

God Has Told You

Micah 6:8

1

8 He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?

2

Micah, who was a contemporary of Isaiah and Hosea, prophesied during the years surrounding the fall of Israel to the Assyrian Empire (cir. 722 BC), an event he seems to predict...

Micah 1:6

3

6 For I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the open country, Planting places for a vineyard. I will pour her stones down into the valley And will lay bare her foundations.

Micah states in his introduction to the book that he prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in Judah, but he chooses to ignore the string of dishonorable kings that closed out the northern kingdom of Israel. During this period, while Israel was imploding from the effects of evil and unfaithful leadership, Judah seemed to be on a roller-coaster ride; ascending to the heights of its destiny in one generation, only to fall into the sin of unfaithfulness in another. In Judah at this time, good kings and evil kings alternated with each other, a pattern seen in the reigns of Jotham...

2 Kings 15:32-34

4

32 In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel, Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah became king. 33 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Jerusha the daughter of Zadok. 34 He did what was right in the sight of the Lord; he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done.

Then, in opposition to this we see...

2 Kings 16:1-4

5

1 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, became king. 2 Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord his God, as his father David had done. 3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and even made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had driven out from before the sons of Israel. 4 He sacrificed and burned incense on the high places and on the hills and under every green tree.

In the narration of the book, Micah is seen to be a deeply religious man, one who has a great interest in doing what God wants. His prophetic statements are to the point, they don't beat around the point, and yet they seem tempered with a deep concern for the nation.

The influence of Micah is seen in...

Jer 26:18

6

18 "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.'"

Here he is cited by certain elders in the time of Jeremiah. They argued that Micah, who prophesied earlier, had not been put to death by Hezekiah, even though he had predicted the destruction of Jerusalem. Note what Jeremiah says...

Jer 26:19

7

19 "Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear the Lord and entreat the favor of the Lord, and the Lord changed His mind about the misfortune which He had pronounced against them? But we are committing a great evil against ourselves."

This passage would seem to imply that Hezekiah's reforms were due, at least in part, to the influence of Micah. Note that the reference to Micah is immediately followed by the account of Hezekiah's return to the Lord. To me, this makes a connection between those two things.

Micah's prophecy bears a close resemblance both in form and content to certain portions of Isaiah. Compare...

Mic 4:1-3

8

1 And it will come about in the last days That the mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, And the peoples will stream to it. 2 Many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord And to the house of the God of Jacob, That He may teach us about His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion will go forth the law, Even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 3 And He will judge between many peoples And render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they train for war.

With...

Isa 2:2-4

9

2 Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. 3 And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.

While conjectures are sometimes fun to engage in, putting them aside, it is not possible to state with certainty who made this prophecy first, but it does emphasize the origination of the statement as being from God. We can also see in **Micah 4:4** an addition to the parallel material in Isaiah...

Mic 4:4

10

4 Each of them will sit under his vine, And under his fig tree, With no one to make them afraid,

So Micah's narration is seen as a very pointed prediction of peace in the nation and points to a time when the Israelites will be walking in the name of their Lord and His covenant with them. So, whether it was Micah first or Jeremiah first isn't relevant, God was making a statement to the people that He emphasizes to them by having more than one prophet make it. Kind of like a verily, verily type of emphasis often seen in the words of Jesus.

Here is the statement God wants the Israelites to understand...

11 *Jerusalem will be destroyed. It will no longer be the seat of the religion and worship of God's people. There will come a time when the House of the Lord will be established and all*

nations will need to come to it to have a relationship with God. At that time the Law of the Lord, the Word of the Lord, will go forth and judge all nations.

Micah continues his discussion with the people from this point and we can see 3 statements that he makes to them, each containing...

- 12** A) A Statement of Doom
- B) A Statement of Hope

These three exhortations, which become apparent in what Micah is telling the people, are found in...

- 13** 1) **1:2-2:13**
- 2) **3:1-5:15**
- 3) **6:1-7:20**

Now, it is possible that these statements were given by Micah at various times in the course of his prophetic career. The first is assumed by scholars to be the earliest because of its prediction of the doom of Samaria. The thought is that since the second concerns only Jerusalem, the northern kingdom may have already fallen. Remember what we saw in **Jer 26:18**, Micah was in the time of Hezekiah. The third statement is more difficult to place historically.

The one thing that Micah really emphasizes is that the peace, the hope, that he prophesies about will happen, but only because God wills it.

14 *The "dew" and "showers" "tarry not for men."*

That is to say that the remnant he speaks of, will not happen because of any human effort. It will be from God. One of the most important concepts of the prophecy of Micah is the presence of God in human history. The imagery that Micah presents in **Ch. 1:2-4** isn't intended to represent a literal appearance of God, it is showing His intervention in history to bring about the destruction of Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom. This destruction was actually brought about by the Assyrians, but Micah, at least God through Micah, presents it as the direct result of God's response to the disobedience of His people.

Now, while this idea of the presence of God is a concept shared by most other Israelite prophets, Micah develops it into a statement of worship, a theology, if you will, that is depicted by him in a way unique to his prophecy. God's intervention in history to effect the destruction of Samaria (**1:6**) and Jerusalem (**3:12**) was seen by Micah as a witness or a judgment against the nations (**1:2**). The destruction of the capitals of God's own people, Jerusalem, had a direct relevance to the nations. That destruction illustrated the fact that God punishes sin even in His own people. In that way the charred remains of the two cities were an omen of doom for other nations, whose wickedness would spell their doom as well.

The doom spelled out for Israel and Judah was not absolute. Therein lies the theology of the hope of the prophet Micah. In the narration found in **4:11-13**, the prophet sees Israel in the sphere of the nations. The nations are pictured as gloating over the destruction of Israel and Judah. But they are unaware that God has a purpose for them (**4:12**). God's people will be made into a powerful force that will ultimately triumph over the nations...

Mic 4:13

15

13 "Arise and thresh, daughter of Zion, For your horn I will make iron And your hoofs I will make bronze, That you may pulverize many peoples, That you may devote to the Lord their unjust gain And their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

Micah portrays the people of God as a REMNANT. This concept is a theme that appears in several prophetic books. Micah adds an important perspective to that concept. As we saw the remnant of God's people will make inexorable progress throughout the course of history toward the achievement of God's purposes for them...

Mic 5:7

16

7 Then the remnant of Jacob Will be among many peoples Like dew from the Lord, Like showers on vegetation Which do not wait for man Or delay for the sons of men.

This emphasis on the remnant as a powerful force in history is set forth by the prophet in **4:6** as well...

17

"And the lame I will make the remnant; and those who were cast off, a strong nation."

God shows through Micah's prophesy the remnant, not simply as a residue of people, as the term "remnant" may imply, but as a strong nation. But note, they do not immediately constitute the remnant. In **2:12** the ultimate restoration of the remnant is accomplished in association with one whom Micah calls...

18

"The breaker" or "He who opens the breach"

The people of God, not necessarily the Israelites, but the true people of God, those who have chosen to faithfully follow His statutes, are pictured as a milling flock of sheep penned up in a fold, but "the breaker" opens a breach in that pen and leads these faithful followers of God out, with the Lord marching triumphantly at their head.

Mic 5:2-4

19

2 "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity." 3 Therefore He will give them up until the time When she who is in labor has borne a child. Then the remainder of His brethren Will return to the sons of Israel. 4 And He will arise and shepherd His flock In the strength of the Lord, In the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. And they will remain, Because at that time He will be great To the ends of the earth.

What a beautiful Messianic prophesy here. God will raise up one to lead the faithful back to God and to give them strength and comfort, and nothing of this world can stand up against Him. This figure is obviously one of the people, and His close association with Yahweh warrants his identification as the messianic figure. This future restoration of the people of God illustrates their salvation and establishes the continuing validation of God's promises to His people.

Erdman says it this way in his commentary...

20

Thus Micah's contribution to the theological concept of the people of God is to be found in his doctrine of the remnant. The people of God are a strong force in the world, a force that moves inexorably forward toward the ultimate goal of the manifestation of God's kingdom in history

Micah does present Yahweh is just some mere tribal god. His universality is too apparent for that. He intervenes in history, and He is in constant control of the forces of history that move toward the manifestation of His absolute rule. The idea of covenant, then, is also an essential element in Micah's presentation of God. He makes no direct reference to the Mosaic covenant as such, but it is

evident that its commandments and consequences are very much in his mind. In **2:2** he speaks of those who covet fields and who oppress their fellow man. Both are clear violations of the covenant. His denunciation of the oppression of the less fortunate is particularly pointed. Some of his harshest and most vivid language is used to condemn those that violate the spirit of the Mosaic Law.

Let's look back at the passage we started with...

Micah 6:8

21

8 He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?

I find it interesting that what Micah tells the people is to adjust their attitudes. God has given us all that we need...

22

He has told us what is good

And in return He asks little, though He does ask...

23

The Lord requires of you

He wants only that we...

24

Do Justice

Love Kindness

Walk Humbly with God

Micah's statements to the Israelites and the prophecies that he gave are a powerful message to Christians today. Yes, times will sometimes be difficult. We will struggle with our faith and obedience at times. But if we will put our trust in the GOOD that God has told us, if we will heed what He requires of us and walk humbly with Him while doing justice and loving kindness, we can receive His promises. Note what Micah says in...

Mic 7:18

25

18 Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love.

God loved man so much that He sent His Son to be the "BREAKER," the one who would lead the followers of God out the bondage of iniquity, lawlessness, and into the righteousness of God.

Is He leading you?