

**WHAT GOD REQUIRES, GOD PROVIDES**  
**PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE: MICAH**  
**Micah 6:6-8; 7:18-19**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. BRIEF DESCRIPTION**

Israel is declining and its idolatry is pushing it toward destruction. On the surface, Judah still claims to serve Jehovah—but beneath that thin veneer everything has become corrupt. Though the Temple still stands, worship has become empty rituals while the idolatrous ways of Israel are making inroads into society. Rulers oppress the people with cruel violence. Judges are bent by bribes. Businessmen cheat with their weights and measures. Landlords steal from the poor and evict widows. False prophets seek riches instead of righteousness. Priests minister for greed and not for God. Micah exposes this immorality, indicts and judges the oppressors, proclaims God’s expectations of true religion, and promises restoration and salvation for those who repent.

### **B. TITLE**

#### 1. HEBREW

- **Michayahu**—shortened to **Michaiah** = “Who is God like You”
- Also found in **7:18**—“*Who is a God like Thee, who pardons iniquity. . .*”

#### 2. SEPTUAGINT

- **Μιχαϊας**

#### 3. LATIN

- **Micha**

### **C. PLACE IN HEBREW BIBLE**

1. PART OF LATTER PROPHETS—THE TRULY ‘PROPHETIC’ BOOKS OF THE OT
2. SIXTH OF THE TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS

### **D. AUTHOR**

#### 1. AUTHORSHIP

- Attributed to Micah—in **1:1**
- Not disputed by modern scholars

#### 2. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

- a. From **Moresbeth—1:1**—which was **Moresbeth Gath—1:14**
  - 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem

- Near the Judean border with Philistia
  - In a fertile agricultural belt
- b. Rural background—city message
1. Unlike contemporary urban prophet Isaiah—Micah was from the ‘country’
    - Like Amos (before Micah)—from Tekoa—12 miles south of Jerusalem
  2. He delivered his message primarily to the leaders in Jerusalem
- c. Family and occupation unknown
- d. Concerned for the plight and suffering of everyday people

## E. DATE

### 1. MICAH PROPHESED DURING THE REIGNS OF THREE JUDEAN KINGS—**1:1**

#### a. **Jotham**—‘good’ king—**740-731**—[co-regent with Uzziah 750-740]

- See **II Kgs 15:32-38** and **II Chron chapter 27**
- He ‘did right in the sight of the Lord’
- But pagan ‘high places’ were *not* removed, and people burnt incense at them
- He did not enter the Temple—and the people acted ‘corruptly’

#### b. **Ahaz**—‘bad’ king—**731-715**—[co-regent with Jotham 735-731]

- See **II Kgs 16:1-20** and **II Chron chapter 28**
- He ‘did not do right in the sight of the Lord’
- He followed the ways of the Kings of Israel (northern kingdom)
- He worshiped Baal, burned incense at pagan altars, and ‘burned his sons in fire’

#### c. **Hezekiah**—‘good’ king—**715-687**

- See **II Kgs chapters 18-20** and **II Chron chapters 29-32**
- He did ‘right in the sight of the Lord—and tore down all pagan altars
- He promoted religious reform and restored Temple worship

### 2. BEFORE THE FALL OF ISRAEL—722 BC

○ Since Micah predicted the destruction of Israel (Samaria)—**1:2-8**

### 3. BUT—SOME OF IT WAS DURING HEZEKIAH’S REIGN—WHICH BEGAN 715

- a. Jeremiah quoted Micah’s prophecy—**Mic 3:12**—of the destruction of Jerusalem
- b. Jeremiah said—Micah prophesied this during Hezekiah’s reign

**Jer 26:18**—*Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah Zion will be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem will become ruins, and the mountain of the house of the high places of a forest.*

#### 4. LIKELY STRUCTURE AND TIMEFRAME

- a. Probably a recapitulation of oracles from different times in Micah's ministry
- b. Some from the 'bad' reign of Ahaz—before the fall of Israel
- c. Some during the early part of Hezekiah's reign—before the religious reforms
- d. Probably—731-710 BC

#### 5. MICAH'S CHRONOLOGICAL PLACE—IN RELATION TO OTHER PROPHETS

- a. After Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, and Amos
- b. Contemporary of Hosea and Isaiah
- c. Before Nahum and the rest of the minor prophets—and Jeremiah and Daniel

### F. SETTING

#### 1. MICAH'S MESSAGE WAS MAINLY TO JUDAH

- Though he also prophesied against Israel—**1:2-8**

#### 2. ASSYRIA WAS THE ASCENDANT POWER

- a. Under Tiglath Pileser (745-727) and Shalmaneser V (727-722)
- b. Dominated Babylonians
- c. Subdued united rebellion by Israel and Syria (Aramaeans)
- d. Constantly threatened Judah

#### 3. ISRAEL

- a. After Jeroboam II (d. 753)—Israel declined in power
- b. Three of the next four kings were assassinated
- c. **Pekah** (740-732)—fifth king after Jeroboam
  1. Reigned during most **Jotham's** reign—and the beginning of **Ahaz's** reign
  2. Allied with Syrian King Rezin to rebel against Assyrian
  3. When Judah refused to join them—they attacked Judah and threatened Jerusalem
    - Syrians deported many Judean captives to Damascus

- Israel killed 120,000 soldiers, deported 200,000 to Samaria
- Israel eventually returned captives to Jericho

4. Assassinated by Hoshea—who continued payment of tribute to Tiglath Pileser III

d. **Hoshea** (732-722)—last king of Israel

1. Ruled during the reign of **Ahaz** (731-715)
2. When Tiglath Pileser III died—Hoshea stopped paying tribute to Assyria
3. Tried to form an alliance with Egypt—which did not follow through with help
4. Shalmaneser V defeated Israel, captured Hoshea, and colonized Israel—722 BC

#### 4. JUDAH

a. **Jotham's** reign

1. Rebuilt part of the temple and city walls; built Judean cities and fortresses in hills
2. Subdued the Ammonites—who paid large tribute to Judah

b. **Ahaz's** reign

1. Besieged on all sides
  - Israel-Syrian armies
  - Edomites attacked—and deported captives
  - Philistines invaded the south
2. Appealed to Tiglath Pileser III for help against Israel-Syria
3. Judah became vassal to Assyria—and paid tribute

c. **Hezekiah's** reign

1. Assyria was ruled by Sargon II (722-705) and Sennacherib (705-681)
2. Judah defeated the Philistines
3. Rebellion against Assyrians
  - Sennacherib invaded Judah
  - God defeated the Assyrians—killing 185,000
  - Sennacherib returned to Assyria—and was assassinated

### G. STYLE AND GENRE

NARRATIVE WITH PROPHETIC ORACLES

### H. BIBLICAL CONTEXT

1. PROPHECY OF CHRIST'S BIRTH

**5:2**—*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 of Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

○Paraphrased by chief priests and scribes, responding to Herod—**Mt 2:5-6**

○Referred to by crowd at Feast of Booths debating about Jesus' identity—**Jn 7:42**

## 2. SIMILARITY TO ISAIAH

- a. They were contemporaries—addressing the same people—and similar problems
- b. Isaiah focuses on political and world affairs—Micah on ethical and moral issues

## 3. JESUS' CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

- a. In one of His 'hard' calls—Jesus said He would cause division
- b. He quoted **Mic 7:6**

**Mt 10:34-36**—*Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to “set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law” and “a man’s enemies will be the members of his household.”*

- c. Paraphrased in **Lk 12:53**—and loosely referred to in **Mk 13:12**

## I. THEMES

1. GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS OPPOSES INJUSTICE AND OPPRESSION
2. GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS REJECTS EMPTY WORSHIP
3. TRUE RELIGION NOT ONLY HONORS GOD—IT ALSO RESPECTS PEOPLE: GOD EXPECTS US TO BE JUST, MERCIFUL, AND HUMBLE
4. GOD WILL RESTORE HIS KINGDOM AND SEND A MESSIAH
5. GOD IS MERCIFUL AND WILL SAVE

## J. OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION—**1:1**

JUDGMENT ON THE TWO NATIONS—**1:2-2:13**

Judgment on Israel—**1:2-8**

Judgment on Judah—**1:9-2:13**

JUDGMENT ON THE LEADERS—**chapter 3**

PROMISE OF RESTORATION—**chapters 4-5**

The Coming Kingdom—**4:1-5**

Promise to the Remnant—**4:6-5:1**

The Coming Messiah—**5:2-15**

GOD INDICTS HIS PEOPLE—**chapter 6**

MICAH'S LAMENT—**7:1-6**

GOD'S MESSAGE OF SALVATION—**7:7-20**

## II. BIBLICAL TEXT

*6 With what shall I come to the Lord and bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, with yearling calves? 7 Does the Lord take delight in thousands of rams, in ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 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?*

*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. 19 He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea.*

## III. EXPOSITION

### A. WHAT GOD REQUIRES—**verse 8**

#### 1. PREFACED BY TWO THINGS

##### a. **Reminder**—**vv 1-5**

- Micah reminds Judah how God delivered Israel
- Described as *the righteous acts of the Lord*—**v5**
- So—the focus is on God's **righteousness**
- But His 'righteousness' is described as faithful care—not 'rightness'
- Implication—God wants us to be **faithful** and in **right relationship** with Him

##### b. **Four Questions**—**vv 6-7**

1. **Rhetorical** questions—with **implied** answer, "No!"
2. The point = since we serve such a faithful God—what does He expect of us?
3. Two-part answer
  - What God does **not** expect—answering the four questions
  - What God **does** expect—answered by **verse 8**

#### 2. SIGNIFICANCE OF **VERSES 6-8**

- a. They sum up the OT Law and its purpose
  - Like Jesus' 'Golden Rule' summed up the Law and the Prophets
  - Like Jesus' two greatest commandments—Love God and your neighbor
- b. They show how all relationships should be ordered and integrated—both human and divine
- c. **Verse 8 = motto over alcove of religion in reading room of Congressional Library**

### 3. SUMMARY ANSWER = GOD REQUIRES GOODNESS

*He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you*

- a. Simple—singular answer = be '**good**'
  - Hebrew '**towb**' = pleasant—agreeable—beneficial—welfare—valuable—prosperous
- b. God's essential nature = eternally and perfectly Good

**Ps 136:1**—*Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good*

**Ps 100:4-5**—*Give thanks to Him and bless His name, for the Lord is good*

- Both passages explain *why* He is considered 'good'
  - *His lovingkindness* [mercy] *is everlasting*
  - **26 times** in **Psalm 136**
- c. God created everything **towb**—good
- d. We are created in His image—His expectation is for us also to be **towb**—good
  - Implication—we should be **merciful**—full of lovingkindness
- e. This goodness—is expressed in two ways

#### 1. Relating—rightly and faithfully—to **God**

- Worshiping Him truthfully
- Humbly walking with Him

#### 2. Relating—rightly and faithfully—to others

- Treating others fairly
- Showing others mercy

### 4. RIGHTLY AND FAITHFULLY RELATING TO GOD

#### a. **True Worship**

- 1. The implied answer to the four questions—**vv6-7**
- 2. God does not want constant repetition of empty ritualistic acts

3. Like Jesus' rebuke—of the Scribes and Pharisees

**Mt 23:23**—*You hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill, cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.*

4. Not a rejection of religious rites and deeds of devotion

➤ Jesus still supported—giving alms, prayer, and fasting—**Mt 6**

5. But an emphasis on the moral law—over the ceremonial law

## b. Humbly Walking

*And to walk humbly with your God*

1. Walk—**yalak**

➤ To *live* a certain way—a way of life—to live in *communion* with

2. Humbly—**tsana**

- a. Not usual Hebrew word for humility

- b. Not—self-effacement

- c. Real meaning

▲ Coming into conformity with—God's will

▲ Walking carefully—circumspectly—with integrity

3. “Be careful to live as God wants you to live”

4. Explained at God's second giving of the Law

**Dt 10:12-13**—*And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good.*

## 5. RIGHTLY AND FAITHFULLY RELATING TO OTHERS

*But to do justice, to love mercy*

### 1. Do Justice

- a. **mishpat**

▪ Right—proper—fitting—fair

- b. **Doing** justice—not just *talking*—but **acting** justly



- c. Treating others fairly—especially the poor
- d. Parallels Jesus’ ‘Golden Rule’—**Mt 7**
- e. K.L Barker gives this example—**what the Lord said to Shallum, King Josiah’s son**

**Jer 22:15b-16**—*Did not your father have food and drink? He did what was right and just, so all went well with him. He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?*

## 2. Love Mercy

- a. Mercy—**chesed**
  - Kindness—loving-kindness
  - Faithful covenant love
- b. Not just loving the *idea* of mercy
- c. But *expressing* that mercy—with acts of love
- d. James Limburg notes
  - 1. The kind of love—that shows strong loyalty
  - 2. Between humans
    - ▲ Hosea’s ‘steadfast love’ for Gomer—[and God for Israel]—**Hos 2:19**
    - ▲ David and Jonathan’s ‘steadfast love’ for one another—**I Sam 20:14**
  - 3. God’s expectation of us
 

**Hos 6:6**—*For I delight in mercy [loyalty] rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.*
- e. Summary—**love mercy** = keep our covenant to care for one another—and God

## 6. SUMMARY—OF RIGHTEOUS AND FAITHFUL GOODNESS

- a. God requires **action**
  - **Do—love—walk**
- b. God requires **good results**
  - **Justice—mercy—staying close** [to Him and His will]

## B. GOD PROVIDES

### 1. GOD HIMSELF LIVES UP TO HIS COVENANT PROMISES

### 2. HE PROVIDES JUSTICE

- Pronouncing judgment on a sinful nation and leaders—**chapters 1-3**

- Presenting His indictment on sinful people—**chapter 6**

### 3. HE IS PROVIDES **RIGHTEOUS AND FAITHFUL DELIVERANCE**

- Liberating and protecting Israel through righteous acts—**6:1-5**

### 4. HE PROVIDES **MERCY**

- a. **Sends** the coming **Messiah**—**5:2-15**
- b. **Saves** His people—**7:7-20**
  - 1. Because—*He delights* [finds good] *in unchanging love* [mercy—**chesed**]**—v19**
  - 2. Motivated by His everlasting mercy
    - v20—He will again have compassion** [mercy—**racham**] *on us*
  - 3. He forgives our sin!—in every possible way!**—vv19-20**
    - Pardons iniquity
    - Passes over the rebellious act
    - Does not retain His anger
    - He will subdue—tread upon—our iniquities
    - He will cast all our sins—into the depths of the sea