

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
4-4-18

Micah Chapter 6

The LORD's Case Against Israel - Verses 1-8

¹Listen to what the LORD says: "Stand up, plead my case before the mountains; let the hills hear what you have to say. ²"Hear, you mountains, the LORD's accusation; listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth. For the LORD has a case against his people; he is lodging a charge against Israel. ³"My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me. ⁴I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam. ⁵My people, remember what Balak king of Moab plotted and what Balaam son of Beor answered. Remember your journey from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD." ⁶With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? ⁸He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

6:1 Here Micah pictures a courtroom. God, the Judge, tells his people what he requires of them and recites all the ways they have wronged both him and others. Chapters 4 and 5 are full of hope; chapters 6 and 7 proclaim judgment and appeal to the people to repent.

6:1-2 God called to the mountains to confirm the people's guilt. The mountains would serve as excellent witnesses, for it was in the high places that the people had built pagan altars and had sacrificed to false gods (1 Kings 14:23; Jeremiah 17:2-3; Ezekiel 20:28).

6:3 The people would never be able to answer this question because God had done nothing wrong. In fact, God had been exceedingly patient with them, had always lovingly guided them, and had given them every opportunity to return to him. If God asked you, "What have I done to you?" how would you reply?

6:5 The story of Balak and Balaam is found in Numbers 22-24. Shittim was the Israelites' campsite east of the Jordan River just before they entered the Promised Land (Joshua 2:1). There the people received many of God's instructions about how to live. Gilgal, their first campsite after crossing the Jordan (Joshua 4:19), was where the

people renewed their covenant with God (Joshua 5:3-9). These two places represent God's loving care for his people: his willingness both to protect them and to warn them about potential troubles. In Micah's day, the people had forgotten this covenant and its benefits and had turned away from God.

6:5 God continued to be kind to his forgetful people, but their short memory and lack of thankfulness condemned them. When people refuse to see how fortunate they are and begin to take God's gifts for granted, they become self-centered. Regularly remember God's goodness and thank him. Remembering God's past protection will help you see his present provision.

Israel's Guilt and Punishment - Verses 9-16

⁹ Listen! The LORD is calling to the city—and to fear your name is wisdom “Heed the rod and the One who appointed it. ¹⁰ Am I still to forget your ill-gotten treasures, you wicked house, and the short ephah, which is accursed? ¹¹ Shall I acquit someone with dishonest scales, with a bag of false weights? ¹² Your rich people are violent; your inhabitants are liars and their tongues speak deceitfully. ¹³ Therefore, I have begun to destroy you, to ruin you because of your sins. ¹⁴ You will eat but not be satisfied; your stomach will still be empty. You will store up but save nothing, because what you save I will give to the sword. ¹⁵ You will plant but not harvest; you will press olives but not use the oil, you will crush grapes but not drink the wine. ¹⁶ You have observed the statutes of Omri and all the practices of Ahab's house; you have followed their traditions. Therefore I will give you over to ruin and your people to derision; you will bear the scorn of the nations.”

6:6-8 Israel responded to God's request by trying to appease him with sacrifices, hoping he would then leave them alone. But sacrifices and other religious rituals aren't enough; God wants changed lives. He wants his people to be fair, just, merciful, and humble. God wants us to become living sacrifices (Romans 12:1-2), not just doing religious deeds, but living rightly (Jeremiah 4:4; Hebrews 9:14). It is impossible to follow God consistently without his transforming love in our hearts. **6:8** People have tried all kinds of ways to please God (6:6-7), but God has made his requirements clear: Do what is just and right, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. In your efforts to please God, examine these areas on a regular basis. Are you fair in your dealings with people? Do you show mercy to those who wrong you? Are you learning humility?

6:16 Omri reigned over Israel and led the people into idol worship (1 Kings 16:21-26). Ahab, his son, was Israel's most wicked king (1 Kings 16:29-33). If the people were following the commands and practices of these kings, they were in bad shape. Such pervasive evil was ripe for punishment.