

Micah: The Right Measure of Doom and Hope

New Covenant Presbyterian Church

Adult Sunday School 3/27/22

I. Introduction

A. Author

1. The book states Micah of Moresheth as the author
 - a) Moresheth was about 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem
 - b) It was near the Philistine city of Gath
2. He was a prophet ministering to both the kingdoms of Judah and Israel
3. Micah means “who is like Yahweh?”
4. He is remembered by Jeremiah as bringing revival to King Hezekiah and Judah (Jer. 26:17-19).

B. Date

1. Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah
2. This is between 750-690 B.C.
3. The prophets Isaiah and Hosea were his contemporaries
4. Assyria was the rising superpower of his time
5. He predicts the fall of Samaria (1:6)

C. Theme

1. Divine judgment on Judah and Israel’s sin (1:5)
2. Divine restoration for a remnant by removal of sin (7:18)

II. Structure and Outline

A. The structure of the book is a counterbalance between doom and hope

1. Unit one: (1:2-2:13)
 - a) 1:2-2:11 Doom (long section)
 - b) 2:12-13 Hope (short section)
2. Unit two: (3:1-5:15)
 - a) 3:1-12 Doom (long section)
 - b) 4:1-5 Hope (short section)
 - c) 4:6-8 Hope with distress (for remnant)
 - d) 4:9-5:6 Hope with distress
 - e) 5:7-9 Hope with distress (for remnant)
 - f) 5:10-14 Doom (long section)
 - g) 5:15 Hope (short section)
3. Unit three (6-7:20)
 - a) 6:1-7:7 Doom (long section)
 - b) 7:8-20 Hope (short section)

DQ: What does the balance between doom and hope teach us about God and the message of this book?

- B. There is a vast literary style found in the book using prose and poetry
 - 1. Oracles of judgment and salvation
 - 2. Lawsuit speeches
 - 3. Disputations
 - 4. Instructions
 - 5. Laments
 - 6. Prayer
 - 7. Hymns
- C. Wordplay is used in the lament song 1:10-15
 - 1. The villages and towns in this list feature wordplays between its name and its predicted doom
 - 2. Peterson helps capture the wordplays in contemporary language

Don't gossip about this in Telltown.
Don't waste your tears in Dustville.
Roll in the dust.
In Alarmtown, the alarm is sounded.
The citizens of Exitburgh will never get out alive.
Lament, Last-Stand City: There's nothing left standing in you.
The villagers of Bittertown wait in vain for sweet peace.
Harsh judgment has come from God and entered peace City.
All you who live in Chariotville get in your chariots for flight.

DQ: What do you think this kind of wordplay is meant to accomplish? What tone does it give to the book of Micah?

III. Message and Theology

- A. Indictment for Sin
 - 1. Micah gives many indictments followed by judgments
 - 2. The specific sins are identified
 - a) The whole nation of Israel is rebellious (1:5)
 - b) There is social injustice from wealthy oppressors (2:1-9)
 - c) Rejection of Micah's message (2:6)
 - d) False prophets (2:6-11, 3:1-11)
 - e) Abuse of social and religious power (3:1-11, 7:3)
 - f) Wealthy cheat and use dishonest measures (6:9-16)
 - 3. Covetousness can be seen as a major problem
 - a) Like his contemporary Isaiah, Micah confronted greedy "land-grabbers"
 - b) They "Buy up house after house and field after field, until everyone is evicted and you live alone in the land" (Is. 5:8)

DQ: Why is covetousness so heinous to God? Where in Scripture have we seen its destructive nature? How is it connected to idolatry?

“Typically, greedy desires lead to scheming, scheming results in the implementation of devious plans, and devious plans enacted leave human wreckage in their wake.” -Andrew Hill

B. Judgment for Sin

1. Micah prophesies the exile of Judah and Israel
 - a) He predicts the fall of Samaria (722 B.C.) which is capital of the northern kingdom of Israel (1:6)
 - b) He predicts the fall of Jerusalem (586 B.C.) which is the capital of the Southern kingdom of Judah (3:12)
2. There is judgment against wealthy oppressors (2:1-5)
3. Judgment against Israel's leaders (3:1-12)
4. Judgment on the nations and destruction of all idols (5:10-15)

C. Hope for a Remnant

1. Micah repeatedly speaks of hope for restoration
2. A small group within Israel will be saved (a remnant)
3. Micah refers to a remnant 5 times
 - a) Micah 2:12-13, 4:7, 5:7,8 and 7:18
4. The remnant theme can be understood in 3 different ways
 - a) A historical remnant composed of the survivors of God's judgment (Jer. 23:3)
 - b) A faithful remnant who maintain relationship of faith with God (Amos 5:15)
 - c) An eschatological remnant of Hebrews and Gentiles that will be saved (Amos 9:12)
5. The references in Micah combine the historical and eschatological remnant themes
6. The remnant theme mediates the tension between the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants
 - a) Abrahamic covenant guaranteed Israel an everlasting place in God's redemption
 - b) Mosaic covenant threatened Israel's sinful disobedience with death

DQ: How does the remnant theme inform our understanding of salvation in the New Testament? What does it mean for God's promises to Israel and the church?

D. Christ in Micah

1. Micah 5:2 promises a deliverer who will be born in Bethlehem
 - a) Matt. 2:4-6- Chief priests and scribes see this as reference to Messiah
 - b) Peace is ultimately a person (Micah 5:5, Eph. 2:14)

2. Promise of the forgiveness of sins
 - a) Micah 7:18-20
 - b) Jesus accomplishes atonement necessary for forgiveness
3. Jesus is himself the ultimate remnant of Israel
 - a) He alone fulfilled the law of Moses
 - b) He is the only truly righteous Hebrew

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