

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

JUNE 7 - 11, 2021



COURSE SERMON SERIES
5/9 - 8/1
CORRECTIONS

THE MINOR PROPHETS

MONDAY

Micah 1 & 2

Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, spoke more to the rural people, whereas Isaiah prophesied in Jerusalem. The years preceding Micah's prophecy were prosperous, the result of foreign trade and international stability. Consequently, Micah, like Amos, speaks out against the abuses associated with increased wealth. Where Amos anticipated the downfall of Samaria and Israel (the northern kingdom), Micah lived through these years.

The first chapters of the book (1-3) and part of 6 are concerned with the immediate future and the coming foreign political conquests due to sins of greed, injustice, and the oppressive nature of the leadership. The remainder of the book (4, 5, and 7) looks towards the restoration of God's kingdom after the Babylonian exile and towards a time of peace under God's instruction and protection for all the nations. The book is primarily poetic in nature. Hebrew poetry is made up of parallel statements that repeat and contrast to drive home the meaning. It also has a court-like structure with God building a case against His people.

In his commentary on Micah, James Gailey says: "The key to future blessedness is divine intervention, seen in part in terms of military victory, but seen also in the willingness of God to associate with the common man as Shepherd of the flock (4:6; 7:14-20) the emphasis is on the quality of steadfast loyalty or 'kindness' (6:8; 7:18-20) both

of God and of men. If this quality of faithfulness to the obligations inherent in the relationship between God and His people or among the people themselves is lacking, only disaster can be expected; if it is found between God and man and among men, then blessing may be anticipated.”

The book of Micah can be divided into three sections, each beginning with the word “hear” or “listen.” Micah’s words are directed first toward all people, then to the leaders, and finally to God’s people. In the first chapters, he stressed that God alone is Lord of history, stating that the good life (as the people of the day saw it) was going to end because God was about to bring judgment. In these verses we see God’s holiness, justice, power, and concern about human affairs.

In his devotion, Pastor Luke Parker challenges us not to say, “God, this is not the way it should be,” but instead to ask, “God, where are you?” This question recognizes that God is Lord of all and encourages us to seek His direction and guidance in the midst of whatever He is allowing to happen.

QUESTIONS

As you read Micah 1 and 2, what words stood out to you? Ask God why and what He might be drawing your attention to as they relate to your walk with God and your relationship with others.

PRAYERS FOR PERCH.CHURCH IN GLENDALE

As Perch.Church continues to meet online for small groups and Sunday gatherings, please pray for wisdom, discernment, and momentum as they prepare to meet in-person in Glendale in June.

TUESDAY

Micah 3, 4, & 5

A pastor from All-Souls Langham Church in London suggested that Micah maintains an almost perfect balance between the rebuke of sin, judgment, and hope. In this particular section addressed to Israel's leaders (both political and religious), Micah complains that rather than serving the people, the leaders are looking after their own interests.

Micah begins rebuking the political leaders who are responsible for maintaining justice, but who instead "*hate the good and love the evil*" (3:2), making the people cry out to God for deliverance. He then takes on the false prophets who "*lead the people astray*" (3:5), telling people what they wanted to hear for their own financial gain. Despite the leaders vocally invoking the name of God, they were not trusting in God but in their own financial gain. They declared God's conditional promises without declaring God's call to faithfulness and love. God's response was that they would be removed from leadership, and even the temple itself would be destroyed.

But in words that echo Isaiah 2:2-4, Micah looks to a day when God will restore that which is lost and will govern the world in peace. People worldwide will seek Him and follow His ways. "True guidance from God, so rare in Micah's day, will become universal in the day envisioned. War and destruction, expected as punishment for the evils of the 8th century B.C., will be a thing of the past. Violence and bloodshed, the

normal accompaniment of business life in Micah's day, will be replaced by truly peaceful existence." (James H. Gailey)

"The present unjust leadership of Micah 3:1-12 stands in direct contrast to God's future leaders in 4:1-8. If God is going to remove the unjust leaders by bringing judgment, there is hope for the oppressed. If God will one day set up His kingdom and cause the Messiah to lead His people and the nations to a time of peace and justice (4:1-5:4), there is hope for all humankind. If God is going to remove the nation's enemies, there will be no need for their sources of false trust—horses, strong cities, idols (5:5-15)." (Gary V. Smith)

Jeremiah 26:17-19 explains that as Hezekiah responded to Micah's message in repentance, God saved Jerusalem from the Assyrians. But the repentance of the people was short lived, and God later gave them over to the Babylonians. Those who respond in repentance and faithfulness to God can change situations and bring transformation with His power.

QUESTIONS

Rather than focusing on the evil, our call is to seek God. People are to seek the "peace of the city." Rather than standing idly by, how might we bring love and justice to the places where God has planted us?

PRAYERS FOR PERCH.CHURCH IN GLENDALE

Pastor Al Han started working part-time as a hospital chaplain at Adventist Health Glendale in March. Pray that Al's experience as a chaplain would make him a more loving and better equipped pastor. Pray also that the chaplaincy work would give him good opportunities.

WEDNESDAY

Micah 6 & 7

These last verses are addressed to the people of God. As we saw yesterday, there is room for repentance and change. If we will respond to God in humility and with right actions, God will respond in blessing. All is not lost; there is hope. N.T. Wright, in his book, *Surprised by Hope*, states that where we often read of God's justice and think punishment, what is really going on is God putting what is wrong right using the example that someone goes to a court of law to receive "justice" when they have been wronged.

Chapter 7 reviews the teachings of the whole book, beginning by shedding light on the depth of sin moving on to declare that in the midst of the worst, we can look to God for He is faithful and will not let sin (injustice) continue indefinitely. God will be the Justifier of those who trust in Him. We are to speak the truth in love. He is speaking truth—the need to change our ways from self-centeredness to other-centeredness—in love with the promise of justice and hope.

Micah's name means "who is like the Lord." Thus, 7:18 is actually a play on his name. These verses that promise the restoration of Israel are not specifically related to the return from exile but also look forward to the expanding of God's kingdom over the entire earth, pointing to the first and second coming of Jesus.

Over and over again, God declares to Israel His name, His character, His very being. He is “the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to the thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished; He punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.” (Exodus 34:6-7).

God does not change. Jesus has taken the punishment on Himself; but God still requires that we seek Him. He never leaves us without hope. His promises and His kingdom will come to pass. In the worst of times, we are not to focus on what is happening around us but on God.

Like Micah, we are to continually meditate on God’s love, forgiveness, and power rather than on what appears to be a hopeless situation or the mocking of our enemies. God has not forgotten, He is not impotent, and His purposes have not changed. What determines the future is what God has done and will do, not what the evil people in society are doing now. (Smith)

QUESTIONS

Do I spend my time focusing on what does not seem right, or on the character, promises and activity of God? What might I need to confess?

PRAYERS FOR PERCH.CHURCH IN GLENDALE

Several members of Perch.Church have been feeling ill, been hospitalized, or lost family members in recent months. Pray for the Holy Spirit to bring them healing, peace, and comfort during this difficult season.

THURSDAY

Micah 6

Chapter 6 contains one of two famous passages. It is in the form of a lawsuit: a calling to attention, a calling of witnesses, the announcement of the case, a defense of God's action, a defense by the accused, the basis of God's judgment, additional accusations, and God's verdict of judgment—all displaying the seriousness of the breakdown in God's relationship with His people.

In Romans 1:18–2:4, Paul basically teaches the same thing. God has revealed what is just and right. But rather than listening to God, we all too easily suppress the truth of God with the result being that God lets us reap the rewards of our own actions until we cry out to Him.

God does not want empty worship, outward sacrifices, or halfhearted activities. He wants transformed hearts that act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him. The call is to relate to one another with mutual respect, to give merciful affection, and to live a life that is attentive to God and following God's will. Notice these words do not contain any negatives. These are attitudes of the heart that are lived out in the daily circumstances of life and interactions with others. We are to be a holy people, a people set apart for God, loving Him, living in fearful awe, and serving Him.

In a world that wants to evaluate everything on “what’s in it for me,” we often find ourselves on the wrong side of the lawsuit. How different life might be if we evaluated everything from God’s perspective, emptying ourselves of our own rights and privileges in order that others might come to know of God’s mercy and grace. He is still in the process of shepherding His people and extending His reign, His love and justice over all the earth. To be like God is to disadvantage ourselves in order to work for the advantage of others.

During these days we must show others the wonder and power of God, pardon and forgive, and delight in mercy that others might turn to the Lord. Our calling is not to survive, but to thrive in godly activity, loving others as God has loved us. To love someone is to step in and fulfill a need, but to give grace to someone is to step in and fulfill a need for a person who does not deserve it. Let us be grace-filled people who, like God, hear the cries of those who cannot help themselves.

QUESTIONS

Read Isaiah 58 and Zachariah 7:10-11. What does God want you to focus on today?

PRAYERS FOR PERCH.CHURCH IN GLENDALE

As Perch.Church prepares to launch publicly in the fall of this year, they will need to hire one or two part-time staff sometime this summer. Pray that the Leadership Team would make wise decisions in the process, that Perch would have all the resources necessary to hire, and that God would bring the right people to join the team.

FRIDAY

Micah 5:1-5a

Today's reading is the second of the two famous passages from Micah. When the Magi came to Jerusalem from the East searching for Jesus, the religious leaders told them exactly where He was to be born because they read this Micah passage (Matthew 2:1-6). This begs the question: If they knew this, why didn't they go themselves? There are probably some valid explanations, but this begs the question: Do I read Scripture for knowledge rather than application? What am I missing from God because what I read and hear is so familiar that I no longer allow it to speak to my heart? Am I searching out God's presence and power with an eye towards obedient action?

Consider the small town of Bethlehem where Jesus was prophesied to be born. God seldom does things using what we might consider human strength or power or importance, but instead uses just the opposite. He uses the least of men in order that the work done will be completely of God, such as Gideon and Peter.

In Gideon's case, God chose a man whose family and town worshipped idols; when Gideon called people to arms, God told Gideon to lead the army down to just a few "weirdos" who lapped like dogs when they drank from a stream. In Peter's case, we see that we are challenged to take risks that bring us to our knees if we want to get closer to

God. Peter did not get back into the boat when he began to sink. He cried out to God instead, “Lord, save me!” God does amazing things in threatening times through those who are the least, through those who cry out to God from their knees.

Am I staying in the comfort of the boat? Am I saying “no” to God in some way because I think whatever He is asking is beyond me?

Today’s passage was written 700 years before the birth of Jesus. Passages like these encourage us to listen to the words of Scripture as authoritatively from God. They encourage us to hang on to the promises of God when we do not see them being fulfilled in the timing and way that I think they should be. These passages remind us that God’s work is so much larger than we ever might imagine.

God wants to use us in His plans and work, but His plans and work are so much greater than our little “worlds.” God wants nothing less than to bring all nations, all tribes, all people into His kingdom—and He wants to use us to do it.

QUESTIONS

Are my dreams, goals and desires too small? What would Micah write if he were writing today?

PRAYERS FOR PERCH.CHURCH IN GLENDALE

Pray for a successful public launch of Perch.Church in the fall of this year. Pray that Perch.Church continue to do good works, share the faith, meet habitually, and have Christ-centered relationships to build spiritually healthy momentum leading up to the launch.

Sources:

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- James H. Gailey, Jr., *The Layman's Bible Commentary: Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Vol. 15* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), pp. 11, 23.
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- *The Early Minor Prophets: The Amazing Collection [Set of 6 DVD's]* (Alpharetta, GA: Big Dream Ministries, 2005).
- Sermons on Micah from All Souls Langham Place in London.
- N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008).

