

## Mid Week • Micah

### INTRO • CHAPTER 1

**<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.**

Micah is the shortened form of the name Micaiah – which means, “Who is like Yahweh?”

Micah lived and ministered during a 40 year period at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC.

He was a contemporary of the prophet Isaiah, and this explains why so much of Micah’s prophecy is an echo of what we find in Isaiah.

In order to better understand what Micah has to say, let’s take a look at the historical setting – just what is going on in the Middle East at this time?

Assyria is the major player, though Babylon is on the rise.

We read here that Micah lived and ministered during the reign of 3 kings of Judah: Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah – all of these were the descendants of David of course.

During Jotham’s reign, Israel and Damascus, the capital of Syria, entered in to an alliance to attack Judah.

Jotham found out about it and made preparations for an attack, but it never materialized during his reign.

It did come during the reign of his son Ahaz.

Ahaz, against Isaiah’s prophetic insistence not to, entered in to an alliance with Tiglath-pileser III, the new king of Assyria.

When Israel and Damascus attacked Judah, Assyria attacked them and won.

But while Judah was delivered from Israel and Syria, she lost her independence from Assyria and ended up becoming a vassal state that had to send annual tribute to Assyria.

It was during this time that Assyria defeated Israel and carried them away captive, settling other defeated people in their place.

A few years later, Ahaz died and his son Hezekiah rose in his place. Hezekiah continued sending tribute until several regional nations who likewise were vassals of Assyria decided to revolt, thinking that together they could throw off the Assyrian hegemony.

The plan backfired – Assyria returned and laid waste to the entire nation of Judah, all except the city of Jerusalem which they laid siege to, but could not take.

They had to break off the siege and head home because of internal problems there.

Micah foretells all of this in his book.

The book contains 3 addresses – 3 prophetic messages – all introduced by the word “Hear”

The first is found in chs. 1 & 2, the 2<sup>nd</sup> in chs. 3-5, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> in chs. 6 & 7.

They alternate between threat and promise, judgment and mercy.

While Micah paints a pretty terrifying picture of things, we need to bear in mind that what He shares here is the *heavenly perspective*. To the people of his day, things didn't appear all that bad.

They'd grown accustomed to the corruption of the courts and the moral coarseness of the times.

Things had been decaying for several generations and the slow gradual decline had resulted in people thinking the status quo was the way things had always been.

Like a lobster that's put in a pot of cold water and then slowly risen to the boiling point, the people had little awareness that they had departed so far from faithfulness to God.

Micah's ministry was aimed at awakening them to their peril – that they were sitting in a steaming cauldron of judgment and God was about ready to make Judah-stew.

Notice in v. 1 that Micah's ministry was aimed at both the north and the south.

When he began his 40 year ministry, Israel was still in their land.

But 20 years later, they would be conquered by the Assyrians. Micah is unusual in his calling to minister to both the N & S – most

of the prophets spoke only to one of the two nations.

- 2 Hear, all you peoples! Listen, O earth, and all that is in it! Let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, The Lord from His holy temple.**

This gives almost a legal feel to what Micah says.

He is like a prosecuting attorney who is making the case against the accused – in this case, Israel and Judah.

- 3 For behold, the LORD is coming out of His place; He will come down And tread on the high places of the earth.**
- 4 The mountains will melt under Him, And the valleys will split Like wax before the fire, Like waters poured down a steep place.**

Here ‘s a picture of God coming in judgment, a judgment which can no more be stopped than the rains cascading down the sides of the mountains.

- 5 All this is for the transgression of Jacob And for the sins of the house of Israel. What *is* the transgression of Jacob? *Is it* not Samaria? And what *are* the high places of Judah? *Are they* not Jerusalem?**

Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel while of course Jerusalem was the capital of the south.

These two cities were the main scenes of corruption.

- 6 “Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field, Places for planting a vineyard; I will pour down her stones into the valley, And I will uncover her foundations.**
- 7 All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces, And all her pay as a harlot shall be burned with the fire; All her idols I will lay desolate, For she gathered *it* from the pay of a harlot, And they shall return to the pay of a harlot.”**
- 8 Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked; I will make a wailing like the jackals And a**

**mourning like the ostriches,**

**9 For her wounds *are* incurable. For it has come to Judah; It has come to the gate of My people—To Jerusalem.**

Micah predicts the complete destruction of Samaria, just as it happened at the hands of the Assyrians in 722 BC.

It was wiped clean!

Then, a few years later, the Assyrians destroyed the countryside throughout Judah and came up to the very door of Jerusalem before they left.

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Now Micah has some fun with words as he speaks words of judgment on specific locations.

Each of these is a play on words, making puns out of the names of these cities and regions.

Like saying “Hightown will be brought low, there will be disunity in Concord. Cannon Falls will fall to cannons.”

**10 Tell *it* not in Gath,**

“Gath” sounds just like the Heb. Word, “tell” – SO this would be, “Tell it not in Tell.”

**Weep not at all;**

“Weep” is the word “bakoh” and sounds just like the name of the city Acco.

Micah is saying – weep not in Acco.

**In Beth Aphrah Roll yourself in the dust.**

Beth Aphrah means “House of Dust.”

**11 Pass by in naked shame, you inhabitant of Shaphir;**

Shaphir is from the word meaning “beauty” – but here she is stripped of her beauty.

**The inhabitant of Zaanán does not go out.**

Zaanán means departure – but here her inhabitants do not go out.

**Beth Ezel mourns; Its place to stand is taken away from you.**

Beth Ezel means “friendly house” and was the sister city to Zaanan – but now she cannot offer any assistance to Zaanan.

**12 For the inhabitant of Maroth pined for good, But disaster came down from the LORD To the gate of Jerusalem.**

Maroth means “bitterness.”

She looked for good, but got what her names means.

**13 O inhabitant of Lachish, Harness the chariot to the swift steeds (She was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion), For the transgressions of Israel were found in you.**

Lachish had been one of the main fortress cities that protect the SW flank of Jerusalem. It was a wealthy and prosperous city and had been a center of gross idolatry.

Chariot is the Heb. Word *rekesh*, which rhymes with Lachish.

**14 Therefore you shall give presents to Moresheth Gath;**

The play on words here is found in the meaning of Moresheth – *to possess*, but here now, because of their subjugation to Assyria, they will have to *give* annual tribute.

**The houses of Achzib shall be a lie to the kings of Israel.**

Achzip means deceit – so the houses of deceit will be a deceit to the kings of Israel who have palced their trust in them.

**15 I will yet bring an heir to you, O inhabitant of Mareshah; The glory of Israel shall come to Adullam.**

Adullam means retreat or refuge.

So the glory of Israel, meaning her nobility will go in to hiding.

**16 Make yourself bald and cut off your hair, Because of your precious children; Enlarge your baldness like an eagle, For they shall go from you into captivity.**

Hair was seen as a sign of youthful vitality and strength.

Baldness was considered a sign of increasing age and so physical weakness.

In times when people were suffering extreme sorrow, debilitating

grief,. They would cut off their hair to signify they had no strength.

Micah is saying the judgments to come are so severe that the people ought to cut off all their hair as a sign of their sincere repentance and grief over their terrible sin which has brought forth such trouble.

## CHAPTER 2

**1 Woe to those who devise iniquity, And work out evil on their beds! At morning light they practice it, Because it is in the power of their hand.**

This is a chilling statement!

Micah is isolating those in the nation who sit around and devise immoral schemes.

They concoct their wicked plans – because they are in positions of power and influence and have the ability to carry them out.

Then, when the time is right, without a pang of conscience to disturb them, they set out to carryout their evil.

Do you realize there are people today who sit in positions in industry, media, and government, who make major decisions on what their company or department will do, and they calculate ways to implement godless ideas?

I've read the history of the Roe V. Wade decisions which legalized abortion on demand in this country in 1973.

Several years before Roe V. Wade, the Supreme Court manufactured a legal precedent called “a right to privacy.”

There is no right to privacy under the US Constitution, but they made one up out of a extremely loose interpretation of the freedom against unreasonable search and seizure.

But from the beginning, it was the aim of certain justices and their backers to make abortion legal.

Since there was NO LEGAL precedent anywhere that could be construed to allow abortion, they had to make one – and make one they did, because as it says here, they COULD! – the right to privacy; a tenet so much a part of our legal system now that most of us probably thought it was a part of the original constitution.

Someone sat down and dreamed up Temptation Island – and because they had the power, they aired it.

Someone sat down and dreamed up extreme fighting, and because they had the power to do it, they did.

Someone sat down and dreamed up child pornography – and because they had the power to carry it out, they proceeded.

And now, these things have become so much a part of the status quo, we've come to think of them as part and parcel of modern society.

But Micah say, “Woe to those who devise iniquity, And work out evil on their beds!”

Why? Because while they may hatch their plots and devise their schemes and rack in millions of dollars and fund a lavish lifestyle or moral decadence, God is keep close records, and now one gets away with sin.

Each will receive their just desserts!

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Now, Micah turns to deal with specific ways these evil-schemers had been perverting things . . .

## **2 They covet fields and take *them* by violence, Also houses, and seize *them*. So they oppress a man and his house, A man and his inheritance.**

I happened by an ad yesterday while channel surfing – you know, men don't really want to see what's on TV, they want to see what ELSE is on TV – anyway, there was this ad on how to secure property with no money down and then use this property as income.

I don't know what his angle was because I didn't stay to find out. But that's the picture here – people who use whatever means are necessary, legal or otherwise, to take what belongs to another.

Look at that phrase – “So they oppress a man and his house, A man and his inheritance.”

How just is the inheritance tax the government places on us?

You might be able to make a case for the income tax, but how can you justify a tax on an inheritance?

Is it any less theft because the government passes a law and declares something legal?

I've already paid taxes on my income.

What's left is mine well, it's the Lord's really but you know what I mean).

So when I take my after tax income and invest it and build up an estate, how right is it when I leave that to my children, that they have to pay tax on it again?

An inheritance is NOT income – it's the faithful stewardship of one generation to the next!

**3 Therefore thus says the LORD: “Behold, against this family I am devising disaster, From which you cannot remove your necks; Nor shall you walk haughtily, For this is an evil time.**

**4 In that day one shall take up a proverb against you, And lament with a bitter lamentation, saying: ‘We are utterly destroyed! He has changed the heritage of my people; How He has removed *it* from me! To a turncoat He has divided our fields.’”**

**5 Therefore you will have no one to determine boundaries by lot In the assembly of the LORD.**

Wealth in ancient Israel was largely determined by the holding of land.

In fact, until the industrial revolution, that was pretty much true at all times and everywhere.

So if a person wanted to gain more wealth, it meant grabbing more land.

But that was tough in Israel because everything was divided by lots to the tribes and the family of the tribes.

Land remained in a family forever!

But there were those who had found ways to swindle the unaware out of their property and they were doing so at an alarming rate.

God here tells the swindlers that they will lose their lands.

**6 “Do not prattle,” you say to those who prophesy. So they shall not prophesy to you; They shall not return insult for insult.**

**7 You who are named the house of Jacob: “Is the Spirit**



**of the LORD restricted? Are these His doings? Do not  
My words do good To him who walks uprightly?**

When the evil-doers were rebuked, instead of listening and repenting, they merely told the prophets to stop with their inane words.

So the prophets would no longer speak to them – only to those who would listen, and if they listened, then the Word of the Lord would bring them blessing.

**8 “Lately My people have risen up as an enemy—You pull off the robe with the garment From those who trust *you*, as they pass by, Like men returned from war.**

**9 The women of My people you cast out From their pleasant houses; From their children You have taken away My glory forever.**

**10 “Arise and depart, For this *is not your* rest; Because it is defiled, it shall destroy, Yes, with utter destruction.**

**11 If a man should walk in a false spirit And speak a lie, *saying*, ‘I will prophesy to you of wine and drink,’ Even he would be the prattler of this people.**

In these vs., Micah predicts the destruction of Israel and Judah and their being carried away captive.

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Then in the last 2 vs. of ch. 2, Micah looks into the future to Israel’s glorious restoration and return to the land.

**12 “I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold, Like a flock in the midst of their pasture; They shall make a loud noise because of so *many* people.**

**13 The one who breaks open**

This refers to the Lord breaking open the cell of exile and captivity into which they’ve been taken -

**The one who breaks open will come up before them;  
They will break out, Pass through the gate, And go out**

**by it; Their king will pass before them, With the LORD at their head.”**

### **CHAPTER 3**

- 1 And I said: “Hear now, O heads of Jacob, And you rulers of the house of Israel: *Is it* not for you to know justice?**
- 2 You who hate good and love evil; Who strip the skin from My people, And the flesh from their bones;**
- 3 Who also eat the flesh of My people, Flay their skin from them, Break their bones, And chop *them* in pieces Like *meat* for the pot, Like flesh in the caldron.”**

Ooh – this is brutal! God is now rebuking the nobles and leaders of the people.

Rather than seeing themselves as servants of the people, they saw the people as the means to their own ends and gain.

They showed no compassion whatsoever for the weak and poor.

Life was a game and the winner was the one who amassed the biggest purse.

As the rulers of the people, they ought to have seen themselves as shepherds and the nation as a flock.

Oh, they were a flock alright, but instead of wool, they wanted mutton and their fleece was golden.

- 4 Then they will cry to the LORD, But He will not hear them; He will even hide His face from them at that time, Because they have been evil in their deeds.**

When judgment finally comes, they will cry out to God, but God will not answer because the time of mercy has been passed.

- 5 Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets Who make my people stray; Who chant “Peace” While they chew with their teeth, But who prepare war against him Who puts nothing into their mouths:**

- 6 “Therefore you shall have night without vision, And**

**you shall have darkness without divination; The sun shall go down on the prophets, And the day shall be dark for them.**

**7 So the seers shall be ashamed, And the diviners abashed; Indeed they shall all cover their lips; For *there is no answer from God.***”

One of the signs of corruption of the day was that the priests and prophets, the professional religionists were selling themselves out for hire.

That’s right – they were making merchandise of their office as a man of God.

They wetted their finger and stuck it up in the air to see which way the winds were blowing and then when approached, they told people what they wanted to hear – thus becoming increasingly popular and sought after.

These were the featured speakers at the religious conventions.

These were the popular authors and celebrities.

They had long ago stopped seeking the Lord for His message and instead maintained a pious exterior while only parroting the world’s wisdom and sanctifying the world’s lusts and desires.

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Against this empty religious prattle, Micah speaks a genuine word from the Lord . . .

**8 But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD, And of justice and might, To declare to Jacob his transgression And to Israel his sin.**

**9 Now hear this, You heads of the house of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel, Who abhor justice And pervert all equity,**

**10 Who build up Zion with bloodshed And Jerusalem with iniquity:**

**11 Her heads judge for a bribe, Her priests teach for pay, And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD, and say, “Is not the LORD among us? No harm can come upon us.”**

**12 Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed *like* a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, And the mountain of the temple Like the bare hills of the forest.**

Just as he had foretold the destruction of Samaria at the hands of the Assyrians, now he foretells the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians.

## **CHAPTER 4**

**1 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it.**

**2 Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.**

**3 He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.**

**4 But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make *them* afraid; For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.**

**5 For all people walk each in the name of his god, But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God Forever and ever.**

Here is a glorious prophecy of the future Millennial Kingdom when Christ rules visibly on earth.

The Jews will be regathered in their land and Jerusalem, which has been a heavy burden to all the nations of the earth will instead become the focal point of global worship.

Instead of just the Jews going there annual on pilgrimage, the

whole earth will send representatives there to do honor to the Lord.

Peace will reign over all the earth and the physical creation will be liberated from the curse of the Fall.

It will be like the Garden of Eden all over the world.

V. 5 speaks to both the present day and the future Millennium.

In Micah's day, all the nations had their patron deity while Israel worshipped Yahweh.

But in the future, Yahweh will be the God all the nations acknowledge.

**6 "In that day," says the LORD, "I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast And those whom I have afflicted;**

**7 I will make the lame a remnant, And the outcast a strong nation; So the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on, even forever.**

**8 And you, O tower of the flock, The stronghold of the daughter of Zion, To you shall it come, Even the former dominion shall come, The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem."**

**9 Now why do you cry aloud? *Is there* no king in your midst? Has your counselor perished? For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor.**

**10 Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, Like a woman in birth pangs. For now you shall go forth from the city, You shall dwell in the field, And to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered; There the LORD will redeem you From the hand of your enemies.**

**11 Now also many nations have gathered against you, Who say, "Let her be defiled, And let our eye look upon Zion."**

Though in the Millennium the nations will come to worship at Jerusalem, now, in Micah's day, the nations will come to mock the

city and her God.

**12 But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, Nor do they understand His counsel; For He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor.**

**13 “Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; For I will make your horn iron, And I will make your hooves bronze; You shall beat in pieces many peoples; I will consecrate their gain to the LORD, And their substance to the Lord of the whole earth.”**

The nations may defeat Jerusalem and Judah today, but in the end, God will gather the nations to Jerusalem and treat them as a farmer does a sheaf of wheat stalks that have been harvested.

He will beat them and shake loose their grain.

This is a picture of the future judgment of the nations.

## **CHAPTER 5**

**1 Now gather yourself in troops, O daughter of troops; He has laid siege against us; They will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek.**

**2 “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *Yet* out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, From everlasting.”**

Here is the prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

There were 2 Bethlehems in Israel – one in the south and one on the north.

Ephrathah identified the southern one.

You’ll remember that when the wise men went to Herod in Jerusalem to seek out the exact location of the Messiah’s birth, the scribes were able to pinpoint it as the little village of Bethlehem.

They based their counsel on this passage.

**3 Therefore He shall give them up, Until the time *that* she who is in labor has given birth; Then the remnant of His brethren Shall return to the children of Israel.**

The “she” here is the nation of Israel – this verse pictures Israel’s national rebirth after a time of judgment and exile.

- 4 And He shall stand and feed *His flock* In the strength of the LORD, In the majesty of the name of the LORD His God; And they shall abide, For now He shall be great To the ends of the earth;**
- 5 And this *One* shall be peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land, And when he treads in our palaces, Then we will raise against him Seven shepherds and eight princely men.**
- 6 They shall waste with the sword the land of Assyria, And the land of Nimrod at its entrances; Thus He shall deliver *us* from the Assyrian, When he comes into our land And when he treads within our borders.**

This again looks to the future kingdom when Christ comes to rule on earth.

Israel will no longer be at the whim of stronger nations, represented here by the Assyrian threat of Micah’s day. God will raise up a might force fo defenders who make sure Israel’s border remain secure.

- 7 Then the remnant of Jacob Shall be in the midst of many peoples, Like dew from the LORD, Like showers on the grass, That tarry for no man Nor wait for the sons of men.**
- 8 And the remnant of Jacob Shall be among the Gentiles, In the midst of many peoples, Like a lion among the beasts of the forest, Like a young lion among flocks of sheep, Who, if he passes through, Both treads down and tears in pieces, And none can deliver.**
- 9 Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries, And all your enemies shall be cut off.**

In the Millennium, the Jews will dwell in the geographical, economic and social center of the world and will fear no one because God will be visibly present in her midst!

But just as God will waste anyone who makes himself Israel's adversary, He will also waste all that **IN** Israel that is unworthy of Him.

**10 “And it shall be in that day,” says the LORD, “That I will cut off your horses from your midst And destroy your chariots.**

God told the Jews not to amass horse of chariots for their defense but to trust in Him.

**11 I will cut off the cities of your land And throw down all your strongholds.**

When Messiah reigns, city walls will be unnecessary.

**12 I will cut off sorceries from your hand, And you shall have no soothsayers.**

**13 Your carved images I will also cut off, And your sacred pillars from your midst; You shall no more worship the work of your hands;**

**14 I will pluck your wooden images from your midst; Thus I will destroy your cities.**

**15 And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury On the nations that have not heard.”**

Meaning the nations who have refused to listen to the Word of the Lord.

## **CHAPTER 6**

Now God takes the nation of Judah to court. First he challenges them to make their case for why they have rejected Him.

**1—Hear now what the LORD says: “Arise, plead your case before the mountains, And let the hills hear your voice.**

Now God makes His case against Israel . . .

**2 Hear, O you mountains, the LORD's complaint, And you strong foundations of the earth; For the LORD has a**



**complaint against His people, And He will contend with Israel.**

**3 “O My people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Testify against Me.**

**4 For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I redeemed you from the house of bondage; And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.**

**5 O My people, remember now What Balak king of Moab counseled, And what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, From Acacia Grove to Gilgal, That you may know the righteousness of the LORD.”**

Now Micah puts himself in the place of the people who've heard God and been convicted.

But they are not genuinely repentant.

They are more afraid of the consequences of their sin than they are truly sorrowful over their evil.

**6 With what shall I come before the LORD, And bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, With calves a year old?**

**7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, Ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?**

Since we covered vs. 6-8 last Sunday, I'll be more brief with them this evening.

As I mentioned Sunday – while the nation was corrupt to the core, they still maintained a façade of religion.

The temple was still busy – the people were still bringing their sacrifices to the altar and the priests were busy, busy, busy!

But it was a religion of form, ritual and externals.

When people left the temple after throwing God a bone, they thought they had paid their religious dues and now God was duty bound to be good to them.

When they went to the temple, it wasn't worship, it was business.

Worship didn't find its center and object in Yahweh but was seen as the means to an end – and that end being me!

I worry that we can slip in to that same mode of thinking – where worship becomes me-centered, where coming to church becomes a matter of merely scratching a religious or spiritual itch.

We get constant mailings and newsletters here at the church telling us that there's a growing spiritual awareness and hunger among Americans.

It isn't that they're seeking *truth* so much as that they're becoming increasingly aware that the past promises of science that all the problems of the human race could be solved and that technology would usher in a new golden era have proven hollow.

So now they are looking to fill a spiritual void that is becoming more acute because of its long neglect.

But it seems people aren't really after truth because they are entering all kinds of strange cults by the thousands.

The newsletters and mailings tell us how we can get our slice of the seekers pie by doing better marketing of our religious product.

Listen to this article I read yesterday from Church and Worship Technology magazine.

I am a Hollywood junkie. I admit it, I gravitate to the Entertainment page in the newspaper before reading the headline news. I buy Vanity Fair and Premiere magazines. I torture my friends by watching old black and white movies on cable. That is me---entertainment junkie.

However, as a total devotee of anything on the screen--big or little--I understand the need for a clear image. The image of the actors and actresses, the image of the cinematography, the image of the box it comes in--this completes a package that attracts people.

The church market is not much different from the entertainment market. Like the different forms of entertainment (movies, books, televisions), there are many options available to worship God. With more than 50 major religions or religious sects in the world, presenting an image of your church becomes important to

not only your church's growth, but also to your church's health. Therefore, being image conscious is not just a Hollywood vice. It is the same in any venue--image is everything. Churches have a particularly hard time with their image 'because they have so many people to please. They have to be careful to not alienate their congregation.

So how to mix mediums? How to make sure your image---every image--is up to par? By reading this magazine of course (shameless plug) and by realizing that technology can be a image builder--or an image destroyer--so it should be treated with respect and a little fear. Adding technology of any kind to the church is a big project. Starting with funding and ending with the training and first run, technology adds excitement and newness to an ordinary service, it adds an image that the church is moving in a new direction.

Technology can help you project that image to the members of your congregation, as well as those who are searching for God, for meaning, for an image of their own. Use what man built to present what God built. Build and maintain a clear image and people will respond by making it a rousing success.

Kind Regards, Hollie Costello, Editor

This is a perfect modern day application of what Micah says in vs. 6-7.

Do we keep up with the rituals, the image, the forms?

Does this please God – or is this all a religion for US, to make us feel better about ourselves?

What does God require?

**8 He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?**

Worship and religion that doesn't cultivate and promote moral excellence is dead and useless.

**We talked at length about this Sunday.**

**9 The LORD's voice cries to the city—Wisdom shall see  
Your name: “Hear the rod! Who has appointed it?”**

**10** Are there yet the treasures of wickedness In the house of the wicked, And the short measure *that is* an abomination?

**11** Shall I count pure *those* with the wicked scales, And with the bag of deceitful weights?

**12** For her rich men are full of violence, Her inhabitants have spoken lies, And their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

God said doing justly- treating others with fairness was a part of genuine worship.

As long as people were lying, cheating, and stealing, it proved their hearts were far from God.

It's shocking to hear reports of people claiming to be Christians, either buyers or sellers, who cheat others.

John says it this way in 1 John 4 – he who says he loves God but hates his brother is a liar and the truth is not in him.

**13** “Therefore I will also make *you* sick by striking you, By making *you* desolate because of your sins.

**14** You shall eat, but not be satisfied; Hunger *shall be* in your midst. You may carry *some* away, but shall not save *them*; And what you do rescue I will give over to the sword.

**15** “You shall sow, but not reap; You shall tread the olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil; And *make* sweet wine, but not drink wine.

**16** For the statutes of Omri are kept; All the works of Ahab's house *are done*; And you walk in their counsels, That I may make you a desolation, And your inhabitants a hissing. Therefore you shall bear the reproach of My people.”

Omri and Ahab were some of the wickedest of the kings of the north.

**THESE VERSES SPEAK OF GOD'S COMPLETE**

## JUDGMENT OF THE NATION.

### CHAPTER 7

**1** Woe is me! For I am like those who gather summer fruits, Like those who glean vintage grapes; *There is no cluster to eat* Of the first-ripe fruit *which* my soul desires.

**2** The faithful *man* has perished from the earth, And *there is no one upright among men.!!!*

The summer fruits were the remnant left behind after the harvest.

They were too ripe to pick and so were left, but there are few of them.

Micah is using this image to say that as he looks around for righteous companions, he can't find any!!!

**Every one's corrupt and wicked.**

**They all lie in wait for blood; Every man hunts his brother with a net.**

**3** That they may successfully do evil with both hands—  
The prince asks *for gifts*, The judge seeks a bribe,  
And the great *man* utters his evil desire; So they scheme together.

**4** The best of them *is* like a brier; The most upright *is sharper* than a thorn hedge; The day of your watchman and your punishment comes; Now shall be their perplexity.

**5** Do not trust in a friend; Do not put your confidence in a companion; Guard the doors of your mouth From her who lies in your bosom.

**6** For son dishonors father, Daughter rises against her mother, Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; A man's enemies *are* the men of his own household.

No one can be trusted – that's how bad it had gotten.

Are we better today?

Do mothers leave their children to go off and find themselves?

Do mothers trap their children in to the back seat and then drive their car into a lake so that they can be free to pursue a relationship wit a man who doesn't want children?  
Do fathers sexually abuse their daughters?  
Do teens steal their parents' credit cards and go rack up purchases?  
So in-laws lie about each other and try to get each other in trouble?

The family is the basic unit of society, and when the bonds of family unravel, it is a sure sign that civilization has died.

7 Therefore I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; My God will hear me.

Micah lived in a day when social life was unraveling fast. What was his solution? Look to the Lord!

8 Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; When I fall, I will arise; When I sit in darkness, The LORD *will be* a light to me.

Micah speaks now in the first person, but as though the nation was speaking to God.

This is Israel when she is truly repentant and has turned again in faith to the Lord.

The devil would like nothing more than to give us a defeatist attitude and make us just kind of pull in our legs, hug our knees and whimper.

We need to remember that no matter how dark it gets, hell cannot prevail against the Church as we faithfully follow the Lord.

And even if the vast bulk of the visible church departs from the path of Christ and becomes totally co-opted and seduced by the world, the Lord knows those who are His and will prove Himself mighty on their behalf.

9 I will bear the indignation of the LORD, Because I have sinned against Him, Until He pleads my case And executes justice for me. He will bring me forth to the light; I will see His righteousness.

10 Then *she who is* my enemy will see, And shame will cover her who said to me, "Where is the LORD your God?" My eyes will see her; Now she will be trampled down Like mud in the streets. Yes, Israel had departed from the Lord and was due for judgment.

**But after judgment comes restoration.**

And when the restoration is complete, then all Israel's enemies will realize **THEY** were the ones who were far more wrong than Israel ever was.

Micah now speaks to the city of Jerusalem and her future rebuilding . . .

**11** *In* the day when your walls are to be built, *In* that day the decree shall go far and wide.

**12** *In* that day they shall come to you From Assyria and the fortified cities, From the fortress to the River, From sea to sea, And mountain *to* mountain.

**13** Yet the land shall be desolate Because of those who dwell in it, And for the fruit of their deeds.

Now he turns to plead with the Lord to come to His people . . .

**14** Shepherd Your people with Your staff, The flock of Your heritage, Who dwell solitarily *in* a woodland, In the midst of Carmel; Let them feed *in* Bashan and Gilead, As in days of old.

And God replies -

**15** "As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders."

Micah then breaks forth in exultant rejoicing . . .

**16** The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; They shall put *their* hand over *their* mouth; Their ears shall be deaf.

**17** They shall lick the dust like a serpent; They shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth. They shall be afraid of the LORD our God, And shall fear because of You.

As Micah thinks back over all he's seen that will take place in the future of the nation – it's judgment then it's glorious restoration, he says this -

**18 Who *is* a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights *in* mercy.**

**19 He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea.**

20 You will give truth to Jacob *And* mercy to Abraham, Which You have sworn to our fathers From days of old.

We will cover these verses in greater depth on Sunday as we consider just how complete God's forgiveness is.