

## God saves

## Micah 7:1-20

Cycle 1	Chapters 1 & 2	Warning
Cycle 2	Chapters 3-5	Promise
Cycle 3	Chapters 7 & 8	Challenge

a/c Wiersbe

### 1-7      Sorrow

Just as a gardener laments when the fig fails to carry a large crop, and the vine is noticeable by its absent clusters, so the man of God laments over the sin of the people.

For Micah looking for an ordinary godly person on the streets of Jerusalem was as futile as looking for any summer fruit after the harvest was over and there was nothing left to glean. He was grieved over the unfaithfulness of the common people of the land. Everyone had been influenced by the pervasive corruption of those in leadership positions. Those who ought to have set an example for good, had set their hands upon what was evil (3). Everyone was guilty - all had fallen short of God's glory and his standards. (Rom 3:23)

As Peter warns us, judgement will begin "with family of God .. what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God ?" 1 Peter 4:17

As so often, Micah warns governmental rulers, businessmen, and the judiciary of their corrupt practices and their consequences.

Today we call it western civilised capitalist society.

The watchman was appointed in every city to warn the city of any approaching invaders. The death penalty was given to any watchman who failed to blow their trumpets at the right time.

God's watchmen were the prophets.

Warning of attack from outside and warning of internal vulnerability; caused by deliberate sin, self confidence or sheer neglect.

This prophet preached that it was soon to be the day of God's visit - not like an indulgent grandfather, but coming to make a full audit of their behaviour and to call all Jerusalem and Israel to account for their behaviour. It was to be the time God imposed his sanctions and penalties. It was an immanent actual event in history.

Not all of God's visitations are for punishment. He prefers salvation.

Those used to wielding power would find the day of God's judgement a "day of confusion" (4) Used to being the authority they will find that even they are under the authority of the Sovereign Lord.

Even the family has become a place of poison and conflict (5b - 6) The basic unit of Jewish society, the family, was falling apart. When Jesus spoke of the coming church he quoted Micah "a man's enemies will be members of his own household." Matt 10:36  
The gospels warn us that the family will be a major source of conflict when some become Christians. (Matt 10:35; Mark 13:12; Luke 21:16)

From experience I can tell you that even best of Christian families will know conflict, even hatred and violence.

Whilst in-law jokes abound, in reality there can be much friction which can even bring a marriage to a breakdown and the divorce courts.

What is the cause of this social disintegration?

The same then as today?

A need to get back to basics, to support the family?  
Or see that as a nation we have defiantly rejected God's word and God's truth and his will.

All the believer can do at such times, is the same as Micah. Wait, for God's time to act and bring about salvation.

"But as for me, I WATCH (literally, I keep looking) in hope for the Lord, I WAIT for God my saviour; my God will HEAR me." (7) As all believers are characterised - WATCH and PRAY.

You can trust in the mercy of God

## 8-17                    The end is nigh

Though Micah sees judgement as a forgone conclusion, he can see light at the end of the tunnel and God's grace and restoration for the righteous as well as judgement for the surrounding nations that were then in the ascendancy.

Memories of the past goodness of God, is all that Micah suggests the people have left, and there is the desire in the prophet for God to do it again. To overcome the nations that currently oppress Israel, to the extent that the whole world will take notice and worship God.

## 18-20                    The Lord is the one and only saviour

God is the light in the darkness (8-10), a shepherd to his people (11-14) and sovereign over the nations (15-17)

Who indeed is a God like thee ? (18).

These verses are the conclusion to the book, and begins with what maybe a pun on Micah's name, because the name Micah means "Who is like the Lord"

This climatic end to the book is a call for repentance and an assurance that God can and will forgive completely. He pardons sin -literally 'lifts up and bears'

- as seen at Calvary. He would not forgive the corrupt city traders (6:11) but for the faithful remnant, he will forgive their sin, for they are not perfect, but they do seek to follow God. He will Passover them again when judgement comes. And he will do to their sin, what he did to the Egyptian army, and bury the enemy in the depths of the sea, never to rise again.

Christian testimonies often talk of the gross sin of an individual in the past, before conversion. But God puts the past at the depths of the sea, and then puts up a no fishing notice. Each one of us can say, we were sinners, but today I am saved by the grace of God. This is what he means to me today, etc.

He is a God who delights to show mercy - Heseb (18)

What marks God out from the gods is his heseb love for his subjects. He delights in heseb.

This is what the Lord requires from us, justice and heseb. (6:8) This then is the mark of God in the lives of his people.

The most important event for Micah will not be the eventual defeat of Israel's enemies, but God's victory over Israel. The people were rarely true to God, but God will always be true to His people. (2 Tim 2:12-13)

To show compassion (19) includes the idea of suffering with those who suffer, seen in the humanity

of Jesus. He wept with those who wept and rejoiced with those who rejoiced. God's compassion is not academic or just a feeling. God has been actively involved in His world.

"Who [indeed] is a God like you." (18)

### Conclusion

*Once every year, on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, the orthodox Jew goes to a stream or river and symbolically empties his sins from his pockets into the water as he recites Micah 7:18-20. This is the "Tashlich" service, named after the word "You shall cast". It symbolises the fact that God can and will take our sins, wash them down the streams of running water and bury them deep in the depths of the ocean. God not only forgives our sin, he forgets them. (Kaiser in BST p 201) (Weekend of 11th and 12th September 1999 )*

The better we know the character of God, the more we can trust him for the future. The better we know the promises and covenants of God, the more peace we will have in our hearts when things fall apart. When Micah wrote this confession of faith, the future seemed hopeless; yet he had hope because he knew God and fully trusted him.

No matter how dark the day, the light of God's promises are still shining. No matter how confusing and frightening our circumstances, the character of God remains the same.

When the future seems hopeless, may your trust in God be strengthened. You have every reason to trust him.

Use Micah 7:18-19 as a prayer of praise.

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**Note: I use many sources in preparation. If unacknowledged material has been used, I apologise. Please let me know (via contact tab) and I will add the acknowledgment when updating this material.**