

### Micah's Third Message of Judgment and Deliverance

#### Micah 6

Micah 6:1-5 – *“Hear now what the Lord says: ‘Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. <sup>2</sup> Hear, O you mountains, the Lord’s complaint, and you strong foundations of the earth; for the Lord has a complaint against His people, and He will contend with Israel.’*

*<sup>3</sup> O My people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Testify against Me. <sup>4</sup> For I brought you up from the land of Egypt; I redeemed you from the house of bondage, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.*

*<sup>5</sup> O My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab counseled, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, from Acacia Grove to Gilgal, that you may know the righteousness of the Lord.”*

#### Background Notes

The prophecy of Micah consists of three messages: Message 1 in chapters 1 and 2, Message 2 in chapters 3 through 5, and Message 3 in chapters 6 and 7. Each message consists of two parts: Judgment and Deliverance. Here in the third sermon, judgment is prophesied in chapter 6 and the first half of chapter 7, and deliverance in the second half of chapter 7.

In the judgment part of chapter 6, the Lord indicts or brings a lawsuit against Israel because of Israel’s sins. The first indictment is in verses 1-5. The Lord calls on the mountains to be a jury and listen to both sides of the dispute. Israel, plead your case (if you have one) before the mountains (v1). Then listen to my case against you, because I the Lord have a complaint against you (v2).

Notice what the Lord says in His case against the people of Israel (v3-5). He reminds them that He has done nothing to harm or hurt them, but has done everything to help and bless them. He redeemed them out of slavery in Egypt, and He gave them leaders – Moses, Aaron, and Miriam (v4). He forced Balaam to bless Israel even though Balak, the pagan king of Moab, had hired Balaam to curse Israel. (Read about Balaam’s blessing of Israel in Numbers 23-24.) But in spite of all God’s favor, the people of Israel continued in their sinful ways. Therefore the Lord would have to bring judgment.

## Doctrinal Point

### 1. The Lord's requirements are consistent with His character.

Micah 5:6 -8 - *"With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? <sup>7</sup> Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*

*<sup>8</sup> He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"*

Verses 6-8 contain Israel's response to the Lord's first indictment. Her response to the Lord's first charge is essentially a good response. The people are penitent. In fact, this will be the response of the godly remnant of Jewish believers in the future End Times, when Israel returns to the Lord.

Micah voices some of the people's rhetorical questions, and then he tells us what the Lord is really looking for. Does the Lord want thousands of sacrifices? No! Does the Lord want human sacrifices? Of course not! Human sacrifices were clearly forbidden by God's Law.

Verse 8 tells us what the Lord is really looking for. Once again, this wonderful verse:

*"He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"*

This is a great verse to memorize. When our children were growing up, we memorized Bible verses as part of our family devotions, and this is the first Old Testament verse we memorized.

By the way, this is not a salvation verse. In fact, if it were a salvation verse, no one would be saved because it is impossible to live up to the Lord's righteous requirements. No one is 100% just, and no one is 100% merciful, and no one is 100% humble before the Lord. If this were a salvation verse, salvation would be acquired by works, but we are saved through faith alone – faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Praise the Lord!

Notice how the Lord's requirements are consistent with His character: **justice** and **mercy**. This verse tells us what the Lord is looking for in the believer's life, then and today. So believers - are we **just** in every situation, even when no one is watching? Are we **merciful** in our dealings with people? I chose to show mercy to two of my students this past week. I won't tell you the exact situation, and it was not easy - but I chose to show mercy.

What about humility? Do we **walk humbly** before the Lord our God? Or are we self-satisfied and proud of our own good works? Are we hypocrites? The Lord's requirements are consistent with His character.

## 2. The Lord's judgments are consistent with His character

Micah 5:9-16 - *"The Lord's voice cries to the city: Wisdom shall see Your name: "Hear the rod! Who has appointed it? <sup>10</sup> Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the short measure that is an abomination? <sup>11</sup> Shall I count pure those with the wicked scales, and with the bag of deceitful weights? <sup>12</sup> For her rich men are full of violence, her inhabitants have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. <sup>13</sup> Therefore I will also make you sick by striking you, by making you desolate because of your sins. <sup>14</sup> You shall eat, but not be satisfied. Hunger shall be in your midst. You may carry some away, but shall not save them; and what you do rescue I will give over to the sword. <sup>15</sup> "You shall sow, but not reap. You shall tread the olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil, and make sweet wine, but not drink wine. <sup>16</sup> For the statutes of Omri are kept. All the works of Ahab's house are done, and you walk in their counsels, that I may make you a desolation, and your inhabitants a hissing. Therefore you shall bear the reproach of My people."*

These verses contain the Lord's second indictment against Israel.

The business people were cheating their customers. They were using dishonest scales and false weights (v10-12). Have you have ever been cheated as a customer? A number of years ago I was ripped off by a merchant in the Middle East. I bought a box of (so-called) "Bible Land Slides" in the marketplace, but when I got back to the hotel room and opened the packaging, I found that I had a box of poor-quality rejects! I went back to try to find the merchant but he had disappeared. I'd been cheated.

Probably we have all been cheated in some way – but the point here, of course, is that we'd better not be the cheater, no matter what it is we're selling! God must - and will - judge cheaters and dishonest business transactions - then and today. God must judge cheaters because His judgments are consistent with His character. God is perfectly just and honest. God does not cheat!

The Lord indicates that He will have to use His rod of discipline on Israel because of her sins (v9). In verses 13-15 reveal some of the forms of discipline that God would use to judge His people for their sins: sickness (v13), famine (v14), and poverty (v15).

In verse 16 we see that Judah had allowed the worship of idols to creep into the southern kingdom of Judah - the same kinds of idolatry that were practiced by the people of the northern kingdom of Israel, under wicked kings Omri and Ahab. For this sin, the southern kingdom would be invaded, defeated and come to an end - and the people of Judah would be taken into captivity. The once-great kingdom of Judah would become a byword among the nations: *"...that I may make you a desolation, and your inhabitants a hissing. Therefore you shall bear the reproach of My people"* (v16).

God allowed this to happen. Why? God allowed this because His judgments are consistent with His character - then and today. Don't think that you can get away with sin! If God allowed you to get away with sin, God's character would not be consistent. God is holy, and He **must** judge sin. God's judgments are consistent with His character.

## Practical Application

### It's never wrong to wonder why you're sick!

Verse 13 reveals that God can use sickness as a form of discipline. This teaching is found in the New Testament as well. 1 Corinthians 11:30 tells us that God used sickness to discipline some of the Christians in Corinth, because they were guilty of careless and sinful attitudes and actions during the Lord's Supper. So, as a believer, it's never wrong to wonder why you're sick.

But when you're sick, or if you suffer a debilitating injury, don't immediately jump to the conclusion that you must be suffering under God's discipline for some kind of sin in your life! That might be an incorrect conclusion. And when a fellow believer is sick, don't quickly conclude that their ill health is a judgment for sin in their lives! As we all know, there are many causes for illness.

However, having said that, the Bible does exhort us to examine our lives to **make sure that our practice matches our profession!** In Psalm 139:23-24, David asked the Lord to examine him, to see if there was any "wicked way" in his life. *"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive [wicked] way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."*

We should follow David's example. It's a good idea to take a critical look at how we're living our lives as believers, asking the Lord to reveal any sinful habits (pride, jealousy, self-centeredness, criticism, etc), of which we may actually be unaware.

So, when we're sick, it certainly wouldn't hurt to use the "down time" to examine our hearts before the Lord. It's possible that we haven't listened - or deliberately turned a deaf ear - when God was speaking to us. He may bring illness to our bodies to give us an opportunity to check out the state of our "spiritual health"!

It's never wrong to wonder why you're sick!