

# Note

## Micah – Part 1 of 1

Era	Characters	Chapters
In the beginning	God created the world.	Genesis 1
Before 4000 BC	Adam & Eve	Gen 1~5
Before 3000 BC	Cain Abel Seth	Gen 4~5
Before 2500 BC	Noah	Gen 5~10
Before 2100 BC	Job Elihu	Job
About 2000 BC <b>Era of Patriarchs</b>	Abraham Isaac & Ishmael Jacob & Esau Joseph	Gen 11~50
About 1500 BC~ 1000 BC <b>Era of prophets</b>	Moses Aaron Joshua	Exo Lev Num Deu
	Joshua	Joshua
	Judges(Othniel Ehud Shamgar Deborah Gideon Tola Jair Jephthah Ibzan Elon Abdon Samson) Abimelech	Judges
	Ruth Boaz Naomi	Ruth
	Eli Samuel Saul David	1 Samuel
About 1000 BC <b>Era of princes</b>	Saul Jonathan David Absalom Solomon	1 Samuel 2 Samuel
	Solomon Jeroboam Rehoboam Ahab Elijah Elisha Jehu	1 kings
	Ahab Hezekiah Manasseh Josiah Elisha Jehu Elijah	2 kings
	Saul David Solomon	1 Chronicles
	Solomon Rehoboam Asa Jehoshaphat Jehoram Joash Hezekiah Josiah	2 Chronicles
About 500 BC <b>Era of priests</b>	Zerubbabel Ezra Nehemiah Haggai Zechariah	Ezra Nehemiah
	Esther Mordecai Haman Ahasuerus	Esther
	Isaiah Ahaz Hezekiah	Isaiah
	Jeremiah Baruch Zedekiah	Jeremiah
	Jeremiah	Lamentation
	Ezekiel	Ezekiel
	Daniel Nebuchadnezzar Belshazzar	Daniel
	Hosea	Hosea
	Joel	Joel
	Amos	Amos
	Obadiah	Obadiah
	Jonah	Jonah
	<b>Micah</b>	<b>Micah</b> 

# Summary

## **Micah - Part 1 of 1 .....3**

Micah shows what happens as a result of sins and how God will restore

humanity through an eventual saviour of the world: Jesus Christ.

Because of His grace, God asks us to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with Him.

# Transcript

## Micah – Part 1 of 1

Today we come to the book of Micah.

Micah was a contemporary of the prophet Isaiah. Both of them ministered to the southern kingdom at the same time. Isaiah was from the royal family. He was in fact a cousin of the king. So he dealt at a higher level. He attacked the idolatry of the southern kingdom, the immorality and the injustice.

Micah, on the other hand, was a simple man from a simple town in the countryside. So Isaiah grew up in the Royal Court in Jerusalem. Micah grew up in a kind of a village reasonably far from Jerusalem. And because he was a simple man, he felt the pain of the poor and the oppressed. So he cared for them and the sins that affected them, namely, the sins of injustice. While he does talk about idolatry and immorality, his focus is on injustice. Very much like another prophet we studied, Amos.

Amos was from the northern kingdom. And Amos also spoke against the social sins, the great divide between the rich and the poor, how the rich oppress the poor, how the rich live in luxury at the expense of the poor. Amos dealt with social sins in the north but God raised up Micah to deal with social sins in the southern kingdom.

When the two kingdoms split, the northern kingdom went into idolatry very quickly because of the golden calf that King Jeroboam the 1st made. And he put one in the southern part, one in the northern part of the kingdom, one golden calf each. And though they claim to be with worshipers of Jehovah, they actually worship a golden cow with eyes that cannot see your sins, and so they feel quite free to sin because their god doesn't know.

Imagine if you have a school teacher who doesn't know you're doing pranks, or your policemen who are blind. Of course, you'd be tempted to do all kinds of funny things, bad things. So if their god is blind, then of course they can have immorality and injustice. Idolatry always leads to immorality and injustice.

The northern kingdom went down that road of idolatry, immorality, injustice very quickly. But that bad influence began to affect the southern kingdom. The southern kingdom, though they had the temple and they worshiped the living God, they too had their local gods, their little shrine gods that they had learned from the Canaanites. There were shrines everywhere with little gods in them. And they too, because of idolatry, went down the road of immorality and injustice.

What started in Jerusalem then went down to the countryside, and Micah could see the corruption coming down. Cities have far more injustice, far more sins in greater magnitude and are more common because in a big city, people are a bit more removed. Most of your neighbours don't really know you, you can do a lot of things and nobody really knows who you are. Today of course, there's a lot of sin even in the bedroom because of the internet, I mean, you have a lot of private sins. Even Christians are watching pornography, and nobody knows.

Now, in the city, you are somewhat anonymous. On the internet, people are also anonymous. In the city people really don't know who you are. Secondly, in the city, because many people can gather closely, one bad person influences more and more. And sin tends to be more wild in the city. But that sin in Jerusalem began to slowly seep down to the place where Micah lived, and Micah was really troubled by it, and he began to speak up. God raised him up to speak up against injustice.

He prophesied that injustice will lead to Assyrian captivity, and then later, even to Jerusalem suffering and Babylonian captivity. He prophesied of these things. Since it's such a small book, just basically seven chapters, let's just look at it like a mini Bible study, not verse by verse, chapter by chapter.

Chapter 1 - Micah sees the glory of God coming down, this time not at Mt. Sinai to give a great covenant, to have a marriage ceremony at Mt. Sinai with Israel. He sees God coming down in all His glory as a Judge, not as a groom to marry His people. And then this Judge that comes down is going to judge Samaria and Jerusalem for the 500 years of rebellion that they had done against Him. It's like a wife who's committed adultery for 500 years and finally the husband said, Enough! I'm going to have to punish you, not divorce - punish you.

We see here in chapter one, some interesting things. He actually names the towns. Chapter 1:11 ESV

Pass on your way, inhabitants of Shaphir, in nakedness and shame....

So he names one town, Shaphir. This town is going to get punished one day when God judges Israel. Shaphir, the sound of it, sounds like a Hebrew word for beauty. And then he plays on the word and says, one day you will be naked and in shame. They like to dress beautifully but one day you'll be naked and ashamed. So he names a town and he makes a pun, he makes a play on the sound of the name of that town. We Chinese like to play with the sound of words, this word actually mean something, but it can also mean something else.

Let's look at verse 11, the second part  
the inhabitants of Zaanan do not come out.

Zaanan is another Hebrew word that sounds like - go forth. So he says, the town called go forth, will not go forth. So he uses puns to play with it but he actually names the cities or the towns that will be punished. Now, this is far more impactful. When preaching, I notice a lot of times, preachers do not want to be specific, but are very general. And when it's general, everybody in the congregation says it's for somebody else. And so, we have a lot of preaching against sin but it's so generalized that most people have this instinct to deflect it. It's not exactly me. So sometimes preaching has to be very specific. God names towns, God names people. I think this is something that's useful. So chapter 1 speaks of God's judgment, and He names a whole bunch of towns, playing with their names. Also, chapter one is a bit of an acrostic poem, so it helps them to remember.

Chapter 2, we see who God is going to judge, primarily.

Micah 2:1-2 Woe to those who devise wickedness and work evil on their beds! When the morning dawns, they perform it, because it is in the power of their hand. They covet fields and seize them, and houses and take them away; they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.

Who is he attacking? He's attacking land grabbers. There were people at that time who were powerful families, powerful people. Their land was getting scarce and they grabbed land. How did they grab it? They thought of schemes how to grab land, and then the next day they would grab this land from people. So it had become a case of the rich oppressing the poor,

and the poor became landless. And when you are landless, you don't have money and soon you have to sell your children. So the profiteers now make money from your land and from selling your kids. Firstly, of course from usury, they'll lend you money and make you give more and more and more to them. Finally you've got nothing to give, you have to give your kids, you sell your kids and you sell yourself. So, they were profiteers. Can you imagine in the land of Israel this was happening? God had chosen Israel to be a light for the rest of the world to see and to be drawn to Him but now the exact opposite had taken place.

In the past, people like Isaiah would attack the princes, the prophets, the priests, but now we see Micah attacking the profiteers. He was more concerned about social injustice. So we see this horrible scene where, according to Jewish law, your land can never be sold. Your land continues in your name. If you are a woman and your husband died, his brother would marry you and have a child so that the land continues in your husband's name. In other words, you can't grab land from somebody else. You can take it for a while, but after so many years it has to be given back to the family.

Here we see quite a horrible scene, Israel is in bad shape. But you know the good part about Micah? Every time he gives a warning, there's always hope at the end of it.

Let's look at chapter 2:12

I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob; I will gather the remnant of Israel; I will set them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture.

He is saying, God is going to judge you, but there's a covenant that God had with Abraham that Must, Must always be fulfilled - that God will send a Shepherd. All nations will be blessed through Abraham; Israel will be blessed because of Abraham; and every other nation. So, you see Micah saying, Justice, Hope; Justice, Mercy. That is the style of Micah.

Let's look at chapter 3. We know that basically the sin was of profiteers who made money. In every country, the richest guys usually are people who own property. Property developers are the richest people. In many countries, they grab land, still very common today. When a person is poor, they take away his land and soon it's landlords and landless. That's very, very common everywhere in the world, it hasn't changed -the greed of man. We see here how the oppression continues.

Micah 3:1 And I said: Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know justice? You who hate the good and love the evil, who tear the skin from off my people and their flesh from off their bones, who eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones in pieces and chop them up like meat in the pot, like flesh in a cauldron.

The leaders were doing that. They were literally not just taking their money, they were taking their lives, taking their flesh, their children and selling them. Brothers were sold to slavery because they had nothing left to pay except their own bodies. You say, I can't imagine a time like that. Actually, it's still the same nowadays. We have many countries I go to and see landless farmers, they've got nothing, they are just in perpetual debt to the landlords. Very common today. There are one or two guys in the town who live in massive houses and they own all the land around them. And everybody else works for them for nothing, because they're always paying off their debts, and the children are just literally born into a debt they can never pay. Slavery, without the "old way" of slavery. It's just I own you, because you owe me. So, this is the oppression that Judah was going through and Israel was going through; but especially in Jerusalem because Micah was talking about the southern kingdom.

Let's look at chapter 3 verse 5.

Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who cry "Peace" when they have something to eat, but declare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths.

You thought the profiteers were bad, the prophets were just as bad. If you bribe them, they will preach that you're a good guy. If you have no money to give them, they will attack you.

Let's look at verse 11 Its heads (the leaders of the country) give judgment for a bribe; its priests teach for a price; its prophets practice divination for money.

How do you like that? From the king, the leaders to the judges to the prophets to the priests. Everybody needs a bribe to get work done. Does that sound familiar?

I go to countries where nothing can be done without a bribe, nothing. You want to get your water fixed, you go to the public utilities, you bribe. You

want to get your phone lines put in, you bribe. You want to pass exams, you bribe. You go to a hospital, you want to get proper treatment from the doctor, you bribe, nothing new. Everybody from top to bottom needs a bribe, from the Prime Minister down. Just different amounts, the prime minister's wife wants a million dollars bribe, the electrician's wife wants two curry puffs, whatever. Everybody wants a bribe. Has the world changed? Not really. In certain sophisticated countries, the bribery is not in cash under the table, it's in other forms.

Chapter 4 -So you see why Micah is so troubled. When I go to the mission field, I'm very troubled when I see things like that, when the poor are always oppressed. Of course, we who live in the most honest country, or number two in the world, we don't see a lot of that in Singapore. There is bribery to some extent but so minimal. But please remember we are an exception, not the norm.

Chapter 4:3 there's hope. You know, it looks so horrible, but He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away;  
(This is the promise of the eternal kingdom that Micah keeps looking at. He gets so depressed and then he sees the promise of God that says, one day I'll be there, I'll be there.)  
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall there be war anymore.”

I'm sure you have heard this. This is put up in the United Nations -we will beat our swords into plowshares. In other words, no more weapons of war one day. Actually Micah is not the only prophet that said it. Isaiah said it, Joel also said this, beating swords into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks.

Chapter 4:4 but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

You see, Micah sees the horrible situation in his present world, and peeps into the future what he is very sure God will do. So, that's a new Jerusalem.



Look at chapter 4:7 and the lame I will make the remnant, and those who are cast off, a strong nation; and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and forevermore.  
(Eternal kingdom, the New Jerusalem.)

Here you see Micah - warning of things to come, and then - hope.

Now in chapter five we see the siege.

Micah 5:1 & 2 Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

He's showing the contrast, the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem, and then as a prophet, he also sees beyond that. He doesn't know that beyond there's a big gap between this first thing he's seeing and the second. And what does he see? He says, out of Bethlehem, a tiny town, will come a ruler in Israel. And you know what? His coming forth is from of old, from ancient days, or could be translated from everlasting. Who is this? He was prophesying the ruler that will come forth for this everlasting kingdom is Jesus Christ, born in Bethlehem. So this was the prophecy that many, when they heard Christ was born, they knew that He was the Messiah because He was born in Bethlehem.

Bethlehem is very interesting, the word Beth. You find a lot of Bethhaven, Bethage in the Bible. Beth simply means house, leham means bread. Bethlehem is a house of bread. Bethlehem was a little town outside of Jerusalem, not very far from Jerusalem which provided the corn, the "bread" for Jerusalem. So, it's called House of bread. It was a village growing food for Jerusalem and from that, will come forth the Messiah. So this prophecy was remembered when Christ was born.

Chapter 6:6,7

With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

Micah is asking, is that what God wants from us? That we come with burnt offerings, carrying lambs with us, year old rams with us, bringing oil offerings, and even bringing our children like the Canaanites, to offer as human sacrifice to the gods. Is that what God wants from us? In other words, Micah is saying, you know, you keep doing this. I mean, the offerings never stopped, whether it was to the true God in the tabernacle, in the temple, or whether it was to the altar gods, people were always bringing offerings, bringing offerings, and then at the same time as they were doing it, bringing their offerings -

Chapter 6, look at verse 11...This is where the heart of the message is - Shall I acquit the man with wicked scales and with a bag of deceitful weights? Your rich men are full of violence; your inhabitants speak lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

What's he talking about? On one hand, they're bringing sacrifices, going to the temple, going to their altars. They were religious people. It's not that they didn't practice religion. They were what you and I will call faithful church goers. In fact, they were faithful, giving their offerings and their tithes, bringing animals which are not cheap, oil, the precious olive oil, for their offerings. But at the same time, they had deceitful scales, they cheated; they were deceitful merchants.

Let's look at verse 11 and 12. "Shall I acquit the man with wicked scales and a bag of deceitful weights?" You see, every time they sold things, they weighed them. You know, when they said they sold you 100 kilos of grain, actually it was only 70 kilos because the weighing scale was adjusted. And in verse 12, it says, "You rich men are full of violence; your inhabitants speak lies." , all the businessmen were crooks. They made money crookedly, through schemes and plots and then they used it to buy animals and oil and bring to worship.

So basically, what is happening in this place? There is religion but there's no righteous living. There was ritualistic religion, but no righteous living. And you know, some of the most horrible crimes, crooked cultures where there's bribery and deceit and cheating are in the most religious countries. It's ironical.

The most immoral brothels have the most idols in them. The most deceitful business people are the main supporters of temples, churches. The slave traders built massive churches in America in the south. The ones who were drug peddlers, they were merchants who sold death. The cathedrals of

Europe were built by people who plundered the gold of South America, killing millions of people, innocent South Americans. Does it sound familiar? Or is this something over thousands of years ago?

Today, when you see monumental cathedrals and all that, it's often built with money from crooked people who seemed so religious, their names may be on the church lists as the biggest donors of the church. So this is what happens. God is saying, I can't stand this, I can't stand this. Micah says, I can't stand this.

This is what God wants from us.

Chapter 6:8

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, (or mercy) and to walk humbly with your God?

What does God require from you and me, through the ages. To go to church religiously? Look super pious, drop offerings in the bag, and then go out on Monday and oppress our employees, ignore the poor, try to take advantage of them and then come back next Sunday again. Or does God want us to walk justly, in justice? What is justice? Justice is to give someone what is his, what he deserves, it's just, give him the right pay, give him the right respect, give him the right treatment, that is justice. He may be poor, but it's just to give him what he worked for, to give him respect as a fellow human being. That's just.

What is mercy? Mercy is to give someone not what he deserves. It's different, you see. To be just is to give someone what he deserves. Mercy is to give someone what he does not deserve. What do you mean by that? If you are a merciful guy and you know he didn't work today because he was sick, he didn't deserve money, but you still give it to him. That's mercy. Justice, you give him what he worked for, what he deserves, it's just. Mercy is to give him what he didn't deserve, but he needs it. So, mercy goes one step further than justice.

And then to walk humbly. So our job is to be fair to people, and when we see people in need, to be kind. Look at chapter 6 and verse 8, to be kind. He doesn't deserve it but I'll still help you because that's kindness, that's mercy, and then to walk humbly. Having done all that, don't be proud. It's very easy when you're a just employer and you're a merciful employer, you'll be proud.

That's not how God likes it. You see God works behind the scenes. Have you ever thought about it? You know, a lot of people never see the hand of God because He's always behind the scenes. But if you don't really try to look for the hand of God behind that, you forget, just like many times, a good man helps people and nobody knows he's helping. Why? He wants to be behind the scenes until you dig and dig and say, please tell me who helped me, I want to thank him. No, he wants to be anonymous, that's what the answer will be. No, please, I'm not going to do this publicly, I just want to thank him privately. Can you please tell me, I feel so bad I cannot thank him. And then when you dig hard enough, you realize, oh, there was this guy faithfully helping you, you never knew that.

That's how we're supposed to walk because that's how God walks. The cross is the perfect example of God's justice. Justice is He has to give us what we deserve, to be judged for our sins, that's justice. But because He's merciful, He gives us more than what we deserve. He sent His Son to die for us, that's mercy. How can I dare ask for that? I don't deserve that the Son of God should die in my place. But that came out not of God's justice, that came out of God's mercy. He gave me what I didn't deserve. He gave me out of a heart of mercy, His Son, Jesus Christ.

And you know, the act of the Cross is the most humble act you can ever imagine, it's the greatest gift of all given in the most humble way and that is the perfection of the Cross. It is Micah chapter 6 verse 8 in real action. God's justice, judgment, God's mercy sparing me though I deserve to be punished and done in the most humble way. The Son of God died like a criminal, cursed by men.

Micah chapter 6 verse 8 is personified in the Cross and must be reflected in our lives, we who have seen the Cross. But today that's not the way we live our Christian life. Our Christian life is attending church, attending Bible studies, I'm faithful in Bible studies, I do my quiet time and then I go to the office, and I live like everybody else, profiting from others, not really bothering with the poor. I don't care if the poor is suffering, that's really not my problem.

Nine out of 10 Christians would drop money in the offering bag, and will see poor people around them and hear of all kinds of horrendous poverty around them, and won't lift a finger. I'm telling you the truth, I know that. I go to prayer meetings, I share these problems of poverty and all these

people praying, not one, maybe one in 100 will respond. The rest will pray and pray and pray, very spiritual prayers for the poor but not a finger lifted up to help the poor. In fact, they don't even think that's part of Christianity today.

Micah 7:1-3

Woe is me! For I have become as when the summer fruit has been gathered, as when the grapes have been gleaned, there is no cluster to eat, no first-ripe fig that my soul desires. The godly has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among mankind; they all lie in wait for blood, and each hunts the other with a net. Their hands are on what is evil, to do it well; the prince and the judge ask for a bribe, and the great man utters the evil desire of his soul; thus they weave it together.

Verse 5 Put no trust in a neighbour; have no confidence in a friend; guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your arms; for the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.

Micah looks around and says, there are no good people left, the whole society is rotten. That's all he sees around him, but then thank God Micah always sees the good hand of God.

Micah chapter 7:7 But as for me, I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.

verse 18 and verse 19 as we end the book of Micah

Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. (I like that. Chesed, remember that word, chesed, loyal love. God says He loves you, He loves you to the end) He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.

Micah just sees the covenant love, the steadfast love of God for His people and I hope you see that steadfast love in the midst of all the corruption, all the horrendous things around you.

What have we learned about God here? We have learned about a God who requires you to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. That's Christianity.

God doesn't expect you to be a church goer, to love Bible study and to ignore the poor and the helpless and to be proud of your Bible knowledge. God doesn't want that. Why? Because God is a just God. He deals with sin, He's a very merciful God, He gave His Son and He's a very humble God. He works behind the scenes and many of you don't even know. Everything you have, every good and perfect gift comes from God but He doesn't blare, He doesn't blast, He doesn't say, it's from Me, it's from Me, it's from Me. No, He does it gently.

So give to the poor, remember the poor, help the poor and do it quietly. This is what your God wants from you. I'm not saying Bible studies are wrong, but Bible studies that don't lead to this will produce ritualistic religion without righteous living.

May God bless you, know your God. What a wonderful God! Be like Him, reflect Him. May God bless you!