

June 2024

What's the Point....of Micah? **Mark Garner**

Micah prophesied during the same era as Isaiah did, and he discusses several similar themes. Micah's writings also use a variety of images, and he continually shows us the contrast between the fallibility of human nature and our Heavenly Father's holiness and graciousness.

Who Is A God Like You? (Overview Of Micah)

Micah contains images of human weakness, side-by-side with vivid images of God's majesty and his understanding. Along the way, we also see a contrast between human plans and God's thoughts, and the book calls for us to contemplate what Micah says to God, "Who is a God like you?"

Micah begins by comparing human nature with God's (Micah 1-3). The book opens with the image of God coming from his dwelling and walking on the earth, with the mountains melting like wax before him (1:3-4). Indeed, when we see God more clearly, the world's appearances can melt away as we contemplate who our God really is.

Micah paints a vivid picture of the worst side of human nature, with its restless striving and desires. Yet even as the prophet does this, he also shows us God's heart. As God watches his sheep chasing meaningless things, he still wants to gather us like a shepherd. We also see a prophetic depiction of Jesus, the One who walked among us and who opened the way to God.

Micah next echoes Isaiah's image of the mountain of the Lord, with God's call for us to seek our Heavenly Father, so that we may come to know him and may learn to walk in his paths (Micah 4-5). Again we see images of Jesus' ministry, for he has made it possible for anyone from any nation to come directly to him to know God personally. The prophet continues to reassure his listeners of God's care for them and his desire to teach them his paths.

We see more images of Jesus in Micah 5, with the promise of our Lord and Savior coming from Bethlehem, with also the picture of him standing and shepherding his flock (5:2-4). He brings us the peace and security of knowing that he has accepted us, for he has made the majesty of our Heavenly Father known throughout the earth by showing us God's unfailing love on the cross.

Micah now closes with a look at human sin, and then a look at God's forgiveness, with the ways he shows us grace each moment (Micah 6-7). God takes each of us on a spiritual journey, as he sustains us and shows us mercy and understanding each step. Micah explains that God simply asks us to acknowledge that he alone is our God, to walk in humility and reverence, and to love the mercy he pours out on those who walk in the light of Jesus.

We see one more glimpse of God's longing for each of us to be close with him, and as the prophet forewarns his listeners of the discipline and refining that God will bring, he reminds us that our hope has always been in God himself. Moreover, he reassures us of God's intention to give us grace (7:14-15, 7:18-20). Truly, who is a God like the Lord, our living God, who hurls all our sins into the depths of the sea, because of his mercy and his desire to be with us.

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What's the Point....of Micah? **Caleb Dillinger**

Micah is one of the minor prophets that often gets most of its attention focused on 6:8, which is an amazing verse, certainly, but the book has much more to say. To begin, Micah lifts up God against all those who have lifted themselves up. Idols, oppressors, rulers, abusers, all are put beneath God and their judgment is pronounced. Like many of the prophets, the message is clear: God opposes the proud and actively brings them down.

A point is made by the middle of the book about the "mountain of the Lord" and its difference from other nations and leaders. God is described as superior, his plans wiser than others can imagine. This is particularly relevant for many leaders and nations today who think highly of themselves, rather than seeing God above them.

What makes Micah particularly important to Christians is the prophecy concerning Bethlehem. Micah writes about a ruler born in Bethlehem who is from ancient days, and how Israel will be in the midst of other nations. This fits perfectly with the Christian understanding of Jesus and the time of his birth, a ruler who is from old (remember John 1 describing Jesus being in the beginning), but who comes from Bethlehem. At the time of Jesus, Israel is in the midst of Roman oppression, which further correlates with Micah chapter 5. For people who sometimes struggle with doubt over Jesus being the true Messiah, reading Micah can be an excellent reminder that Jesus fulfills prophecy!

If those were not sufficient enough reasons to read Micah still today, chapter 6 testifies to what God desires of his followers: doing justice, loving kindness, walking humbly with God. Again, themes of humility and anti-oppression are strong. The saying in Micah 6:8 comes in the context of people trying to offer animals and even their children as an offering for their sin, rather than repenting and living according to God. Chapter 6 continues after the well known verse 8 with condemnation for wickedness and deception and idolatry, and God's punishment that will come upon wrongdoers.

The book ends with a call to wait. Things may look bad, but things are never over until God says so. The world has sin and evil, but God always wins. The world will one day see God's glory. If you ever struggle with pessimism, wondering how things will ever be better, Micah 7 has some encouraging teachings. Look to God, repent of evil, and wait on the Lord. That's the point of reading Micah today.