

ABATT
Micah
 Christian Life Assembly
 Jim Hoffman

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The Minor Prophets

One of the themes of the Minor Prophets is that mankind, even God’s elect people, do not do well in our struggle with sin on our own.

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The Minor Prophets

- God expected better of the Jew, and he expects far better from us because he has provided a “live in” Helper for us in the person of the Holy Spirit.
- Old Testament believers had the occasional advantage of the Holy Spirit’s presence abiding upon them, but we enjoy his constant indwelling.
- If Israel had no excuse for their inconsistent obedience, then what possible excuse could we claim? (None)

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The Minor Prophets

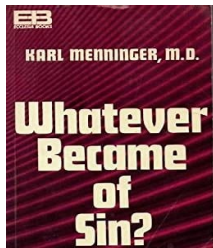
- **Micah is very plain spoken** – he frequently called out the sin of the people, especially the religious leaders of his day.
- G.K. Chesterton once responded to a newspaper editorial entitled, **“What is wrong with the world?”** He responded with two words, **“I am”**.
- In his book, **“Whatever Became of Sin?”**, Karl Menninger tells what happened when our American churches went from hell fire and brimstone to feel good slogans about the benefits of Christianity.

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The Minor Prophets

Menninger details for all to read how when people can claim “victim” status they are no longer accountable for their sin and therefore stop fighting it.



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The Minor Prophets

- Most of Micah’s prophecies are warnings to Judah, but he also foretells the Assyrian invasion and the conquering of the Northern Kingdom.
- His warnings to Jerusalem (Southern Kingdom) are around their eventual enslavement to Babylon.
- Judah will be enslaved for one main reason - because of the spiritual condition of the people and the leaders in particular.

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The Minor Prophets

There is an absolute connection between the spiritual condition of a nation and the culture of that nation. If the spiritual condition of a nation is one of turning from God, the rotting and ruination of that nation is assured.

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The Minor Prophets

- We see in Micah’s prophecy that because of his familiarity with the common people of his day there is an emphasis on justice for the poor.
- Even in our secular world most people still love a good story where the underdog receives justice.
- Much of his writings are directed against the powerful in his land of whom many are also religious.

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The Minor Prophets

- Micah 2:1 Woe to those who devise wickedness and work evil on their beds! When the morning dawns, **they perform it, because it is in the power of their hand.** ESV
- See what Micah says – no one had to coerce those with power to use it for their own benefit.
- Before they got out of bed in the morning, they were already asking themselves, “**how can I steal from others**” today?

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The Minor Prophets

- Micah 2:2 They covet fields and seize them, houses and take them away; and if a poor man received an inheritance they went after that too. ESV
- Micah comes down hard on those who use their clout to their own advantage.
- The rich would use their wealth to oppress the poor and the middle class - **every cruel act to people is an insult to God and will be remembered!**

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The Minor Prophets

- Commentators connect here what Ahab and Jezebel did to Naboth just so Ahab could have better grapes.
- In 1st Kings 21 Ahab wanted Naboth's vineyard, but Naboth said, "no" – Ahab pouts and Jezebel tells him to stop whining and go take the vineyard.
- They forge letters from Naboth critical of the king – they execute Naboth and shazam!, Ahab has the vineyard he wanted. (Naboth's family loses what little they had and Naboth is dead)

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The Minor Prophets

- Micah 3:1 And I said: Hear, **you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel!** Is it not for you to know justice?— 2 you who hate the good and love the evil. ESV
- The very ones who should have been pointing out the evil around them are the perpetrators of it!
- They proved their inverted morality by hating good and loving evil.

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The Minor Prophets

- God’s judgment on Israel is going to be done by a pagan empire, Assyria. (Micah 5 and 7)
- How humiliating to be conquered and chastened by people who are actually more wicked than you are!
- There is justice in this equation – all things being equal Assyria was worse than Israel, but all things were not equal because those with law of God are more accountable.

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The Minor Prophets

Luke 12:48b Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

God can and does expect more from those with more.

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The Minor Prophets

- Micah 3:9 Hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and **rulers of the house of Israel**, who detest justice and make crooked all that is straight, 10 who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity, 11 Its heads **give judgment for a bribe**; its priests **teach for a price**; its prophets **practice divination for money**; yet they lean on the Lord and say, “Is not the Lord in the midst of us? No disaster shall come upon us.” 12 Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height. ESV

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The Minor Prophets

- The house of God is usually the last to fall in a time of decadence. The people of God ought to form a hedge of protection for a society.
- In Micah's day the "religious" class had become corrupt to the point where their ministry motivation had devolved to "what's in it for me?".
- The priests were marketing religion as one would any other business – that's what it had become.

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The Minor Prophets

- Micah 4:1 It shall come to pass in the latter days.....
- Micah now turns to speaking about the future kingdom where peace and justice will reign.
- Verses 1 – 10 tell of the day when God's people will experience peace, justice, provision and safety ***It's going to happen.***

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The Minor Prophets

- A huge lesson from Micah is that God will warn of impending judgment when sin reaches a certain point in a society.
- If there is repentance, his judgment can be stayed, and perhaps even avoided completely.
- If there is no repentance, God may not act quickly, but he will always act decisively, and on his timetable. (150 years between Israel and Judah's judgments)

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The Minor Prophets

- What Micah prophesied was applicable to Israel, and Judah, as well as to the church of our day.
- God expects the lost to act as lost people and he expects the church to act like the church.
- **We must care about truth, justice, and righteousness or his blessing on us and could well be his chastening.** (how is that for a blessing?)

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The Minor Prophets

- Micah 5:4 And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. 5 And he shall be their peace. ESV
- The one to come out of Bethlehem, Messiah, will be a shepherd who will provide a place to run to when his sheep are threatened, and he will be their peace.

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The Minor Prophets

- Micah 6:6 What can we bring to the Lord? **Should we bring** him burnt offerings? **Should we bow** before God Most High with offerings of yearling calves? 7 **Should we offer** him thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of olive oil? **Should we sacrifice** our firstborn children to pay for our sins? 8 No, O people, the Lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. NLT
- The formula for pleasing God is quite simple – do what he requires. (obey him!)

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The Minor Prophets

- Micah asks a series of rhetorical questions about how to behave in a way that pleases God.
- It's almost like he is intentionally asking questions he knew were wrong.
- He then answers his own question of what pleases God, **"to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."**

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The Minor Prophets

- As it turns out it is possible to please God by deciding to do a few simple things – not simple to do, but simple to understand.
- The hymn writer wrote, **"I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back."**
- Pleasing God is not complicated, but because we have a will that is inclined towards sin it can be difficult.

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The Minor Prophets

THE STORY BEHIND
THE SONG:
I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS

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The Minor Prophets

“The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried.”

G.K. Chesterton

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The Minor Prophets

- Micah 7:18 Who is a God like you, **pardoning iniquity** and **passing over transgression** for the remnant of his inheritance? He **does not retain his anger forever**, because **he delights in steadfast love**. 19 **He will again have compassion** on us; **he will tread our iniquities underfoot**. You will **cast all our sins into the depths of the sea**.
- 20 You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old. ESV

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The Minor Prophets

- Remember what Micah means? “Who is like the Lord”.
- Both Israel and Judah will experience his power as they are trampled by his instruments, the Assyrians and the Babylonians.
- But in his closing words Micah will emphasize the mercy and compassion of God as opposed to his power.

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The Minor Prophets

- Micah also makes a strong reference to the faithfulness of God when he speaks of Jacob and Abraham.
- **God's covenant with his people is still in place, will still be kept by God, and though he must chasten his people he will not forget his people.**
- Hebrews 12:6 "For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."

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Questions?

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