
RELATED SCRIPTURES

Genesis 2:16-17 | John 10:7-18 | Zephaniah 3:14-20

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 2.12.23

SUMMARY

As we open the book of Micah, one of the Bible's "minor prophets," it's essential to know some background information. Firstly, Micah, as a prophet, speaks on behalf of God. We might think of the Bible's prophets as attorneys bringing a lawsuit to God's people. God made a covenant (dating back to the Garden then repeated numerous times throughout the Old Testament) with his people—that he would be faithful to them—and with that, there was an expectation that God's people would follow his law and worship him alone. However, God's people were seldom obedient, and prophets like Micah had the unpleasant task of indicting them for being covenant breakers. Second, through much of the Old Testament, the people of God are known as "Israel." At the time of Micah's writing (around the 8th century B.C.), the kingdom of Israel was divided into northern and southern kingdoms. The northern kingdom was called Israel, with Samaria as its capital, and the southern kingdom was Judah, with Jerusalem as its capital. Thirdly, the prophets of the Bible *usually* direct the heart of their message to either the northern or southern kingdom; Micah has words for both. During this period, the northern and southern kingdoms were living in relative peace with one another and enjoying prosperity. However, the wealth of the ruling class was coming at the expense of the poor. Moreover, God's people were giving themselves over to idolatry—the worship of the gods of neighboring nations. So, the "indictment" of God's people, beginning in chapter one, speaks of a severe judgment that awaits Samaria (vs. 2-7) and Judah (vs. 8-16) for their evil actions. Thankfully, God's judgment isn't his final word. Micah speaks words of judgment *and* forgiveness; God scatters his people for their sins, but he's also the Good Shepherd who, in covenant faithfulness, gathers and forgives. Yes, he gathers and forgives Israel, but his words of forgiveness find their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who gathers and forgives his church.

GROUP QUESTIONS

From the sermon or your direct reading of Micah 1:1-16, share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you.

Does it make you uncomfortable when the Bible speaks of "God's judgment"? Why or why not?

What might the charges be if God were to "indict" the modern church? How does Christ give us hope despite these indictments?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.