

Lesson #25

PREPARATION FOR LESSON: read the book of Micah**BACKGROUND**

Author: Micah, a contemporary of Hosea and Isaiah

Date and Place of Ministry: He preached some 40 years in Judah from c. 738 – 697 BC

Theme: Disobedience brings national judgment, but individual and national repentance will bring future blessings.

Scripture background: 2 Kings 15:32 - 16:20; 18:1 - 21:21; 2 Chronicles 27:1 - 32:33

OUTLINE

- I. Disobedience and Judgment 1-3
- II. Future Blessings thru Jesus 4-5
- III. Present and Future Response 6-7

HISTORICAL SETTING IN JUDAH

Jotham - **godly** king, ungodly people 2 Chron 27:2-6 **750-736 BC.**

Because the king followed God, God gave him political and military victories.

Ahaz - ungodly king, ungodly people 2 Chron. 28:1-5, 16-21 **736-726 BC.**

Because Ahaz practiced idolatry, human sacrifice and religious prostitution,
God gave him political and military defeats.

Hezekiah - **godly** king, **godly** people 2 Chron. 31:20-21; 32:22-23 **726-693 BC.**

Because the king followed God, God gave him political and military victories.

DEVELOPED OUTLINE**Chapters 1-3** Disobedience and Judgment...

...of the cities/common people - All the villages are within 15 miles of Micah's hometown

The meaning of each town's name describes the results that God's judgment will have on them.

Gath - *Telltown*; Acco - *Weeptown*; Beth-Ophra - *House of Dust*; Shaphir - *Beauty-Place*;

Zaanan - *Outlet*; Beth-Ezel - *Neighbortown*; Maroth - *Bitterness*; Lachish - *Horsetown*; Aczib - *Deception*

...of the leadership

Political leaders are taking possession of family farms in violation of God's laws. 2:1-2

Prophets teach to please the people; the people want prophets only to tell them of happiness and blessings. 2:11

Leaders, prophets and priests are demanding pay for spiritual help. 3:11

Greed, injustice, bribery and murder are common among God's leaders. 3:9-11

Chapters 4-5 Future blessings when Jesus sets up His kingdom and rules from Jerusalem

Chpt. 4: peace, vs. 3; prosperity, vs. 4; worship of God alone, vs. 5; freedom from enemies, vs. 10.

Chpt. 5: God will remove from their lives everything they depended on in place of God. vss. 10-14

All the things thruout history are pictured as *fortified cities and chariots; witchcraft and idols.*

God will remove their desire to trust in **things** so they want to trust only in God - That is a blessing!

Chapters 6-7: Response of the Jews, present and future

- *We attend Temple services every week; repeat Jewish prayers; listen to readings from the books of Moses and the Psalms; bring animal offerings. What more does God want us to do? Why does He not accept our offerings?*

6:8 He has showed you what He requires:

<i>act justly</i>	honesty in business life	cf. Micah 6:10
<i>love mercy</i>	kindness in social life	cf. Micah 6:12
<i>walk humbly with God</i>	relationship and obedience to God in spiritual life	

- *Israel has been taken into exile. Are we next? If we respond, will God forgive and spare our nation of Judah?*

Micah uses the meaning of his name - *who is like Yahweh?*

He says no one can equal God in forgiveness, mercy, compassion, grace and faithfulness.

God's grace is always greater than His judgment! Micah 7:18-20

Even when their nation is destroyed, God will preserve them as a people and bring them back to the land.



DEFINITIONS

Walk humbly with your God means to believe and obey what God says; to accept His rules and boundaries.

Israel This name has 7 different meanings.

- In the 1800's BC - *Israel* was a **person**; the new name God gave to Jacob.
- In the 1400's BC - it was the **land** and **nation** of the 12 Jewish tribes developed in the days of Joshua.
- From 930 - 722 BC - *Israel* was the name of the **northern nation** at the time of the Jewish civil war.
- From 536 BC - 70 AD - it was the name of the **southern nation** when people of Judah came back from exile.
- From 1948 - present - *Israel* is the name of the **land** and **nation** of Jews.
- In God's Kingdom - it will be the name of the believing **Jews** and the **land**.
- Anytime in history - *Israel* was and is the name for the Jews as a **people**. (Israelis, Israelite)

EXPLANATIONS

Religious Prostitution - part of the Canaanite religion

Hilltops, spreading trees/groves of trees, Asheras were places of worship where religious prostitution was practiced.

Baal and Ashteroth were the god and goddess of fertility; the **Ashera pole** was a sex symbol.

The Canaanites worshipped the idols Baal and Ashteroth.

When they wanted fertility for themselves, their animals or a good harvest, they asked the fertility gods.

They would go to the places where the gods were worshipped, *high places, groves of trees, asheras, hills*.

They believed fertility was given when the fertility god and goddess had sex with each other.

So to encourage the gods, the people had sex with prostitute priests/priestesses who were dedicated to the gods.

It was called religious prostitution and done at the high places and hilltops.

As Jews lived among the Canaanites, they began to think of this as *normal* – another part of Yahweh worship.

Ahaz, God's king over God's people *worshipped* in this way.

Predictions during Micah's ministry from 738 - 697 BC. (put in chronological order of fulfillment)

- **Samaria** will be destroyed ----- it happened in 722 BC 1:6
- **Jerusalem** will be destroyed ----- it happened in 586 BC 3:12
- **Babylon** will exile them ----- it happened in 586 BC 4:10
- **Jesus** will be born in Bethlehem ----- it happened in 6 BC 5:2 (NAB 5:1)
- **World peace** ----- it will happen in the future AD 4:3

Results of Micah's ministry - It changed the nation of his day. compare Jer. 26:17-18 with 2 Kings 18:3-7

During Micah's first 12 years of ministry, a teenager from the royal family listened and responded.

When he was 25 he became king in Judah. His name was Hezekiah.

Because of Micah's words, Hezekiah followed God and led the nation to follow God for 14 years.

APPLICATION

Micah reminds us...

- When our trust is in things more than God, God will remove them and give us a desire for Him.
Once our trust is in God, He is free to fill our lives with the blessings He knows are best for us.
- God wants obedience in our lives more than religious activity.
If we are not obeying His commands during the week, He cannot accept our worship on the weekend.

Micah gives us God's promise

Tho I sit in darkness, the Lord will be my Light! 7:8

So many things can bring darkness to our lives:

failure, tragedy, illness, death, broken relationships, loss, uncertainty.

In that *dark night of the soul*, we cannot see where to go or what to do; our mind has questions without answers;

our emotions go numb, unable to feel God's presence.

In those times of greatness darkness, God is there to give us strength and ability for our immediate needs.

He will lead us to others who can help, encourage and show us what to do.

As we allow Him to lead us, His light will gradually turn our darkness into light.



EXTRA INFORMATION

Micah's Style of Writing: Each chapter is like a 1-man-drama where Micah takes several roles.

He speaks a few verses as a prophet, a few verses as the nation, a few verses as God.

The topic of each person either adds to or contrasts with the previous topics.

- Chpt. 1 The sin and judgment of Samaria and Jerusalem
 - vss. 1-5 Micah declares God's judgment
 - vss. 6-7 God declares His judgment
 - vss. 8-9 Micah's response to God's judgment
 - vss. 10-14 The towns' reaction to God's judgment
 - vss. 15-16 God confirms His judgment
- Chpt. 2 Judgment
 - vss. 1-2 Plans of Judah's leaders to do evil
 - vss. 3-5 Plans of God to bring judgment
 - vs. 6 Response of false prophets about God's judgment
 - vs. 7 Response of God's prophet about God's judgment
 - vss. 8-11 Response of God about Judah's present actions
 - vss. 12-13 Response of God about Judah's future blessing
- Chpt. 3 Sin and judgment
 - vss. 1-3 God declares Judah's sin
 - vs. 4 Micah declares God's judgment
 - vss. 5-7 God declares His judgment
 - vss. 8-12 Micah declares Judah's sin
- Chpt. 4 Future blessings
 - vss. 1-5 Micah describes Kingdom blessings
 - vss. 6-8 God adds His description
 - vss. 9-12 Micah tells of present judgment with future blessing
 - vs. 13 God adds His promise of blessing
- Chpt. 5 Future blessings thru Jesus
 - vss. 1-5 God's promise of Jesus, their peace
 - vss. 6-9 Micah's declaration of future deliverance
 - vss. 10-15 God's promise of deliverance
- Chpt. 6 Present response
 - vss. 1-5 God's case against Judah
 - vss. 6-7 Judah's response
 - vss. 8-9 Micah's response
 - vss. 10-16 God's statement of judgment
- Chpt. 7 Present and future response
 - vss. 1-7 Micah describes the present
 - vss. 8-10 Judah accepts God's judgment
 - vss. 11-13 Micah describes the future
 - vss. 14 Judah's desire to be led by God
 - vs. 15 God's promise to lead them
 - vss. 16-17 The response of the nations
 - vss. 18-20 God's response

