

Micah:
Hear God's Words
Lesson 4

Key Verse

But he said, Yea rather, blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

—Luke 11:28

Key Verse Thought: Read the Key Verse. Do you understand what this verse means? (Remember that this is Jesus speaking. As Jesus was teaching the people, a woman in the crowd spoke up. She said that the woman who bore and nursed Him, Jesus' mother, should be blessed. Our key verse in this lesson is Jesus' response.) The word **blessed** means: "*fully satisfied; possessing the favor of God; a partaker of God's nature through faith in Christ.*" **Hear** means "*to understand or comprehend.*" **Keep** means "*to keep, to observe, to not violate.*" Jesus declared we are blessed if we obey God's Word (the Bible).

Emphasis: As Christians, we have the hope (promise) that God will forgive our sin, forever, and we are to show that we believe by hearing God's Word (reading the Bible).

Lesson Summary: The book of Micah begins with, "*The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem*" (Micah 1:1). This tells us when he lived and to whom God sent him to speak. Notice that these were the same kings to whom Isaiah spoke, so they lived around the same time – Micah coming just a little later. He warned the people of the coming judgment, but he also told them of the future blessing. One of the main things we can remember about Micah is that he called for the people to hear. "*Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is ...*" (Micah 1:2a).

Micah spoke to both Israel and Judah during the reign of King Hezekiah (see Jeremiah 26:18). We can also see that this helped King Hezekiah decide to make great reformations in Judah. In addition, remember that Israel was carried captive during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah. Therefore, Micah saw Israel carried away captive by the Assyrian army.

Like many prophets before him, he reminded the people where they had failed, calling for the people to repent and to have a right relationship with God (by obeying His commands). He warned of the coming destruction of Jerusalem. Nevertheless, he too, left the people with the hope of restoration one day. God even allowed Micah to reveal where the Messiah would be born (see Micah 5:2). He then left the people with hope – God would remove their sin (as far as the depths of the sea), and He would keep His promises made, “... to Jacob ... Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old” (Micah 7:20).

Suggested Bible Reading to Prepare for This Lesson

- Monday: Micah 1-2
- Tuesday: Micah 3
- Wednesday: Micah 4
- Thursday: Micah 5
- Friday: Micah 6
- Saturday: Micah 7

Micah: Hear God’s Words

1. Micah, the Prophet (Micah 1)
 - Contemporary of Isaiah
 - Called for all people to hear
 - Remember
2. How had Judah Failed? (Micah 2-3)
 - A listing of their sins
 - A refusal to hear God’s prophets
3. God’s Promises (Micah 4-5)
 - Israel’s future
 - The Messiah
4. What Does God Require? (Micah 6-7)
 - The people’s misconceptions
 - God’s truths

Note: Once again, as we study another book of prophecy, understand that it cannot be fully covered in one lesson. We will just highlight some important and interesting things found within the book of Micah. Remember again, of what we have been learning.

For the last few lessons, we learned about the prophet Isaiah. He spoke during the reign of the kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. In this lesson, as we learn about Micah, we will find that he lived at about the same time as Isaiah, but he began to speak a little later. Remember the kings we have studied recently – especially that Ahaz was a very bad king, but his son, Hezekiah, was a very good king. We will learn today how Micah was an influence upon King Hezekiah.

1. Micah, the Prophet (Micah 1)

As we read the following verse, we can understand where Micah belongs in history. “**The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem**” (Micah 1:1). Isaiah began speaking to Judah just a little earlier. Notice that the last three kings are the same. However, remember that Isaiah spoke mainly to the kings in their courts. In this lesson, we will learn that Micah spoke mainly to the common man in Judah (and even in Israel). Do you think Micah was an encouragement to Isaiah – letting him know he was not speaking out alone?

Micah must have noticed that even with the prophets speaking, the people still were not listening. Read how he begins his message, “**Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is ...**” (Micah 1:2a). He had a warning for God’s people – all of them. He began by telling both the people of Jerusalem (the capital of Judah) and the people of Samaria (the capital of Israel), “**For, behold, the LORD cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth**” (Micah 1:3). Why do you think God said He would “**tread upon the high places of the earth**”? Remember some of the history we have learned of God’s people. Beginning with King Solomon, we learned that he built “high places” where he and his many wives worshiped false idols (1 Kings 3: 3-4). Also remember that there was not one good king in Israel – for all “**did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin**” (2 Kings 14:24). And that sin was “**the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan**” (2 Kings 10:29).

King Ahaz, one of the worst kings who ruled over Judah, walked in the ways of the kings of Israel.

2. Twenty years old *was* Ahaz when he began to reign ... and did not *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father. 3. But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel. 4. And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree. (2 Kings 16:2-4)

King Ahaz sacrificed his son to the false god, Molech. Read about what God had warned them. “And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through *the fire* to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: *I am* the LORD” (Leviticus 18:21).

How did Micah react to the news that God was going to have to come down to make things right Himself? “Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls” (Micah 1:8).

As we continue, remember that Hezekiah became king in Judah, and he was a good king.

3. And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did. 4. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves ... 5. He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any* that were before him. 6. For he clave to the LORD, *and* departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. (2 Kings 18:3-6)

Notice the first thing King Hezekiah did that revealed he was a good king: he removed the high places. That was exactly where God said He would begin dealing with His people. Remember what we read in Micah 1:3: “... the LORD ... will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth.”

Does it sound like King Hezekiah took Micah's words seriously? Nevertheless, God obviously allowed Micah to understand that these reformatations would not be enough. We can grasp this in the following verse. "For her wound *is incurable*; for it is come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, *even to Jerusalem*" (Micah 1:9). God told Micah that Judah's "wound *is incurable*." The words **incurable wound** means "*the hopeless condition of Israel brought about by their habitual sin.*" We will understand better in our next lesson – for we will learn that the reforms of King Hezekiah were short lived. All because of his son, Manasseh, who was another one of the worst kings of Judah.

A Deeper Path: Remember Elijah. When he ran because Queen Jezebel threatened his life and he thought was the last prophet, God came to him and encouraged him. Not only that, but he sent Elijah to get a helper, Elisha. Elisha was a blessing to Elijah for the rest of his ministry.

2. How had Judah Failed? (Micah 2-3)

Micah chapter two gives us a glimpse of the sins into which the people had fallen.

Micah 2:1-2, 6, 8, 9:

- "1. Woe to them that devise iniquity,
- and work evil upon their beds!
- when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.
- 2. And they covet fields, and take *them* by violence; and houses, and take *them* away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.
- 6. Prophesy ye not, *say they to them that prophesy*: they shall not prophesy to them, *that they shall not take shame*.
- 8. Even of late my people is risen up as an enemy: ye pull off the robe with the garment from them that pass by securely as men averse from war.
- 9. The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses;
- from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever."

Not only were they living wickedly, but also they refused to hear God's prophets speak to them. For these offences, read some of what God would allow.

3. Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily: for this time *is* evil. 4. In that day shall *one* take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, *and* say, We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed *it* from me! turning away he hath divided our fields. 5. Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the LORD. (Micah 2:3-5)

God was warning that He would allow an evil to come upon them that they could not avoid. Do you remember when the people entered the Promised Land, and they divided the land by casting lots? God was letting them know that there would be no land for which to cast lots. Their land would be taken away from them.

Not only would their land be taken away, but also their beloved city of Jerusalem would be destroyed.

Read the following verse. “Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed *as* a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest” (Micah 3:12). Later we will learn more about the destruction of Jerusalem as we study the prophet Jeremiah. However, compare that verse in Micah with something interesting recorded in Jeremiah. “18. Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be plowed *like* a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest. 19. Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the LORD, and besought the LORD, and the LORD repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? ...” (Jeremiah 26:18-19). Jeremiah recorded that it was Micah’s bravery and faithfulness in preaching God’s Word that caused King Hezekiah to seek the Lord. King Hezekiah believed Micah’s words, and because of those words, King Hezekiah made great reformations in Judah that we learned of a few lessons ago. As king, he could have rejected those words and had Micah put to death. Nevertheless, Micah was faithful, and King Hezekiah’s heart was obviously touched. For, when King Hezekiah made those great reformations, God suspended his wrath – for a period of time. Remember, God sent the angel of the Lord that defeated King Hezekiah’s enemy for them – without even having to fight.

3. God's Promises (Micah 4-5)

After the discouraging words of Micah chapter three (where it told us that Jerusalem would be destroyed), God gave His people an encouraging word about their distant future.

1. But in the last days it shall come to pass, *that* the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. 2. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (Micah 4:1-2)

Remembering that the city of Jerusalem was situated upon a mountain helps us understand this verse. God also wanted them to know that their beloved city they were about to see destroyed would be restored one day.

Continue reading to see what God planned from that city.

3. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. 4. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make *them* afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken *it*. 5. For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever. (Micah 4:3-5)

One day, Jesus will rule and reign from Jerusalem. (Also see this confirmed in Revelation 11:15: “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”) Moreover, Jesus’ reign would be one of peace.

One of the most famous verses from the book of Micah is quoted in the book of Matthew. We hear this verse almost every year at Christmas time. “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2).

Remember this is the verse that told in which city the Promised One (Jesus) would be born.

2. Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 3. When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. 5. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, 6. And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. (Matthew 2:2-6)

When the wise men came from the east, they stopped in Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, and asked where the king of the Jews had been born. King Herod gathered the chief priests and scribes and asked them where the Christ was to be born. They referred back to the book of Micah.

This verse was important later as we can see in the following verse. “41. *Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?* 42. *Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?*” (John 7:41-42). They knew that Christ was supposed to come from Bethlehem (because of Micah 5:2). However, they obviously had forgotten that Jesus had been born in Bethlehem, and that he only grew up in Galilee. They missed!

4. What Does God Require? (Micah 6-7)

As we continue in chapter six of Micah, we can begin to understand just how foul the people’s understanding of God had become. “6. *Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and*

bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? 7. Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression, the fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul?” (Micah 6:6-7). They honestly had become so influenced by the bad kings (think of King Ahaz who offered his son to the god Molech), that they actually believed God would accept the sacrifice of a firstborn child to gain forgiveness from God.

But as we continue, we find God had already told them what He required of them – they had just chosen to disregard God’s commands. “*He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*” (Micah 6:8). This is the same message God had preached to the people from the beginning of time. All God expects from His people is for them to walk humbly with Him. Remember the following:

4. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: 5. And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

After reading how far the people had gotten from God, can you understand why God wanted them to constantly talk about His commands, put them in their head, and even write it by the door so that they would constantly be reminded of what God’s Words were? In addition, do you remember what Jesus, Himself, said when the Pharisees challenged Him?

36. Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law? 37. Jesus said unto him, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.* 38. *This is the first and great*

commandment. 39. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:36-40)

As we continue, recognize what Micah wanted the people to understand about God. “18. Who *is* a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy. 19. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. 20. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old” (Micah 7:18-20). No matter how far away from God the Israelites strayed; God would never forsake His people. They were to understand that there would be a penalty to pay for their sin and blatant disregard of God’s law, but God would have compassion upon His people and forgive their sin. He would not only forgive their sin, but he would cast that sin into the depths of the sea – never to be seen again.

One more very interesting thing about the book of Micah: the name **Micah** means “*who is like Jehovah?*” Did you notice the final question Micah asked as he was closing the book? He asked “**Who is a God like unto thee?**” **God** in that verse means “*might; power; strength.*” After hearing that God would discipline His people (showing He truly loved His people), remove idol worship from them (only allowing place to do what is right – worshiping the one and only true God), and promising to restore them one day, recognize something else that only God can do. In Micah 7:18, God promised that He would not remain angry with His people for their sin (transgressions). Because He is a merciful God, He would take those sins and cast them into the depths of the sea, where they can never be retrieved. God chose a man whose name tells us that he understood there was no one who could ever be like “Jehovah.” To understand better the difference, see Exodus 6:3: “**And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.**” God wanted to be more than a name to His people, He wanted to be a reality to them – someone they deemed as all powerful; one who can do anything. God would never fail to keep a promise He made to His people, so they were to live on that hope.

A Deeper Path: We have a promise in the New Testament that correlates to the final verses we can read in the book of Micah. Just as God promised to pardon their sin, casting them into the depths of the sea, He also promised to keep the promises made to Jacob and Abraham. We can read that the blood of Jesus, which He shed for our sins too, can make us near – all because of Jesus. “12. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:12-13). Also, remember: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Do you remember the hope on which the Israelites were to live? (The hope that God would keep His promises – especially the removal of sins, forever.) Read what we are to do today. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4). Moreover, with that hope we gather through the writings of the Old Testament, it is revealed to us in the New Testament in just whom that hope is to be placed. “To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). By Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection, we can place our trust in Him – and He enters into us. That gives us the hope of glory (eternity in Heaven with Him). In the Old Testament, they could not quite grasp that concept. However, through Jesus, we today, can understand it. We know that He died to take our sins away, something the people in the Old Testament never knew. All they ever knew was the covering of their sins for one year at a time (through the yearly sacrifice of the priest and sprinkling of blood upon the mercy seat). Moreover, once we understand, it should draw us closer to God. “For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Hebrews 7:19).

Micah 1-7 at a Glance:

Chapter 1: A call to hear for judgment is coming to Israel and Judah – for sin; he tells where the destruction will be

Chapter 2: Lists sins committed and the discipline for those sins; rejecting God’s prophets but accepting false prophets

Chapter 3: Micah boldly confronts the false prophets – for he was called by God; He placed blame where it belonged

Chapter 4: A promise of future peace: “... and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.”

Chapter 5: Troubles would come, but God would send the Promised One (vs. 2) who would bring victory & deliverance

Chapter 6: God reminded them what He had done for them & what He required of them; yet they walk as the house of Ahab

Chapter 7: “The good *man* is perished out of the earth: and *there is none upright among men ...*” punishment will come, but “... he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in mercy.*”

Reinforcement: Just as Micah called God’s people to “hear,” we too, are to “hear” God’s Words today. Even Peter, as he preached in the early church, said. “And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe” (Acts 15:7). How can we do that? We are to recognize our sin, ask for forgiveness from God, and believe that He will save us (through faith in His Son, Jesus). How can we “hear” God’s Word and begin to obey it? By reading our Bibles, praying, attending church (and especially Sunday School) regularly, and even listening to and obeying godly authorities. Be encouraged to understand the importance of hearing and obeying God’s Words. Also, remember that we are to be a living example in our world today. What kind of an example do you want to be? One like Judah (who failed miserably and were eventually carried away from their homeland, disciplined), or do you want to be a good example, like Jesus – who obeyed his Father unto death, even the death of the cross (see Philippians 2:8).

Closing: It would be good to close with a short prayer reinforcing today’s lesson. Always include any prayer requests you may have. *Today, pray that we will learn to hear God’s Word and that it will be our heart’s desire to obey those words we read from the Bible.*