

MICAH: GOD'S PUNISHMENT AND HIS RESTORATION

IX: Man's Need To Obey God As A Priority

(Micah 6:1-8)

I. Introduction

- A. Micah, who was “a Judean from Moresheth in the SW of Palestine, preached to the common people of Judah.” (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1283, “Introduction to the Book of Micah: The Prophet.”)
- B. The message of Micah's prophecy was that God's coming judgment for Judah's sin would be unavoidable and severe, but in the end, His Abrahamic Covenant would be honored, and Israel would be blessed.
- C. Micah 6:1-7:10 presents a formal case where God twice indicts Israel for violating His Law and Micah, representing the nation, twice replies, beseeching God's mercy as Israel's only hope.
- D. We view the first indictment and Micah's response in Micah 6:1-8 for our insight, application, and edification:

II. Man's Need To Obey God As A Priority, Micah 6:1-8.

- A. In God's first formal indictment of Israel, He asked His people what He had ever done to have wearied them so that they had ceased to follow Him, Micah 6:1-5:
 1. The Lord summoned the outside witnesses of Israel's mountains and the strong foundations of the earth to hear his “lawsuit or litigation” (*rib*, Ibid., p. 1488), Micah 6:1-2a. God had a controversy with His people, and He wanted to plead His case with them, Micah 6:2b.
 2. God then affirmed His innocence in His relationship with Israel, asking, “My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer Me.” (Micah 6:3 NIV)
 3. The Lord then explained His innocence, noting how He had done only good to Israel, Micah 6:4-5:
 - a. First, God had brought Israel up out of the land of Egypt, rescuing the nation from slavery, Micah 6:4a. The mighty plagues, the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea and Israel's deliverance from Pharaoh's chariot army coupled with the forty years of livelihood provisions for the nation in the wilderness journeys until they had reached the Promised Land were demonstrations of God's great goodness and faithfulness!
 - b. Second, God had given Israel her leaders in Moses, Aaron, and Miriam: Moses was the overall leader and lawgiver, Aaron had been Moses' spokesman and Miriam had led the women in singing praises to the Lord for delivering the nation from the Egyptians at the Red Sea, Micah 6:4b.
 - c. Third, the Lord had reversed the intended curse of Balaam (Micah 6:5a with Numbers 23-24), protecting Israel from harm in the angelic conflict. (Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to Micah 6:4-5)
 - d. Fourth, the Lord had miraculously brought His people across the Jordan into the Promised Land, with Shittim being the last encampment east of the river and Gilgal the first on the west bank, Micah 6:5b, Ibid.
- B. Micah's response in Israel's behalf acknowledged that the nation had no just complaint to make about God, that she stood utterly incapable of atoning herself for turning away from the Lord, Micah 6:6-7:
 1. The prophet asked with what kind of offering he could come before the Lord and bow down to Him so that God might be appeased over Israel's sins, Micah 6:6a.
 2. Micah asked if he should come with burnt offerings or with calves a year old, Micah 6:6b.
 3. In case someone thought greater offerings were needed to appease the Lord, Micah then asked if God would be pleased with thousands of rams or with ten thousand of rivers of the rich product of olive oil (*shemen*, Kittel, Bib. Hebr., p. 939; B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 1032), Micah 6:7a.
 4. Micah even asked if he should give his firstborn in sacrifice to atone for His sin, what was forbidden by the Law (cf. Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; Deut. 12:31; 18:10), Micah 6:7b. Micah was not actually offering to give his firstborn child, but he was asking rhetorical questions “to suggest to Israel that nothing – even the most extreme sacrifice – could atone for what she had done,” Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1489.
- C. In summary, Micah told Israel what was good, what the Lord had shown her, Micah 6:8a: God required that Israel (1) act justly, be fair in dealing with others, that she (2) love *hesed*, “loyal love,” fulfilling her commitments to meet the needs of others (Ibid.; H. A. W., T. W. O. T., 1980, vol. I, p. 305-307) and (3) to walk humbly with her God, Micah 6:8b. God did not want Israel to relate to Him in a ritualistic manner, but to trust and obey the Lord from a heart that was devoted to Him. (Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T.)

Lesson: *God did not want His people to relate to Him in a cold ritualistic way, dealing with their sins by way of sacrifice as an end in itself, but to follow Him wholeheartedly in consistently fellowshiping with the Lord.*

Application: *May we live in fellowship with God by AVOIDING sin, relating to the Lord from the HEART.*