)

In chapter 6, Micah comes back into the present. The scene is like a courtroom and God is making accusations like a prosecutor.

A. God's Complaint Against Israel (6:1-8)

Micah 6:1-2 (NKJV) “¹ Hear now what the Lord says: ‘Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. ² Hear, O you mountains, the Lord's complaint, and you strong foundations of the earth; for the Lord has a complaint against His people, and He will contend with Israel.’” What is the Lord's complaint? The people of Israel were not meeting the simple requirements to please God. We looked at those simple requirements in the introduction. **Micah 6:7-8 (NKJV)** “⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression, the fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul? ⁸ 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?” This is what God desires of His people – justice, mercy and a humble walk in communion with Him.

B. God's Chastisement of Israel (Chapter 6:9-7:6)

Micah 6:9 (NIV) “Listen! The Lord is calling to the city-- and to fear your name is wisdom—‘Heed the rod and the One who appointed it.’” What was God's rod? For the northern kingdom (Samaria) it was Assyria. For the southern kingdom (Judah) it was Babylon. God chose to use a godless nation as His rod to chastise His people. Would God use a godless nation to judge America? He did with the Jews; why would He not do so with us?

IV. The Message of Deliverance (Chapter 7:7-20)

Micah now speaks for himself. This was his nation, his people. **Micah 7:7 (NIV)** “But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me.” Israel will be delivered! The nations that God used as His rods will be broken themselves. Micah is overwhelmed with God’s promise of forgiveness and deliverance of His people who had forsaken Him. **Micah 7:18-20 (NKJV)** “¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. ²⁰ You will give truth to Jacob *and* mercy to Abraham, which You have sworn to our fathers From days of old.”

CONCLUSION

“Who is a God like You?” The answer is “There is none”! How could we not desire with all of our heart to please Him by doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly and intimately with Him?