

"God's Love Story Sermon Outlines"

by Doug Hamilton

Section 21: "No Matter What, the Love Story is the Same" (The Book of Micah)

- The Book of Micah is the sixth in the order of the books of the 12 Minor Prophets.
- From the first verse of the book we find the information concerning the author, the location, the dates, the source and recipients of the message. *Micah 1:1 The word of the LORD which came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.*
 - "Moresheth": His hometown, located 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem, was a frontier village near the Philistine border city of Gath. As a citizen of a rural location, Micah could identify with poor peasants and farmers who were often victims of politicians and greedy leaders in Jerusalem (2:1–4).
 - "In the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah": Based on this his ministry was within a 60 year time period (750-686 BC). Some of Micah's oracles seem to predate the fall of Samaria (1:2–7; 6:16), an event that took place in 722 BC. Combine this with the parallel passages to Isaiah, it appears that his time period was in the last part of the 8th century BC.
 - "the word of the LORD": His words were not of his own initiative, but from God. He is God's witness (v 2). Five times in the book he proclaims, "thus says the Lord," is used (2:3; 3:5; 4:6; 6:1, 9). He is "filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord" (3:8). He is a prophet in every sense of the word.
 - "which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem": Primarily this prophecy is being carried forth by Micah as a warning of what is to come against both the northern and southern kingdoms.

Historical Background

We must look at the historical context of the writing to better understand it.

- There was a period of peace for the northern and southern kingdoms at the early part of the 8th century BC. There arose changes in the economic structure of both kingdoms during this period. Commerce exploded and the rich grew wealthier than ever before, causing a gap between the "haves" and the "have nots". The rich ended up abusing the poor through corruption of priests and judges. This struck the very heart of the religious system, being in violation of the Law.
- Peace was prevalent during the reigns of Jeroboam in the north and Uzziah in the south, but in 745 BC Tiglath Pileser III of Assyria changed that. Capturing Damascus in 732 BC, resulting in chaos in the region, affecting Israel, Judah and Philistia. He died a few years later in 727 BC and was succeeded by Shalmaneser V.
- When Hoshea, the last king in Israel, refused to pay any more tribute to Assyria, they felt the wrath of an invading army with a siege in 724 BC. Two years later the northern kingdom had fallen, resulting in the carrying away of the wealthy people of Samaria (2 Kgs 15:29, 30; 17:1–41). Judah in the south did not fall to the Assyrians, but were extremely limited in the liberties (2 Kgs 16:10; 17:19) and never really recovered politically.
- It was a bad time in every way for the nation. The leaders were corrupt, the morale was failing, the economy was about to go into the tank and great danger was coming their direction.

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It is in this environment we are introduced to the prophecies of Micah. Over the next seven chapters, the prophet Micah pounds out twenty prophecies to confront, educate and encourage the citizens of the dying nation.

The Twenty Oracles of Micah

- 1) "The Lord Is Coming" (1:2-7).
 - a. The LORD, from His holy temple, has seen what they have been up to (1:2)
 - b. He is "*coming forth from His place*" and will "*tread on the high places of the earth*" (1:3).
 - c. As He steps the "*mountains will melt under Him and the valleys will be split*" (1:4). This is for "*the rebellion of Jacob (Jerusalem)*" and "*the sins of Israel*" (1:5). Their primary sin is IDOLATRY (1:7).
- 2) "The Prophet's Lament" (1:8-16).
 - a. Micah weeps greatly over their state, "*I must lament and wail*" (1:8). It is like the cries of the *jackals* and the mourning of *ostriches*.
 - b. Why was the prophet weeping so loudly? He sees an army coming from the southwest and it is going to roll over twelve cities in its path. Great desolation, refugees, and hostages are the result. The cities are Jerusalem, Gath, Beth-le-aphrah, Shaphir, Zaanan, Beth-ezel, Maroth, Lachish, Moreshath-gath, Achzib, Marashah and Adullam (1:9-15). The one that Micah is most concerned about is Jerusalem. They will be going into exile (1:16) and this brings great sorrow to his heart to foresee this destruction.
- 3) "God's Woe to the Wicked Wealthy" (2:1-5).
 - a. They plan even when reclined in their beds at night because they know they have the "*power in their hands*" (2:1).
 - b. What is the evil plans of the wealthy? They covet the fields, the homes and the inheritance of the poor (2:2) They do not care about the families of poor people among them as the haughtily exalt themselves above them (2:3).
 - c. Perhaps their attitudes will be adjusted when destruction comes upon them as God removes them from the land (2:4-5). Assyria will do to them what they have been doing to the poor. What goes around, comes around. Whatever they sowed that shall they also reap (Gal 6:7)!
- 4) "The Rebuke of Wealthy" (2:6-11)
 - a. The wealthy do not like what Micah is preaching. "*Do not speak out*" they cry, but this only makes it worse for them (2:6). Micah's words are fine for the righteous, but reproachful to the wicked (2:7). They do not believe what Micah is saying about them is true.
 - b. Micah proves his case against them. They rob the unsuspecting, despise the returning troops and evict hurting families from their homes (2:8-10). Try as they might to deny it, God saw it all. They are nothing more than false prophets concerning their present state before God (2:11).
- 5) "A Restored Remnant" (2:12, 13)
 - a. The Lord will gather a remnant of his people like sheep in a fold (2:12), then the Lord will lead them out through the gate (2:13).
 - b. One can assume this is when Babylon carried away the remnant of Jews. They would be the ones that were marched out the gates of Jerusalem and eventually

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back after the captivity. The destruction would be devastating, but there would be a remnant.

- 6) "Guilty Rulers" (3:1-4).
 - a. The leaders in Jerusalem "*heads of Jacob*" (3:1) need some condemnation. They treat people with the compassion of a cannibal (3:2-3).
 - b. When the armies come in and destroy those guilty leaders, they will cry out for help from God, but He will turn His face against them (3:4).
- 7) "False Prophets" (3:5-8)
 - a. Micah accuses them of leading God's people astray and proclaiming peace when there would be none (3:5). Micah on the other hand did speak for God (3:8),
 - b. Their reward for the wicked deeds will be no vision, darkness and shame (3:6-7).
- 8) "Corrupt Leaders" (3:9-12).
 - a. Micah gives a second prophecy against the corrupt leaders of Jerusalem, *who despise justice and distort all that is right* (3:9). They have built the physical city on *bloodshed and wickedness* (3:10). Their judges are out for bribes and the priests for money (3:11).
 - b. They will be plowed like a field and become a heap of rubble for their deeds (3:12).
- 9) "Zion's Future Exaltation" (4:1-5).
 - a. Even though the Temple will be destroyed by Babylon, in Zion's future exaltation it will be restored to an even greater glory (4:1). All the nations will have it available to them (4:2). "*Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.*"
 - b. There will be great peace among the residents of this new temple. *They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.* (4:3)
 - c. The residents of this new Temple will not be confused about what god to worship for they will walk in the name of Jehovah (4:5).
- 10) "Restoration of a Remnant and Zion" (4:6-8)
 - a. God will gather all the lame and the grieved into the realm of Zion (salvation) (4:6). The LORD will rule over them (4:7) and will watch over them (4:8).
- 11) "From Distress to Deliverance" (4:9, 10)
 - a. They cry aloud, but will be redeemed.
 - b. They will go into Babylon, but be rescued.
- 12) "From Siege to Victory" (4:11-13)
 - a. Many nations gathered against you.
 - b. They will rise and thresh, have horns of iron, hoofs of bronze
- 13) "From Helpless Judge to Ideal King" (5:1-4)
 - a. *Marshal your troops, O city of troops, for a siege is laid against us. They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod.* (5:1)
 - b. "*But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.*" (5:2)

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- 14) "Peace and the Overthrow of Assyria" (5:5, 6)
 - a. There will be deliverance from Assyria and peace in the land.
- 15) "The Remnant Among the Peoples" (5:7-9)
 - a. The remnant will be like the dew on plants which signifies blessing (5:7).
 - b. The remnant will be as a lion among sheep which signifies judgment (5:8).
- 16) "Destruction of the Military and False Religions" (5:10-15)
 - a. Their war horses and chariots (5:10), their cities and strongholds, their carved idols (5:13-14) will be destroyed with vengeance (5:15).
- 17) "God's Case Against Israel" (6:1-8)
 - a. They are asked to plead their case before God (6:1) in light of the great accusation against her (6:2). God basically asks "What have I done to you that you would treat Me this way (6:3)? I brought you out of slavery and gave you leadership (6:4), delivered you from Balak and made the journey with you (6:5).
 - b. Yet you still could not make up your mind, Me or idols (6:6). I don't want your sacrifices (6:7), but for you to act justly, merciful and humbly (6:8).
- 18) "Israel's Guilt and Punishment" (6:9-16)
 - a. *Heed the rod and the One who appointed it* (6:9). God cannot just forget this bad behavior (6:10) and acquit you of the evil (6:11). Your violence, lying, deceitful lives will be judged (6:12).
 - b. Destruction and ruin is your future (6:13). You will eat, but not be satisfied (6:14), plant, but not harvest, press olives without oil and crush grapes without wine (6:15). I will give you over to ruin, derision and scorn (6:16).
- 19) "Lament over the Society" (7:1-6)
 - a. Micah laments once again because it appears that he is the only righteous one in the land (7:1-2). All the people are skilled in evil, greedy, contempt and confused (7:3-4). Relationships among the people are horrible, lacking trust, respect and honor (7:5-6).
- 20) "Prophetic Liturgy" (7:7-20)
 - a. The psalm of trust: 7:7-10 *"I will wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me...though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light...He will bring me out into the light..."*
 - b. A prophetic promise of restoration 7:11-13 *a day of building for your walls will come...people will come to you...the earth will become desolate because of its inhabitants..."*
 - c. A prayer for blessing 7:14-17 SHEPHERDING, WONDERS, MIGHT and RESPECT
 - d. A doxology of praise 7:18-20 Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love.¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea.²⁰ You will give truth to Jacob And unchanging love to Abraham, Which You swore to our forefathers From the days of old.

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So what does this have to do with God's Love Story?

The Book of Micah is characteristic of many of the prophets from the Bible. The prophets typically are saying, NO MATTER WHAT, THE LOVE STORY IS THE SAME! These prophets were raised up by God to keep God's Love Story alive and present in our hearts, NO MATTER WHAT!

- No matter what way the nation goes, the people of God can have hope!
- No matter what the government does to us, we still have a future!
- No matter what people will do to us, we still have God cheering us on!
- No matter what injustice comes our way, vengeance is always God's!
- No matter what men may say, we stay on the path!
- No matter what breaks your heart, God is there to comfort!
- No matter how much variance we face in this life, God's glory is constant!

Simply put, NO MATTER WHAT...God's Love Story does not change. God's love will never fail us. There is nothing the devil can throw our way that changes what God has in store for us.

- Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Hebrew 13:8)
- I am the Lord, I change not. (Malachi 3:6)
- Thou art the same, thy years will not come to an end. (Hebrew 1:12)
- In Him "*there is no variance nor shadow of turning*" (James 1:17)

God is consistent and His Love Story is Consistent, persistent and constant. Once you experience God's Love Story, nobody can take it away from you. One can give it up by giving up, but it cannot be taken away.

Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.