

### **Micah 1: 1-7 (New International Version)**

<sup>1</sup> The word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah—the vision he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> Hear, O peoples, all of you,  
listen, O earth and all who are in it,  
that the Sovereign LORD may witness against you,  
the Lord from his holy temple.

<sup>3</sup> Look! The LORD is coming from his dwelling place;  
he comes down and treads the high places of the earth.

<sup>4</sup> The mountains melt beneath him  
and the valleys split apart,  
like wax before the fire,  
like water rushing down a slope.

<sup>5</sup> All this is because of Jacob's transgression,  
because of the sins of the house of Israel.  
What is Jacob's transgression? Is it not Samaria?  
What is Judah's high place? Is it not Jerusalem?

<sup>6</sup> "Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of rubble,  
a place for planting vineyards.  
I will pour her stones into the valley  
and lay bare her foundations.

<sup>7</sup> All her idols will be broken to pieces;  
all her temple gifts will be burned with fire;  
I will destroy all her images.  
Since she gathered her gifts from the wages of prostitutes,  
as the wages of prostitutes they will again be used."

### **Micah 7:18-20 (New International Version)**

<sup>18</sup> Who is a God like you,  
who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance?  
You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.

<sup>19</sup> You will again have compassion on us;  
you will tread our sins underfoot  
and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

<sup>20</sup> You will be true to Jacob,  
and show mercy to Abraham,  
as you pledged on oath to our fathers  
in days long ago.

**OASIS: Christmas means...we can be forgiven (Micah 1 &7)**

*(Leaders note: Our study will be split into two halves, as we first look at the opening and then look at the closing sections of Micah. The opening passage explains the problem of evil and injustice, which can be our problem as well. The closing passage explains God's response, as He both judges but also pardons and forgives, which is the solution we need just as much as ever.)*

Possible Starter question: If you were God (and I am glad to say you aren't ☺), what would be some of the things that would really upset you as you viewed the brokenness of today's world? (pause) What would be some of the upsetting things about today's church and Christians?

Transitional comment: The 7<sup>th</sup> century BC prophet, Micah, begins by expressing God's reaction to evil and injustice, and concludes his book reflecting God's redemptive response.

- Pray for the Holy Spirit's leading (if you haven't already prayed)
- Let's listen as someone reads our first passage aloud (Micah 1: 1-7)
- Now, take several minutes to reread these verses and get a sense for the unfolding developments that Micah is explaining (*hint: 4 parts*).

The beginning section (Micah 1: 1-7):

- O What does v. 1 tell us about the Micah and his context?  
*(n.b. Micah's ministry is dated approximately 740-687; King Jotham reigned from 740-732 BC; Hezekiah reigned from 715-686 BC. This verse is really the heading for the book).*
- O In what ways does v. 2 grab our attention? Who is Micah addressing? What do you learn about God's intent here?
  - I What do you sense is the tone of this verse?
- O In vs. 3-4, what action is the Lord taking—and what repercussions occur?
  - I What do the different metaphors contribute? What sense is conveyed?
- O What do we learn about the God's complaint or accusation in v. 5?
  - I What is the big deal?  
*(n.b. Jacob represents the northern kingdom and the house of Israel represents the southern kingdom. Together, they are the chosen people, the people of the covenant. Yet, their sin brings punishment)*
- O What are some of the consequences mentioned in vs. 6-7? What underlying problems are identified?
  - I Given these 2 verses, how would you be feeling if Micah was addressing you?
    - A Is it possible that God might have similar reactions to Christians or our church? If so, on what basis?

The concluding section (Micah 7: 18-20):

*(n.b. Now it is time to look at these concluding verses. Have someone read them aloud. Then, give people a minute to look them over individually.)*

- O What does Micah find so remarkable, so incomparable about God?
  - O What are some of the benevolent qualities of God that are stated in these verses?
    - I How is this portrait of God that much more remarkable given the necessity of God's judgment of sin, as expressed in Chapter 1?
      - A For Micah, these last verses were a celebration of God's grace and goodness. In what way are they a celebration for you? For your LIFE Community?
  - Correlation: In what ways does the Christmas story of Jesus' birth make this possible?
    - A What have we discussed that helps you gain or renew your understanding of the "joy to the world" contained in the birth of Jesus?
    - A In prayer together, praise the God who is both just and forgiving. Thank God for sending His Son, Jesus, to rescue us from sin and its consequences! Merry Christmas!
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- a. BIG idea: God hates evil and injustice so much that He judges it—but He loves us enough to forgive us.
- b. Key verse: Micah 7: 18 *Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression...*
- c. KEY: O = Observation; I = Interpretation; A = Application (or C = Challenge).

Advice to study leaders:

- d. Complement your OIA questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? What do others of you see/think?).
- e. Determine the core questions you'll ask (know which ones to skip if pressed for time.
- f. Always reword questions in words that are comfortable for you (and, if the question doesn't make sense to you, then discard it.)
- g. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- h. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- i. Application: Pace the study to conclude with "difference making" application.
- j. Secondary texts—use other texts very sparingly, even if they are relevant. Other texts push you into the "teacher role," away from facilitating. People can feel distracted or de-powered.
- k. If you are utilizing this "on-line" study and not part of the OASIS course, I recommend that you get the 1-volume commentary entitled New Bible Commentary, Revised (21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition, IVP). It is well worth the \$40.