

## Micah

### table of contents

micah 7. <sup>2-3</sup> — just scripture.....	2
micah 7. <sup>4-5</sup> — just scripture.....	4
micah 7. <sup>18-20</sup> — lent.....	5

Micah 7.<sup>2-3</sup>— just scripture

<sup>2</sup>Those of integrity have vanished from the land.  
There isn't an upright individual among them.  
All of them are involved in violent intrigues.  
Each of them hunts down his fellow citizen with a snare.  
<sup>3</sup>Their hands are outstretched to corruption.  
For a favorable decision, the government administrator demands,  
along with government official, bribes.  
So, the power elite reveals what he secretly wants,  
and they grant it.

For those who wish to compare translations, here is the KJV.

<sup>2</sup>The good man is perished out of the earth:  
and there is none upright among men:  
they all lie in wait for blood;  
they hunt every man his brother with a net.  
<sup>3</sup>that they may do evil with both hands earnestly,  
the prince asketh,  
and the judge asketh for a reward;  
and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire:  
so they wrap it up.

1. Micah's complains that "those of integrity have vanished from the land," that there is "*none* upright among them," that "*all* are involved in violent intrigues," and that "*every* one of them hunts down his fellow citizen."  
? What do you think and feel about this complaint?

Compare these like-minded statements.

"... we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are *all* under sin; as it is written,  
'There is *none* righteous, no, not one:  
There is *none* that understandeth,  
there is *none* that seeketh after God.  
They are *all* gone out of the way,  
they are [*all*]*together* become unprofitable;  
there is *none* that doeth good, no, *not one*.  
Their throat is an open sepulchre;  
with their tongues they have used deceit;  
the poison of asps is under their lips:  
whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:  
Their feet are swift to shed blood:  
Destruction and misery are in their ways:  
And the way of peace have they not known:  
There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. 3.<sup>9-18</sup>).

"... all mankind must unavoidably perish; yea, *all* are hardened; yea, *all* are fallen and are lost,  
and *must* perish except it be through the atonement which it is expedient should be made" (Al.  
34.9).

- ? How do you respond to these? Why do you answer as you do?
2. In the KJV, Micah says that they “do evil with both hands earnestly.”
- ? What do you see when you consider their doing evil “with both hands” and being “earnest” in so doing or, in my translation when you imagine them with “their hands... outstretched.”
3. Among the evils being done in Israel, Micah includes,
- “For a favorable decision, the government administrator demands,  
along with government official, bribes.”
- ? What do you think when Micah so quickly and easily turns his attention to social injustices as he catalogs the sort of behaviors that he finds so reprehensible?
4. Not only does Micah criticize the behavior of those who seek bribes, paybacks, and kickbacks in order to pervert social justice, but he also criticizes those who grant bribes, paybacks, and kickbacks.
- “So, the power elite reveals what he secretly wants,  
and they grant it.”
- ? As you read this and all of Micah’s criticisms leveled against Israel of his day, how much resonates as applicable to your society today? Why do you answer as you do?
- ? What is expected of you in response to such social evils and injustices?

*(edition: March 17, 2025)*

Micah 7.<sup>4-5</sup> — just scripture

<sup>4</sup>The best of them is like a prickly bush.  
The most upright like a thorn hedge.  
The day of your overflowing destruction has arrived.  
Now, the day of your dismay.  
<sup>5</sup>Don't confide in an acquaintance.  
Don't trust a friend.  
Guard what you say to your wife.

For those who wish to compare translations, here is the KJV.

<sup>4</sup>The best of them *is* as a brier:  
the most upright *is sharper* than a thorn hedge;  
the day of thy watchmen *and* thy visitation cometh;  
now shall be their perplexity.  
<sup>5</sup>Trust ye not in a friend,  
put ye not confidence in a guide:  
keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.

1. Micah compares even the best and most upright of Israel's citizens to a 'prickly bush' and "thorn hedge" that pokes, wounds, and hurts those who come in contact with them.  
? What do you think, feel, and even visualize when you read this criticism and comparison?
2. Micah speaks of the poor moral state and extreme inability to trust others that are dominant in his society.  
? What do you think and feel about Micah's assertion that even those with whom one might be most intimate are not to be trusted?  
? How applicable is such criticism to your own day and society? Why do you answer as you do?
3. This reading is a continuation of the criticism began in the previous verses.

<sup>2</sup>The good man is perished out of the earth:  
and there is none upright among men:  
they all lie in wait for blood;  
they hunt every man his brother with a net.  
<sup>3</sup>that they may do evil with both hands earnestly,  
the prince asketh,  
and the judge asketh for a reward;  
and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire:  
so they wrap it up.

- ? What is the overall impact of these verses on the way you think of ancient Israel's sins?
- ? What is the overall impact of these verses on the way you think of your own society.

(edition: March 17, 2025)

Micah 7.<sup>18-20</sup> — Lent

<sup>18</sup>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.  
<sup>19</sup>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.  
<sup>20</sup>Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob,  
and the mercy to Abraham,  
which thou hast sworn unto our fathers  
from the days of old.

This is the 14<sup>th</sup> reading for Lent 2025.

In this reading, we return to repentance, the hoped-for forgiveness of sin, and the dominant role God plays in the entire process. It is a remarkable and hopeful passage, made all the more remarkable when one considers the condemnations and threats of punishment that dominate the Book.

1. Micah presents several words and phrases that reflect God's relation and response to sin.  
? What are those words and phrases?
2. Consider each of the following words or phrases that relate to God's reaction to sin.
  - "Pardon"  
? What do you think of when you consider the word, pardon? In what types of settings is it most often used?
  - "Passeth by"  
? What do you see when you imagine someone "passing by" something or someone else?  
? What do you see when you imagine God "passing by" sin?
  - "Retaineth not his anger"  
? How have you felt when someone whom you loved and thought angry with you demonstrated that they were not?
  - "Delighteth in mercy"  
? We know and often say that "God is merciful." What is added to your understanding of God's mercy when you read that mercy is a "delight" to Him?
  - "Subdue our iniquities"  
? In what settings is the idea of "subduing" most common?  
? How does the image of God "subduing our iniquities" rather than simply "forgiving our iniquities" enhance your understanding of God and His power over sin and iniquity and what He does with when He finds in our lives?
  - "Cast all their sins into the depths of the sea"  
? What do you see when you consider this imagery?  
? What does it suggest about our attitude to and relationship with sin after we have been forgiven of it?

3. Micah's final verse is a reminder that his claims about God's power over sin are of ancient existence and that they were revealed to Israel from the very beginning of its experience with Him.
- ? To what examples can you point in which God revealed and acted upon his power over sin in Israel's earliest encounters with God?
  - ? When the testimony of God's power over sin was one of the first things Israel learned of God, and when he so consistently exerted that power in Israel's behalf, why is it, do you think, that so many have trouble believing it in their own life?
  - ? What do you think and feel when you consider the following inspired observation of Jean Calvin?

"There are very many who so conceive God's mercy that they receive almost no consolation from it. They are constrained with miserable anxiety at the same time as they are in doubt whether he will be merciful to them because they confine that very kindness of which they seem utterly persuaded within too narrow limits. For among themselves they ponder that it is indeed great and abundant, shed upon many, available and ready for all; but that it is uncertain whether it will even come to them.... This reasoning, when it stops in mid-course, is only half. Therefore, it does not so much strengthen the spirit in secure tranquility as trouble it with uneasy doubting. But there is a far different feeling of full assurance that in the Scriptures is always attributed to faith....

"There is no right faith except when we dare with tranquil hearts to stand in God's sight. This boldness arises only out of a sure confidence in divine benevolence and salvation.

"Here, indeed, is the chief hinge on which faith turns: that we do not regard the promises of mercy that God offers as true only outside ourselves, but not at all in us; rather that we make them ours by inwardly embracing them. Hence, at last is born that confidence which Paul elsewhere calls 'peace'... Now it is an assurance that renders the conscience calm and peaceful before God's judgment. Without it the conscience must be harried by disturbed alarm, and almost torn to pieces" (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. I, Book III, p. 561).

(edition: March 17, 2025)