



Community Group Discussion Guide

The Book of Micah - Micah 1:1

I. Starter Questions:

- What is the best epic novel you've ever read or a movie that covered a significant span of time that you particularly liked?
- What about it did you enjoy?

(An apology up front – In an effort to try to prepare us for the setting of the book of Micah, this guide is written to provide some basic background history of the nation of Israel. With that in mind multiple Old Testament passages have been included. If you find that there are too many to adequately cover in the time allotted for your group, please feel free to select the ones you prefer to read during class and just summarize the others)

Today's Passage:

Micah 1:1 - *The word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.*

II. Discussion of Scripture:

Where are we, how did we get here, and what should this verse mean to me?

Micah was an Old Testament prophet who intersected the timelines of three of Judah's kings as stated in the verse above. This would have placed him somewhere between 750 and 687 B.C (Approximately 250 years after King David and 700 years before Jesus arrived). He was a contemporary of the prophets Isaiah, Hosea and Amos and came from the Southern Kingdom of Judah (Moresheth was located about 22 miles SW of Jerusalem).

This verse also tells us that Micah received a word from the Lord concerning Samaria (the Northern Kingdom) and Judah. We will find over the next few months that the word that Micah received contained messages of both judgment and forgiveness from the Lord. But why judgment? And why now? To try to address those questions let's take a 30,000-foot glance at Israel's history up to this point. For the sake of time, we will join Israel after their 40 years in the desert at the end of Moses's life as they are about to enter the promised land. Suffice it to say, Israel's walk with their God has been a mixture of victories and failures which honestly is a thread that runs through the entire Old Testament. The victories came when the nation was fully surrendered to God in faith and worship. In these times, God protected them and often fought their battles for them. The failures followed periods of wandering, grumbling, idolatry and conforming to the ways of the neighboring nations and often resulted in loss on Israel's part.

- **Deuteronomy – God’s Covenant with Israel:** 40 years after God revealed that he was greater than the current world superpower, Egypt, he has led the Israelites to the edge of the Promised Land...for a second time. Israel has seen God visibly in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (not to mention many other miraculous acts) and yet they still have their moments of grumbling and unbelief. Despite this, God’s love is steadfast, and He enters into a covenant with Israel. The passage below contains His concluding remarks of this covenant through Moses.
 - **Read Deuteronomy Chapter 30:11-20**

- **2 Chronicles 7 – The Dedication of God’s Temple:** Approximately 300 years after the Israelites enter the Promised Land, after the period of Judges where “everyone did what was right in his own eyes”, Israel is now a Kingdom. King David has recently passed away, but God has promised to preserve his line and ultimately produce the King of Kings from that line. David’s son Solomon has been granted the honor of building a temple for the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. After the temple’s dedication, where God visibly makes His presence known by filling the temple with fire and the glory of the Lord, God speaks these words to Solomon.
 - **Read 2 Chronicles 7:11-22**

- **1 Kings 11 - Solomon’s idolatry** – Unfortunately, Solomon did not finish well. He married many wives from other surrounding nations and ultimately his heart was turned to chase after their gods and even worse, he set up places of worship for those gods within Israel. This sin had significant ramifications and lasting consequences for Israel. It caused the nation to be split and set a precedent for idol worship within the kingdoms of Samaria (northern 10 tribes of Israel) and Judah (southern 2 tribes).
 - **Read 1 Kings 11:1-13**

- **2 Chronicles 19 – Jehoshaphat, an example of a good king** – Over the course of the next 200 years until Micah’s day, Israel saw its share of prosperous times and trying times. The northern kingdom never had a good king that followed God, however God did send them Elijah and Elisha, two very notable and power filled prophets as well as other prophets like Hosea and Jonah. The line of David remained intact in the southern kingdom with a mixture of good kings and bad kings. One example of a good king was Jehoshaphat. Even though not all his decisions were right, his heart was devoted to the one true God, and his actions for the most part reflected this. If you have time, read a little about him and how God honored his devotion to Him.
 - **Read 2 Chronicles 20**

- **2 Chronicles 28 – Ahaz, a bad king in Micah’s day** – We finally reach the days of Micah. Assyria is the current superpower in the region and has its eyes set on Samaria and Judah among other surrounding nations. The northern and southern kingdoms have been prosperous, but their affections have drifted away from God, and they are not loving their neighbors very well either. Of the kings mentioned in Micah 1:1, Jotham and Hezekiah were good, but Ahaz was particularly bad. This passage gets us up to speed and places us right in the middle of Micah’s ministry.
 - **Read 2 Chronicles 28:1-4 & 28:16-27**

- **Isaiah 3 – An indictment on a nation** – While we have been looking at a few of Israel’s kings, you might be wondering about the inhabitants of Israel and if their actions mirrored their leaders. This excerpt from Isaiah is one of many examples of what was going on in the country at Micah’s time.
 - **Read Isaiah 3:8-15**

Overall, what we have covered today is a bit of a downer. Despite God’s repeated acts of mercy and protection, the nation of Israel continued to stray. There is good news, though. God was not surprised by Israel’s actions.

Psalm 103:8-14

8 The Lord is merciful and gracious,
 slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
 9 He will not always chide,
 nor will he keep his anger forever.
 10 He does not deal with us according to our sins,
 nor repay us according to our iniquities.
 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
 so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
 12 as far as the east is from the west,
 so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
 13 As a father shows compassion to his children,
 so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.
 14 For he knows our frame;
 he remembers that we are dust.

In fact, he told the Israelites all the way back in Deuteronomy that they were going to fall away. But He had a plan that he set in motion further back in the Garden of Eden to save a remnant of the entire human race for those who would humble themselves and return to Him in faith. A savior and king, “The offspring of woman” (Gen 3:15), a descendant of Abraham, in the line of David. The book of Micah will give us glimpses of this savior.

Micah's contemporary, Isaiah, also provided many glimpses:

Isaiah 9:6-7

6 For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Discussion Questions:

- 1. What stood out to you in the passages we read today?**
- 2. Compare the epic story of the Israelites to your own life. Is there anything you can relate to or any application to be made?**

III. Responding in Prayer:

While Old Testament books can often be challenging to understand, especially the prophets, they are very rich and contain direct proclamations from God. Pray that our study of Micah this fall will be rewarding and draw us closer to God. Pray that He will reveal Himself to us through this study and help us to apply it in our lives.

Pray for our families and those in our community as school ramps back up. Pray for protection for our children and a removal of anxiety. Pray that families will be drawn to seek out peace through Jesus as they deal with any stress that enters their lives.

Pray that God will continue to impress upon us that true significance and security comes only from Him and that we will not be enticed by the idols of this world.