

My Favorite Thing About

MICAH

Micah 6:8

August 21, 2021

Israel was called out of a life of slavery and into a life of holiness. Through fidelity and faithfulness Israel would be a living example and their witness would bring a knowledge of the One True God to the entire world.

Hundreds of years later we come to the book of Micah.

Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah and ministered during the reigns of:

- **Jotham – Did Right even though the people continued to sacrifice and burn incense at the high places.** (750-732 BC)
- **Ahaz – One of the most Evil kings to reign in Judah. He sacrificed his children to Molech.** (735-716 BC)
- **Hezekiah – Did Right and tried to reverse the evil begun by his father.** (716-687 BC)

As we know, despite all God had done for His people, they continued to rebel against Him. So..... He took them to court.

- **Micah 1:2** - Hear, O peoples, all of you; Listen, O earth and all it contains, and let the Lord God be a witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple.

First up --- the People

- **Micah 1:6-7** - 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. ⁷ All of her idols will be smashed, all of her earnings will be burned with fire, and all of her images I will make desolate, **BECAUSE** she collected *them* from a harlot's earnings, and to the earnings of a harlot they will return.
- **Micah 2:1-3** - Woe to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds! At morning's light they carry it out because it is in their power to do it. ² They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them. They defraud a man of his home, a fellowman of his inheritance. ³ **THEREFORE**, the LORD says: "I am planning disaster against this people, from which you cannot save yourselves. You will no longer walk proudly, for it will be a time of calamity.

Next up --- the leadership and the prophets who led the people astray:

- **Micah 3:1-3** - And I said, "Hear now, heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel. Is it not for you to know justice? ² "You who hate good and love evil, who tear off their skin from them and their flesh from their bones, ³ and who eat the flesh of my people, strip off their skin from them, break their bones, and chop *them* up as for the pot and as meat in a kettle."
- **Micah 3:9-12** - heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and twist everything that is straight, ¹⁰ who build Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with violent injustice. ¹¹ Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe, her priests instruct for a price, and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD saying, "Is not the LORD in our midst? Calamity will not come upon us." ¹² **THEREFORE**, on account of you, Zion will be plowed as a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the temple *will become* high places of a forest.

Because God is fair, Israel was invited to defend itself, *"Stand up, plead your case before the mountains; let the hills hear what you have to say."*

God moved from charges of infidelity to asking 2 questions, *"My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you?"*

Then He invited Israel to remember His saving acts on their behalf, *"I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam. ⁵ My people, remember what Balak king of Moab counseled and what Balaam son of Beor answered. Remember your journey from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD."* {Micah 6:1-5}

The people were alarmed by these charges brought against them. They could not deny the mighty acts of God but they were living under the delusion that they remained firmly within the Covenant as *"God's Chosen People"*, which they had practically dissolved as a result of their idolatry.

How they responded to the charges is very telling about how they had come to view God and their responsibility to Him:

- **Micah 6:6-7** - What can we bring to the LORD? Should we bring him burnt offerings? Should we bow before God Most High with offerings of yearling calves? ⁷Should we offer him thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Should we sacrifice our firstborn children to pay for our sins? {NLT}

They had fully come to see God as just another god to be appeased.

- No rain = must have done something to tick off the god - sacrifice some stuff so that he'll bring rain.
- Bad war season = must have done something to tick off the god - sacrifice some stuff in order to experience victory in the next battle.
- Want a good agricultural year with no blight or locust plagues – Sacrifice some stuff in order to **AVOID** ticking off the god.

Idols don't care how you treat your neighbor. Idols don't care if you're selfish or greedy or arrogant. Idols don't care how many affairs you have. Idols don't care if you show mercy or value justice. Idols care nothing about your character. They only care about how many **EXTERNAL** hoops you're willing to jump through in order to get what you want.

God is displeased? What is required to buy him off? Will an ordinary sacrifice do? Will we need to amp it up a little with yearling calves or perhaps thousands of rams and rivers of oil? If that is not enough, we are prepared to sacrifice our children if that will make these judgments go away.....

They had taken the worship of God and the sacrificial system He had set up – which was intended to direct their thoughts to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus on their behalf – and had recast them into an external set of rituals and empty religious formalism that required no heart change, no self-examination, no transformation, no obedience, no faithfulness

God is mad = sacrifice some stuff and that will make the problem go away.

They were hoping to side-step consequences through external acts that would require no internal reformation.

Which brings us, finally to **My Favorite Thing About MICAH --- One Verse**

Micah 6:8 - He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Simple enough:

Act Justly "Righteousness"– integrity, uprightness, morally right, fair – doing the right and just thing in every situation **ALL THE TIME.**

Love Mercy "Hesed" – We learned about "**Hesed**" in the book of **RUTH** = loyalty, goodness, kindness / lovingkindness, devotion, faithfulness, favor, mercy, unchanging love --- going above and beyond what is expected. To that we'll add, "**Showing pity for / compassionate treatment of an enemy, the unfortunate or helpless.**"

Walk Humbly with your God – Humble is the opposite of proud. Humility tells me that I am created. Humility tells me I cannot save myself. Humility tells me I need a Creator and a Redeemer. It is a sense of my need for God – my dependence on Him. What I am and who I am before the God of the universe.

No external forms of religion can replace a life that is upright and fair and honorable in its dealings, full of compassion and "**Hesed**" in every circumstance and has a deep understanding of it's need for God.

A life devoid of those things may go through all the "**churchy**" motions and even make a few pious noises, but scripture could not be more clear about how God views such a life:

- **Isaiah 1:11-17** - The multitude of your sacrifices-- what are they to me?" says the LORD. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. ¹² When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? ¹³ Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations-- I cannot bear your evil assemblies. ¹⁴ Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. ¹⁵ When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; ¹⁶ **wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, ¹⁷ learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.**
- **Isaiah 29:13** - The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.
- **Ezekiel 33:30-32** - As for you, son of man, your countrymen are talking together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, saying to each other, 'Come and hear the message that has come from the LORD.' ³¹ My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. ³² Indeed, to

them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.

- **Hosea 6:6** - For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.
- **Matthew 7:21-23** - Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'
- **Matthew 15:7-9** - You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: ⁸ "'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. ⁹ They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.'"
- **1 Corinthians 13:1-3** - If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.
- **2 Timothy 3:1-5** - But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God -- ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.
- **Revelation 3:14-17** - And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: ¹⁵ 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

Oh, how different our world would be if everyone who claimed to be a follower of Jesus took these words to heart:

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act **justly** and to love **mercy** and to walk **humbly** with your God. {also see James 1:27}