

Hope Found

Hope is found in God's promised salvation to those who trust Him.

MICAH 7:1-10,18-20



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e Amorite.
s for proph-
(Nazarites,
dren of Israel?

rites wine to drink;
prophets, saying,

ISRAEL'S SINS

1 I am pressed under you, as a
 2 *that is* full of sheaves.
 3 Before the flight shall perish from
 4 and the strong shall not strength-
 5 force, "neither shall the mighty de-
 6 himself:
 7 Neither shall he stand that handleth
 8 the bow; and *he that is* swift of foot shall
 9 not deliver himself; "neither shall he that
 10 rideth the horse deliver himself.

16 And *he that is* courageous among the
 17 mighty shall flee away naked in that day,
 18 saith the LORD.

GOD HAS SPOKEN

3 Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken
 4 against you, O children of Israel,
 5 against the whole family which I brought
 6 up from the land of Egypt, saying,
 7 "You only have I known of all the fam-
 8 ilies of the earth: "therefore I will punish
 9 you for all your iniquities.
 10 "Can two walk together, except they be
 11 agreed?
 12 "Will a lion roar in the forest, when he
 13 hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of
 14 his den, if he have taken nothing?"

15 on
the
father
profane
down upon
ery altar, and
condemned in

FAITHFULNESS

19 the Amorite before
 20 *his* was like the height of
 21 *his* was strong as the oaks;
 22 he had his fruit from above, and
 23 in beneath.

13

What are things for which you do not mind waiting? For what do you despise waiting?

Most of us grow impatient when told to wait. We use apps so we can skip the ordering line. We pay additional fees for the freedom to skip a line at a theme park. Micah wrote to a nation that had waited year after year for the coming of a Messiah who would right the wrongs of the world and bring salvation to the people of God. They needed to hold on to faith and live in anticipation of the day God would deliver them.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Chapters 6–7 contain Micah’s final message. It begins with the imagery of a lawsuit brought by God against His people (Micah 6:1-16). They had violated God’s covenant. Witnesses were called in, evidence was presented against the accused, a defense was given, and a verdict was reached. Micah called upon the mountains, hills, and foundations of the earth to bear witness to the Lord’s case. It is fitting they were called upon to bear witness to Israel’s violations of its covenant with the Lord given the heavens and the earth were called upon to be witnesses to the ratification of this covenant when God initially made it with Israel (see Deuteronomy 4:26; 32:1).

After calling His witnesses, God initiated His case against Israel by recounting His faithfulness to Israel. He had delivered them from bondage in Egypt, provided them with godly leaders, protected them from their enemies, and made a way for them to enter the promised land. Instead of keeping their covenant with the Lord by acting justly, loving Him faithfully, and walking with Him in humility, they thought they could appease Him simply

by offering an abundant amount of sacrifices (Micah 6:4-8). Their sins were so glaring that there was no defense to be made. The Lord reminded them of the curses He promised to bring upon Israel for breaking its covenant with Him, declaring they were about to happen now (6:14-15; see Deuteronomy 28:38-40).

Micah’s message ended with a lament (Micah 7:1-6), then a message of hope as he looked beyond the present to the future when the Lord would restore His covenant people (7:7-13). He concluded with a prayer extolling God’s power, forgiveness, loving-kindness, and loyalty to Abraham, Jacob, and all of their descendants (7:14-20).

MICAH 7:1-10,18-20

1 How sad for me! For I am like one who — when the summer fruit has been gathered after the gleaning of the grape harvest — finds no grape cluster to eat, no early fig, which I crave.

2 Faithful people have vanished from the land; there is no one upright among the people. All of them wait in ambush to shed blood; they hunt each other with a net. **3 Both hands^A** are good at accomplishing evil: the official and the judge demand a bribe; when the powerful man communicates his evil desire, they plot it together. **4** The best of them is like a brier; the most upright is worse than a hedge of thorns. The **day of your watchmen^B**, the day of your punishment, is coming; at this time their panic is here. **5 Do not rely on a friend^C**; don't trust in a close companion. Seal your mouth from the woman who lies in your arms. **6** Surely a son considers his father a fool, a daughter opposes her mother, and a daughter-in-law is against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own household.

7 But I will **look to the LORD^D**; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. **8** Do not rejoice over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will stand up; though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be **my light^E**. **9** Because I have sinned against him, I must endure the LORD's fury until he champions my cause and establishes justice for me. He will bring me into the light; I will see his salvation. **10** Then my enemy will see, and she will be covered with shame, the one who said to me, "Where is the LORD your God?" My eyes will look at her in triumph; at that time she will be trampled like mud in the streets. [...] **18 Who is a God like you^F**, forgiving iniquity and passing over rebellion for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not hold on to his anger forever because he **delights in faithful love^G**. **19** He will again have compassion on us; he will vanquish our iniquities. You will **cast all our sins into the depths of the sea^H**. **20** You will show loyalty to Jacob and faithful love to Abraham, as you **swore^I** to our ancestors from days long ago.

Key Words

- A. Refers to the judges and powerful/rich citizens. They both plot together to accomplish evil.
- B. Watchmen is a term for prophets in Israel (Jeremiah 6:17; Ezek. 3:17). In view here are the false prophets whose day of destruction had come (Ezekiel 33:6).
- C. Relationships were so fractured in Micah's day they could not trust or count on one another.
- D. It is God who can truly help and save. We must wait for Him (Psalm 27:14).
- E. Jesus refers to Himself as "the light of the world" (John 8:12).
- F. A rhetorical question— God has no comparisons (Jeremiah 10:6).
- G. It brings God joy when His people love Him, as God delights in loving His people.
- H. The imagery represents God taking our sins away from us as far as possible (Psalm 103:12).
- I. An oath-bound promise. A reference to the covenant made with Abraham (Genesis 12).

EXPLORE **THE TEXT**

1. REALITY DEFINED (MICAH 7:1-6)

The sin of our world should break the hearts of believers.

How does knowing the magnitude of one's sin push a person to lament his or her disobedience?

2. SALVATION DISCOVERED (MICAH 7:7-10)

Believers can wait expectantly for God's full salvation.

How is waiting an expression of faith in God?

3. FORGIVENESS CELEBRATED (MICAH 7:18-20)

Believers can celebrate God's forgiveness, compassion, and faithfulness.

What problems arise when we trust more in our ability to stop sinning than in God's ability and desire to forgive?

How should a believer respond to God's forgiveness?

APPLY THE TEXT

Discuss as a group ways Micah's description of Israel is seen in today's culture.

How can the group encourage one another while living in a sinful world? How can the group help others see their need for forgiveness and obedience to God?

KEY DOCTRINE: God the Father

God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. (See Deuteronomy 32:6; Romans 8:14-15.)

BIBLE SKILL: Use other Scripture to help understand a Bible passage.

Read Leviticus 26:33-45 and Deuteronomy 29:25-30:5. Considering these passages, how does Micah's prophecy demonstrate the consistency and faithfulness of God to keep His promises? What does the time frame from when Moses warned Israel to when Micah warned Israel reveal about the kindness and patience of God?

TALK IT OUT

Focus on Micah 7:7. Why does waiting call for faith and trust?

In Hebrew, words like *hope* and *wait* are like the words translated as *trust*, *believe*, and *put one's faith in*. In this passage, Micah states his resolve to wait for God to act. He is not giving up hope knowing that God will come some day with salvation. Looking to the Lord and waiting on His salvation means that in the most desperate of situations we not only believe that the Lord is the only one who can deliver us, but also, we believe that He will deliver us.

When have you simply waited for God to act? What emotions did you experience?

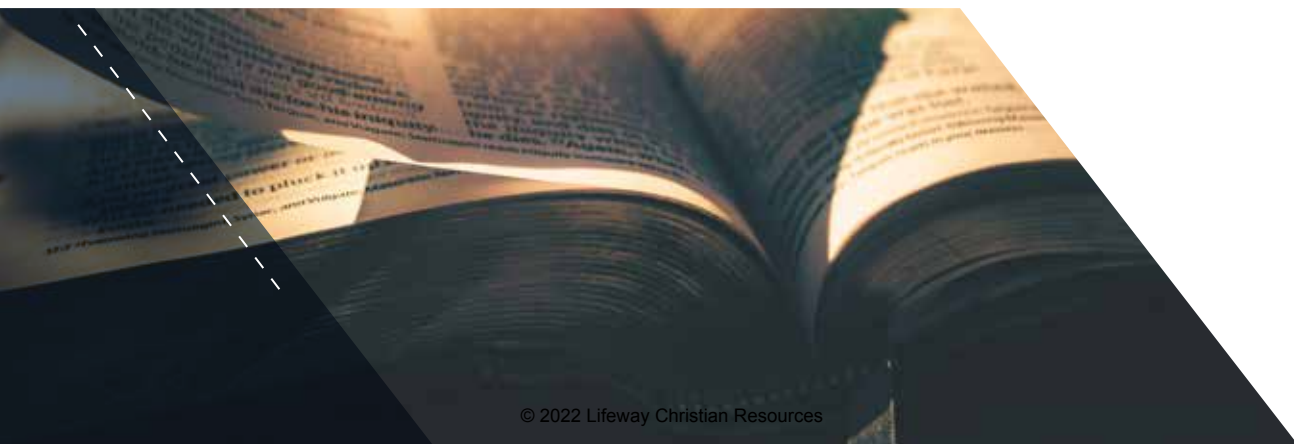
Notice the personal pronouns used by Micah when referring to God. These point to the personal nature of Micah's relationship with God. He was not talking about some distant God who was not interested in what was going on. Instead, Micah referenced a very personal God who was not only interested in what was going on but would also hear the cry of His prophet.

Discuss what this verse tells us about the nature of our relationship with God.

How can we help each other maintain that personal element with God?

Memorize Micah 7:7, considering how God is personal to you.

Prayer Requests



DAILY EXPLORATION

Day 1: Micah 7:1-4

Identifying the sinful behaviors the people were engaged in.

As a prophet, Micah was surely discouraged by the lack of spiritual vitality among the people of God. He lamented the fact that *faithful people had vanished from the land*. Righteous people were hard to find among the people of God. After lamenting the absence of the righteous, Micah delineated both the public and private sins of the people. The people were self-absorbed, immersed in their own wants and needs no matter what it took to achieve them. The words *both hands* describe skilled labor. However, they were not skilled at being helpful or doing good. Rather, they were skilled at *accomplishing evil*. Specifically, the politicians and judges were skilled at taking a *bribe*. They did not act in the interest of justice but in their own self-interest. The two expressions, *the day of your watchmen* and *the day of your punishment*, refer to the same thing. Watchmen were posted on the walls and in watchtowers as lookouts for invading armies. Israel's prophets often saw themselves as watchmen for the people, warning the nation of God's impending judgment if they refused to repent. Even though Israel ignored these prophetic messengers of God, once again God graciously sent Micah to warn the people of judgment.

How are the sins identified by Micah seen in our world?

Day 2: Micah 7:5-6

Consider the role friends and family can play in someone's disobedience to God.

Friends could not trust friends. Husbands could not trust wives. Parents could not trust their own children. Micah said, *a man's enemies are the men of his own household*. Families were collapsing. Homes were disintegrating. In Jesus's call to discipleship in Matthew 10:35-36, He quoted Micah 7:6 to demonstrate how He came to bring a sword rather than peace. The gospel itself will divide friends and family who fall on opposite sides. But in Micah's day, families were falling apart not because of the gospel but because of the lack of the gospel. Society was caught in a cycle of sin, and judgment was coming because of their sin. Before a person can long for salvation, he must be aware of his sin. Before a church can seek revival, it must acknowledge what has caused the need for that revival. Micah evaluated the situation and defined reality in his day. People often move too quickly toward possible solutions without stopping to define reality.

How does knowing the magnitude of your sin push you to lament your disobedience?

Day 3: Micah 7:7-10

Focus on the word wait and how it conveys confidence.

Micah began his turn toward hope by speaking from the point of view of the remnant in Zion. The remnant called out to their *enemy* not to *rejoice* over them in their *fallen* state. David expressed this same sentiment as he faced his battles (Ps. 30:1). The remnant expressed hope that they would one day *stand up* again. Even though they would *sit in darkness*, one day the Lord would be their *light*. Notice that the Lord was not bringing light; He Himself was the light. In verse 9, the remnant acknowledged their sin again, and they acknowledged they must face *the LORD's fury* for their own sin. But God would champion their cause. He would come to their rescue, establishing *justice* and bringing them *into the light*. Punishment would occur but would only be for a season. Micah and the remnant confidently declared they would see His salvation. For these reasons, Micah's confident pronouncement in verse 7 was that he would *look to the LORD* and *wait for the God of my salvation*. He confidently declared, *my God will hear me*. The use of the pronoun *my* twice in this verse indicates the personal relationship the prophet and the remnant had with their God. He was not some impersonal god who impulsively meted out justice. He was a God invested in their lives and wellbeing. The idea of waiting on God involved trust. Micah waited because He trusted God in the process.

How is waiting an expression of faith in God?

Day 4: Micah 7:18

Contemplate God's view of forgiveness.

The name *Micah* means "who is like the Lord," and the prophet played off his own name to wrap up his prophecy with some of the most encouraging words of the entire book. He asked the question, *Who is a God like you?* This is a rhetorical question that demanded the answer, "No one!" The God of Israel was incomparable to any other god that people worship. In verses 18-20, Micah used four different words for sin and four different verbs for forgiveness. God forgives, passes over, vanquishes, and casts sin away. God does a completely thorough job of forgiving sin. He places sin out of sight (Isaiah 38:7). He places it out of reach (Micah 7:19). He places it out of mind (Jeremiah 31:34). He places it out of existence (Isaiah 43:25). The sins mentioned at the beginning of the final chapter of Micah were great. But Micah understood God's unchanging character, and his hope was based on God's willingness and desire to forgive. Micah also noted that God did not *hold on to his anger forever*. Sin had to be punished, but once sin's judgment was meted, God did not hold a grudge. When the remnant returned after exile, they did not have to worry that God had held on to their sin and kept it as a bribe against them. Neither do we have to worry that God holds on to His anger toward our sin when His wrath has been satisfied by Christ on the cross.

What problems arise when we trust more in our ability to stop sinning than in God's ability and desire to forgive?

Day 5: Micah 7:19-20

Understand how God's forgiveness applies to all people.

God vanquishes iniquities by casting them *into the depths of the sea*. This action calls to mind another action of God in Exodus. As Pharaoh's army pursued the children of Israel, they crossed the sea on dry land. When they arrived at the other side, God closed the sea and Pharaoh's chariots sunk to the bottom of the sea (Ex. 15:4-5). The God who sinks chariots can also sink our sins into the bottom of the sea where they become out of sight and out of reach. Why is God such a great forgiver? Micah attributed this to two characteristics. God forgives because He has *compassion*. This is a tender love that God has for His children. God wants to do good, not harm, to His children. He also forgives because of His *loyalty* and *faithful love*. God had made a covenant with His people through *Jacob* and *Abraham*, and God keeps His promises. He promises never to leave or forsake those who are His (Heb. 13:5).

How should a believer respond to God's forgiveness?

APPLY THE TEXT

Reflect on your life and how Micah's description of sin applies to you. Of what do you need to ask for God's forgiveness? How can you celebrate the forgiveness found through faith in Jesus?

