

MICAH (Teacher's Edition)

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AUTHOR-

This book was written by the prophet Micah, a native of the village of Moresheth in southern Judah near the Philistine city of Gath. Since Micah championed the rights of the poor, he was probably a humble farmer or herdsman himself, although he shows a remarkable knowledge of Jerusalem and Samaria, the capital cities of the nations of Judah and Israel. Fearless and outspoken in denouncing sin, he is mentioned by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 26:17, 18), was a contemporary of Isaiah, Hosea (and possibly Amos) and concentrated his ministry mostly in Judah. His name means "Who is Like the Lord?" and he was so committed to the Lord that he went totally naked on occasion to get his message across.

WHEN THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN-

Micah tells us that he prophesied "in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (1:1). The reigns of these three kings stretched from about **750 B. C. to 687 B. C.**; so his book was probably written sometime during this period.

ABOUT THE BOOK-

Micah's opening verse is written in prose, but everything thereafter is **poetry**. This poetical prophecy speaks of the Lord who has no equals in judging and pardoning sin. His compassionate faithfulness keeps covenant with Abraham and his descendants.

Micah begins his words of judgment with calls for the people to **come to court**. God is portrayed as **the prosecuting attorney**, the **witness for the prosecution**, and the **sentencing judge**. God is a witness against His people (1:2); He demands justice (3:1); He even calls upon the elements of creation to be His witnesses, since He has a legal dispute against His people (6:1-2). The clear implication is that God has **the right to hold His people accountable** for their behavior.

God insists that His people keep their part of the covenant agreement. But even while making His demands, He holds out the possibility of grace and forgiveness.

The mixture of judgment and promise is striking.

These contrasting passages give real insight into the character of God. In His wrath He **remembers mercy**; He cannot maintain His anger forever. Judgment with love may seem incompatible but is truly the work of the Lord. God was determined to maintain His holiness, and so He acted in judgment on those who had broken His covenant. But He was just as determined to fulfill the promises He had made to Abraham centuries earlier. This compelled Him to point to the fulfillment of the covenant in the kingdom to come.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the Book of Micah is its **clear prediction of a coming Savior**. This prophecy in chapter 5 is stunning in its **accuracy** because it names **the specific town** where the Messiah was born-the village of Bethlehem in the territory of the tribe of Judah so many years before its fulfillment. It is remarkable when we think of the circumstances that were necessary to bring it to fulfillment.

Although they were residents of Nazareth, Mary and Joseph "happened" to be in Bethlehem at the right time when the Messiah

was born about 700 years after Micah's prediction. This is a valuable lesson on the providence of God. He always manages to work His will through a unique combination of forces and events.

BASIC THEMES-

Micah can be seen as the champion of the oppressed. The subjects of Micah's messages reveal much about the society of his day. He constantly denounced the oppression of the poor by the rich. He characterized the rich as devising ways in which to cheat the poor out of their land (2:1-5). People were evicted from their homes and had their possessions stolen. Those who committed such crimes were fellow Israelites. The marketplace was full of deception and injustice. Dishonest merchants were using false weights, bribing judges, and charging excessive interest rates. Even the priests and prophets seemed to be caught up in this tidal wave of greed and dishonesty that swept his country. The rulers of the country, who had the responsibility of upholding justice, did the opposite (3:1-4).

Micah also denounced the religious practices of the nation. He predicted the destruction of Judah as an act of God's judgment. Other prophets, however, led the people to believe that this could never happen because God was residing in the nation and would protect them. Micah contended that the other prophets' message was not from God. Instead, the message from God was the imminent devastation of Judah.

The people worshiped other gods. They did not quit believing in and worshiping the God of Judah, but they combined this worship with devotion to other things. The people believed all that religion required of them was to bring their sacrifices and offerings to the Temple. No relationship was acknowledged between their activity in the Temple and their activity in daily life. Micah attempted to correct this misconception by arguing that God is not just interested in the physical act of making a sacrifice but is supremely concerned with obedience that extends into daily life in chapter 6:6-8. This great passage expresses the truth that authentic worship consists of following God's will and dealing justly with other people.

Micah warned of impending judgment on God's people for their disobedience. At the same time, he proclaimed messages of hope. Judgment would come, but afterwards, God would restore a remnant

of the people devoted to Him. In this Micah emphasizes the reality of God's love. Practically every passage about God's wrath **is balanced with a promise of God's blessing**. Hence, unlike the unjust kings that the people were accustomed to, God would bring a ruler who would allow the people to live in peace (5:1-5). Ultimately, the Babylonians destroyed Judah in 586 B.C., but a remnant returned. Matthew saw in Micah's hope for a new ruler a description of Christ (Matt. 2:6).

A POSSIBLE KEY WORD-

Following the above discussion and the balance in the book, I believe a great key word would be: **JUDGMENT AND RESTORATION**.

KEY VERSE(S) AND CHAPTER-

Staying with my key word the basic themes, and the revelation of a key aspect of God's character, my key verse is: **Micah 7: 18** and my key chapter is: **Micah 7**.

JESUS REVEALED IN THE BOOK-

- The prophecy of His birth in Bethlehem (5:2)
- **The coming of the Lord in 1:3-5 speaks of Jesus**
- **The king/shepherd in 2:12, 13 speaks of Jesus our Shepherd/King**
- **5:4-5 speaks of Messiah Jesus' shepherd hood, his anointing, His deity, and humanity, His universal dominion, and leadership of a peaceful kingdom**

THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALED IN THE BOOK-

- The prophetic all speaks to the Spirit
- **The Holy Spirit is directly mentioned as the power given him to preach the truth (3:8)**
- **The Holy Spirit is the one who teaches us and leads into truth (4:2)**

SOME TRUTHS AND APPLICATIONS-

Micah 2:6,7

Don't discourage leaders from speak the whole counsel of God. Refuse to listen to the Word selectively. Receive the corrective & the affirmative.

Micah 3:11

Never set a price on your ministry. Never seduce people to give to you using psychological or spiritual manipulation.

Micah 4:2

Climb the mountain in prayer with the Lord. Sit at His feet and and ask that His Word become alive to you. Rely on the ppower of His Word, through your passionate prayers, to enable you to walk as the child of God you are.

Micah 7:8, 9

Take responsibility for your sins and don't look to blame anything or anyone else. If you choose to bear the Lord's judgment on your sin, then He will give you true revelation (light) and you will come out of the punishment for your sin better than you were before- wiser in the things of the Lord. Be confident that being in the Lord's hands in honest repentance is always better that coveriing your sin!