

Major Minor Effect – Introduction

(Habakkuk and Micah)

Major Minor Effect is the title of this study because we are going to be covering the texts of two of the minor prophets.

The prophets of the Old Testament reveal God to us today as they did to the people of their time. They were God's spokesmen. Today *we* are God's spokesmen and women. So, these minor prophets have a major effect on us as we study to know and understand God in a way we have never known Him before. As we study the prophets, we catch God's heart, His passion, and experience His holiness and His judgement (holy indignation and wrath). This is something you will never experience fully if you only study the New Testament. In the Old Testament we meet God's unique holiness and stand in awe of Him! This is called "holy fear."

The prophets Habakkuk and Micah speak of God's holy indignation and wrath. We do not think anger fits with the image of "God is love." If God is love, how can He be angry? The harder question is, if He can be angry, how can He express it without contradicting the image of "God is love?"

These are good questions and can only be answered by studying the **WHOLE** counsel of God. Studying the Old Testament is a great way to know and understand God and all of His attributes.

In these last days we need to be about our Father's business, studying His Word for ourselves and encouraging others to do the same so that none of us will be "carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming." (Ephesians 4:13-14) We need to grow up in Him, and this does not happen without studying His Word fully. The Bible is the Word of God, and to ignore the Word is to ignore God!

Every book of the Bible is critical to our life, otherwise God would not have included it. Thank you for taking the time to study the Word. It will change your life, and you will encounter God in powerful ways through it. Remember, the Word is a living Word. His Word reveals the knowledge of the one and only true God—His ways, His history, His commandments, and His ordinances for life.

My prayer is that you will see how relevant Habakkuk and Micah are to these trying times and our lives. I pray, too, that you understand the righteous anger of God that can order our lives and help us speak His Truth into the lives of others so that they would experience the reverent awe of Him.

Get ready! He has created us to be His spokesmen and women. What are we to speak? Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth!

*** I have provided you with two versions of Habakkuk and Micah. Use the NASB (New American Standard Bible) for marking and studying. The NLT (New Living Translation) is to help with ease of reading and understanding.

*** In this study you will find some questions that are italicized. These indicate questions that are intended to be introspective, thought-provoking, and applicable to your life.

*** You will also find sections marked with a ¶. This symbol designates a moment of teaching or encouragement.

Habakkuk – Lesson 1

Most of us question God and wonder why He does some of the things He does or doesn't do. We ask for God's explanation of His ways but never really have the opportunity to receive His reply. What Habakkuk has recorded here is something rather extraordinary: a dialogue in which he twice complains to God about the world's injustice, and twice God answers him! This is as relevant to our time as it was when it was written.

The central theme of Habakkuk is trusting God—to have total faith and trust in God alone. It is interesting to note that Martin Luther was influenced by this book. He was troubled by the fact that he felt like he could never please God. Then he found a life-transforming verse in Habakkuk 2:4b, "...but the righteous will live by his faith." For Luther this was the beginning of his reformation of faith and influenced his writing of doctrine. This verse is quoted in the New Testament three times (Rom. 1:17, Gal. 3:11, and Heb. 10:38). Luther recognized it was God's righteousness that made him righteous, not himself. It is all God. Habakkuk 2:4 shook Europe and eventually the whole world as it became Luther's great rallying point and the watchword of the sixteenth century Reformation.

The book of Habakkuk also teaches us to rejoice when the lid has blown off of everything we knew as normal and when life is turned upside down, as we have experienced this year. Let's take a moment to pray and ask God for eyes to see and ears to hear what He has for us in this book.

Habakkuk was annoyed at the injustice he saw all around him and frustrated with God's apparent lack of concern about it. The book of Habakkuk begins with the prophet expressing some of these complaints and then waiting to hear how God would respond. He says in Habakkuk 2:1, "I will look to see what He will say to me."

1. Read Habakkuk through once to get the main points. Make a note where you see a change in "the voice" (who is speaking). Answer the questions below:

- Who is writing?

- To whom is he writing?
- Why is he writing?
- Who are the main characters?
- What is he writing about?

2. In this lesson we are going to concentrate on Chapter 1 and observe what we can. Read the chapter again and mark the following key words:

- *Habakkuk*
- *nations*
- *Chaldeans* (Babylonians are basically the same)
- *iniquity* or *wickedness*
- *Lord God*
- *violence*

3. Let's see what we learned from marking our key words. List what you learn about the following:

a. Habakkuk

b. Chaldeans

c. Iniquity or wickedness – Who is guilty?

d. God

4. How does Chapter 1 begin?

5. What are God's answers to Habakkuk's questions?

6. What is Habakkuk's response?

7. Looking at Habakkuk 1:12-21, how does Habakkuk present his case before the Lord, and what does this tell you about him?

8. When Habakkuk questions God about the state of affairs in Judah, God tells him that He is raising up the Chaldeans (Babylonians). As we will see later, Micah referred to Babylon in one of his messages. Look up Micah 4:10 and note what he said about them.

9. Once Nineveh is destroyed, Babylon becomes a major player in history. Read 2 Kings 20:12-18 and note what you learn about Babylon. Take some time and look up information about Babylon. Check Bible dictionaries, commentaries, and the internet. Babylon (once located in present-day Iraq) will be a major player right up to the second coming of Jesus.

10. Read Deuteronomy 28:49-57 and Habakkuk 1:8. With all that you have learned so far about Babylon, do you think Deuteronomy could be talking about Babylon? Why?

11. *Can you relate to Habakkuk's questions? Does reading Habakkuk change the way you see these questions now?*

✿ I know sometimes it seems like we are just gathering information, but as we continue to study the whole Word of God, we are putting more and more pieces of the picture together to see Him more clearly. Remember, God gave us His Word to be transformed and to grow in a deeper relationship with Him. We have a future and a hope and that should bring us great peace and joy. Thank you for being diligent in continuing to study. This will all come together beautifully.

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever felt like Habakkuk, questioning God and asking why? Have you wondered where He is in the midst of injustice or why He doesn't stop what is going on?
2. What would you ask God to explain if you could ask him "Why?"

Habakkuk – Lesson 2

Today we will look at Chapter 2. Habakkuk ended Chapter 1 with a question. Let's boldly bring Him our questions as he did. So, once again lift your eyes to the Lord and pray for His wisdom and insight.

1. Remember, careful observation is the key to accurate interpretation, and you are doing that. Read through Habakkuk Chapter 2 and mark the following key words, listing below what you learn about each of them:

- *vision*
- *faith* (this is only used once but it is significant)
- *idol*
- *woe*

2. As I stated in the introduction in Lesson 1, Habakkuk 2:4 is very important. It is quoted three times in the New Testament. In fact, a Jewish commentary on the Old Testament, *The Talmud*, states that Habakkuk 2:4 summarizes the 613 precepts God gave Moses on Mount Sinai. Some say this is like a crown jewel set in the minor prophetic writings. We are going to read those three New Testament references, note their settings (context), and list what we learn. (Don't rush through this, as we are seeking Him and what He has for us in this verse.)

- a. Romans 1:17 (Great verse to memorize. I'm just saying!)

b. Galatians 3:11

c. Hebrews 10:38

3. Let us explore the phrase “the righteous will live by his faith.” The Hebrew definition of “faith” (from Wikki Books) is: *belief, firm persuasion, assurance, firm conviction, faithfulness. Faith is confidence in what we hope for and the assurance that the Lord is working, even though we cannot see it. Faith knows that no matter what the situation, in our lives or someone else's that the Lord is working in it.* Now read Hebrews 11:1-6 and list what you learn about faith.
4. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. What role does faith play in salvation?
5. Read Romans 1:5. What do you think the phrase “obedience that comes from faith” means? Now, looking at Habakkuk 2:4, what is the contrast in this verse, and why is the phrase “proud one” used?

6. Read Habakkuk 2:5. What does the man in these verses represent?

7. Let's see what we learned from marking "*woes*" in our text. For each one tell who is pronouncing each woe, what each woe is, upon whom the woe falls and why.

✚ As we conclude today, I want to make sure you saw that the "*woes*" tell of the impending demise of the Chaldeans and all those who worshiped idols. Colossians 3:5 confirms these woes, telling us that greed is a form of idolatry. Just like Habakkuk points out in his woes, do you recognize that greed is a form of idolatry in this culture, too? In light of all the evil Habakkuk saw, he questioned God's dealings with people that appeared to get away with evil. Do you struggle when you see evil people prospering too? The answer is the same today as it was in Habakkuk's time. (Read Psalm 73.)

The more we see God clearly, the more we walk with confidence. We know who He is and that even when life doesn't make sense, we can walk by faith in Him. It is so important that we apply what we learn to our lives. Take time to pause and spend time with Him today. Read the Small Group Questions, and ask God to help you answer them.

One last chapter of Habakkuk remains. It is magnificent and beautiful!

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. As we reflect on faith that comes from obedience in who He is and His righteousness, I can't help but ask that you take a moment and ponder the following questions:
 - Upon what do you base your salvation?
 - Do you live by faith on a daily basis? If not, what keeps you from doing so?
 - Do you trust Him more than you trust yourself?
2. What did you learn about God in Chapter 2 of Habakkuk?

Habakkuk – Lesson 3

Wow! What a beautiful ending to the book of Habakkuk. The last verse (3:19) reads, “The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds’ feet, and makes me walk on my high places.” This verse reminds me of the book *Hinds Feet on High Places* by Hannah Hurnard. It is the story of a young woman named Much Afraid, whose journey takes her far away from her Fearing family and into the HIGH PLACES of the Shepherd, guided by her two companions Sorrow and Suffering. It is an allegory of the Christian life.

Father, as we are close to concluding this study of Habakkuk, show us how to apply it to our life. Show us Your presence constantly in our midst, that You are always the Good Shepherd, guiding us, protecting us, leading us, and teaching us. Lord, help us to sit at Your feet and take in all that You want to reveal to us. Open our hearts to Your wisdom and understanding. We love you. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

1. Read Habakkuk Chapter 3. Mark the following key words:
 - *Habakkuk*
 - *Lord*
 - Any references to the *Chaldeans*
2. How does Chapter 3 begin? What do you sense is happening?
3. What did Habakkuk ask for at the beginning of his prayer? List them below.
4. What do these requests tell you about Habakkuk’s understanding of God?

5. Did you learn anything about God, not what He does but who He is?

6. Let's compare Moses' song with Habakkuk's prayer. Read Exodus 15:1-19. Do you see any similarities?

7. In Habakkuk 3:3 Mount Paran is mentioned. According to Deuteronomy 33:2 this is also what Mount? This referenced the giving of the Law where the aspect of God's nature—His holiness—is emphasized. At Mount Sinai Israel was told that she had to be holy because the Lord her God was holy. This meant that the nation had to be separate and distinct from all other nations around it (Lev. 20:26). Habakkuk has joined the quest for righteousness and holiness that had originally prompted his prayer to God in Chapter 1:2-4. He reminds us that God still desired for His people to have personal and national purity and sanctity. Holiness was still the order of the day then. It's the same today for "without holiness no one shall see God" (Hebrews 12:14). The same thread runs through the New Testament. 1 Peter 1:16 says, "Be holy because I am holy." What does this mean to you?

8. What are the different ways Habakkuk opens each chapter? What does this tell you about Habakkuk?
9. Habakkuk 3:5 says, "Pestilence goes before God and plague comes after Him." The literal translation is not "after Him" but "at His feet." Some believe that these words in Habakkuk 3 reference what happened in the past when God delivered Israel.
- If this is true, why do you think Habakkuk is looking back?
 - How can looking back benefit you when you know rough times are coming?
10. Here are a few scriptures that speak about God's deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt. See if you see any similarities to Habakkuk 3:3-15. (This will show you the importance of moving through the Word of God in a systematic way, from beginning to end. It brings His Truth to life for us today and always. It is important to remember Gods' faithfulness to us.)
- a. Exodus 19:16-19
 - b. Deuteronomy 2:25

c. Joshua 10:12-14

d. Psalm 18:14 and 77:17

11. Some commentators believe Habakkuk 3 is a prophecy of what God will do in the future. List what God does in Habakkuk 3:3-15.

12. Now read Revelation 6, 8-9, 11, 15-16, and 19 and see if you can see any similarities. (Revelation is a hard book to understand, so just read through it and jot down any highlights that relate to Habakkuk. Don't get bogged down in this.)

✚ We need to get ready. The Lord could come at any hour of the day or night, and it is our responsibility to be ready to walk with hind's feet wherever He sends us.

Habakkuk 3:19 says, "The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' feet, and makes me walk on my high places." The following is a great explanation of "hinds feet" and this verse by Praise Ajewole:

This verse caught my attention because it talks about strong feet. I took it to literally mean the Lord will make my feet stronger. I then learned it has a deeper meaning.

This verse is a declaration and a promise. God alone is our strength. A hind is a female deer that can place her back feet where her front feet stepped. The hind is a sure footed, agile animal. It is able to climb impossible mountain terrains that others can't.

High places may be likened to challenging situations. Maybe a health challenge, a family crisis, or a delayed request.

When going through a tough situation, it feels like everything is out of control and life just wants us to stumble and fall. The path is so steep and narrow, and our footing so unstable. But through it all God is with us. The challenge may not instantly disappear but he has promised to be with us.

This verse is a reminder that God is able to help us do the impossible. Making our feet like hinds feet means he will equip us with what we need to bring us through the rough patch. Notice that it is only the hind that can climb those rocky terrains. This is because it has the right feet to climb. God has also equipped us with unique abilities and skills to help us through our high places. He will provide the assistance, the financial help, the right care we need. God is the strength we need and he will equip us with what we need. Going through situations teaches us a lot of lessons. This makes us grow stronger. When walking through these challenges, God has promised to help us so that we sure footed and don't stumble.

So let's claim this promise today and walk confidently with hinds' feet.

✿ We have one more lesson to go, and we will have completed this study. Next week we will look at what happens to Babylon in Habakkuk Chapter 3 and what kind of example Habakkuk sets for us as we live in these last days.

Thank you for being diligent in studying His Word and holding fast to always being at the Lord's feet and learning His Word through the Holy Spirit, so you will not be deceived and tossed by every wind of doctrine.

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Where can you look back and see God's faithfulness in your life?
2. Where do you need God to give you "hinds feet?"

Habakkuk – Lesson 4

I am sure you have noticed that in Chapter 3 the word *selah* has been used. No one knows exactly what *selah* means, but it is used many times in a similar way in the Psalms. The following is what the Bible Knowledge Commentary says about this:

“What is generally considered another musical notation, *selah* (Hab. 3:3, 9, and 13), probably indicates a pause in the song. “Selah” is used elsewhere only in the Psalms, where it occurs 71 times. The Hebrew verb from which the term comes means “to exalt, to lift up.” It may mean a pause (a) to elevate to a higher key or increase the volume, (b) to reflect on what has been sung and exalt the Lord in praise, or (c) to lift up certain instruments for something like a trumpet fanfare. Whatever its meaning, an obvious break was intended in the middle of Habakkuk 3:3.”

So, pause (*selah*) and pray. Reflect upon the Lord before beginning this final lesson on Habakkuk.

1. In Habakkuk 3:13-14 God tells us He “struck the head of the house of evil.” If the event is a reference to what God did in the deliverance of His people from Egypt, then obviously it’s about Egypt. But remember those people who “arise” in verse 16. What will happen to the Babylonians? Could this refer to a future deliverance? We are going to peek into Isaiah and Revelation to see the future of Babylon. What do these verses tell us about Babylon’s fate?
 - a. Isaiah 14:22-23
 - b. Isaiah 47:1-15
 - c. Revelation 17:1-19:6 describes Babylon’s role in the future as the great harlot, the city who reigns over the kings of the earth (17:18). Read Revelation 18:1-3, 21-24 and list what you learn about Babylon.

2. So, whether Habakkuk is remembering the past or prophesying the future, it is relevant to us to remember God's faithfulness and live in hope of the future when He is coming again and will trample our enemies.
 - a. Take one more look at Habakkuk 3:3-15 and list what is going to happen to "your people."
 - b. If Habakkuk 3:3-15 tells of God's past actions only, then to what is verse 13 referring?
 - c. If this is a prophetic image of the future, how would you interpret verse 13?
3. What do you learn about Habakkuk from Chapter 3? Do you see him living by faith? What kind of example is he setting for us and under what circumstances?

4. Read Habakkuk 3:17-19. We should memorize these verses. They will be used by God in our minds when we face many trials and situations in our life. It will help us “exult in the Lord and rejoice in the God of my salvation.” What an encouragement that the Lord God is our strength!
 - a. Habakkuk 3:19 mirrors Psalm 18:33. What is the repeated imagery found in both?
 - b. Earlier in the same Psalm (18:1), David tells us who His strength was. What does Habakkuk say about that in Chapter 3:19?
5. *When we are weary and feeling faint, God supplies our strength. How do these verses encourage you like David and Habakkuk?*
 - a. Isaiah 40:31
 - b. Philippians 4:13
 - c. John 15:5b – we need God

✚ Habakkuk contains the best declaration of what it means for justified men and women to live by faith. That faith is an active trust in the Lord who is actively involved in our world today.

We face many trials in our lives and sometimes the trials are global. But as those who follow Christ, we can stand on the promises of God. Habakkuk knew about Jeremiah and how he spoke God's Truth—to repent of their evil ways and turn back to God. What happened? They didn't listen and even put him in jail. Why would we assume that we will live a life free from persecution for proclaiming His Truth? Romans 8:35 and 37 reads, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." Take this promise to heart.

Habakkuk's faith was redemptive and personal, and it was practical. It could stand the test of total crop failure and the destruction of everything one held dear. It did not depend on God's promise that He would supply health, wealth, and prosperity in order to earn Habakkuk's trust, belief, and respect. God could still be loved and worshipped in the midst of tragedy. When everything turns upside-down, God is still the sole object of praise and adoration. The reason is simple: He is Lord. He is in charge. Habakkuk knew this, and no matter what came along, he would praise the Lord.

Thus, in the face of all the extreme challenges of life we can go on because He goes before us and is with us. Justified people live life abundantly. And they live by faith!! Keep your eyes on Him and whether you face virus, sickness, financial hardship, or global disaster, God sees you and is worthy of all praise!

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Do you have any verses you run to when you need encouragement?

2. How does Babylon's final defeat bring you encouragement?

Micah – Lesson 5

(Chapters 1-2; Message 1)

God is always God, and God is always the God of hope. His Word is the message of His Truth. God is never silent; He is always speaking to us through His living Word.

Let us always start our time with Him in prayer –

Father, please open our eyes and heart to see You. May You give us Your wisdom and understanding of Your Word so that we can see the wonderful Truths you have for each of us. Renew a right Spirit in us and hold us close and whisper into our ears all that You have for us. We love you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Micah is not a book you hurry through as you read it. It takes prayerful time with God to understand all the prophecies in this book. So, read patiently and prayerfully through it.

We need to start with an overview of the book. At this point in time remember that Israel had split into two kingdoms. Judah is the name of the Southern Kingdom of Israel with the capital of Jerusalem. The Northern Kingdom is called Israel whose capital was Samaria. Micah wrote to both kingdoms, but the southern nation of Judah was his primary audience. Micah lived in a rural community in the Southern Kingdom.

Micah had several purposes in writing this book:

1. To warn the Northern Kingdom, Israel, and the Southern Kingdom, Judah, of impending judgment because of its covenant disloyalty (sin)
2. To confirm for Judah that they were just as guilty as was Israel, so they would be judged like Israel
3. To emphasize God's justice and love in disciplining the nation
4. To affirm God's future restoration of His people (not the major purpose)
5. To present "God as the sovereign Lord of the earth who controls the destinies of nations, including His covenant people Israel"

It is important to God that we understand that Micah has a significant message, or He would not have included it in the Bible. 2 Timothy 3:16 reads, "All Scripture is

God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” The name Micah means “Who is like Jehovah,” and it is the longest of the two Old Testament books we are studying. There are seven chapters, and they are filled with passion, promises, prophecies, and teaching that will capture your mind and heart, and help you walk circumspectly in these last days.

1. Read the entire book of Micah. Mark the repeated word *hear*. Remember that key words unlock our understanding of the text.
 - a. List all the references to *hear* in the space below. Be sure to mark any *hears* with an asterisk (*) that seem to start a new message.
 - b. Do you see how Micah begins each message with the word *hear*? What is the significance of the repeated *hear* within the same message?
2. Look for clues to answer the following prompts:
 - a. Time period of the writing-
 - b. For whom it was written-
 - c. Why it was delivered to them-

3. Go back and reread Chapters 1-2 and mark key words. (The rest of our lesson will focus on these chapters.)

- *sin, evil, iniquity, uncleanness*
- *calamity*
- *destruction (destroyed, destroy)*
- *woe* (this usually indicates warnings)
- *the Spirit of the Lord* (I usually mark this like the *Holy Spirit*, in yellow underline)
- *remnant*
- *Samaria*
- *Jerusalem*
- *Lord* (I usually mark *Lord* or *God* in yellow with a triangle)

*** If you are up to it, you can list what you learn about *Samaria*, *Jerusalem*, and *God* on a separate piece of paper to help give you more insight.

4. What do you learn about Micah in the very beginning of chapter 1? What must he do and why?

5. Now that you have done all the marking and reading and have seen the three messages that Micah delivers, we are going to look at the first message found in chapters 1 and 2.

a. To whom does Micah address his first message, and what does he want them to know about it? (This is found in Micah 1:3-4.)

b. Do you think this message is significant to people in modern times?

c. Who is Micah addressing in his first call to “hear,” and what will happen to them?

6. Looking back at Micah Chapter 2, noticing the references to “sin” you marked, tell *who* is sinning. What are they doing? What will happen to them, and who will make it happen?

7. What leads to sin according to James 1:13-15?

✚ Take a moment to apply this Truth to your life. Ask God to search your heart and cut off temptation before it has the chance to lead you into sin. Ask for His forgiveness for sin. Remember what we read in Micah 1:13? “You were the beginning of sin.” We don’t want to miss this moment to reflect and repent. Remember, He is a God of forgiveness and is always willing to forgive. He is also, as we see in our reading, a God that brings justice to sin because He is Holy.

8. Read Micah 2:6-11. Take note of who is speaking here. What do you learn?

✚ I know this is hard to read and understand, but the more you ask the Spirit to help you as you slowly read through this book I believe you will start seeing some incredible insights. So, hang in there!

9. *Micah 2:7b reads, “Do not My words do good to the one walking uprightly?” How is this true in your life? How can this affect your choices?*

10. Look at the key word “*Lord*” you marked in Chapter 2. As you see the word repeated, what stands out to you? A warning? Comfort? Instruction?

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. What is Micah's first message found in Chapters 1-2, and what does it mean for us today?
2. What have you learned so far about God (His righteousness and His holiness) that you can weave into the fabric of your life?
3. Is there something that stood out to you that you have never considered before about God?

Micah – Lesson 6

(Chapter 3; Message 2, part 1)

We tend to forget that the Lord is coming again. The early church was passionate and stirred up when they were reminded about the Lord's second coming. We need to remember that He is coming again and to stir the flame and kindle anew a passion about our mission to be God's spokes(wo)men to this world. May this lesson in Micah be used to fire your passion for His coming. Take a moment right now to pray and ask God to walk you through this chapter with wisdom and insight.

1. We will focus on Micah's second message which begins in Chapter 3 and ends with Chapter 5. Read Chapters 3-5 to see the entire second message. Here are key words for these chapters you can mark as you read:
 - a. *prophets (seers, diviners)*
 - b. *temple (house of the Lord)*
 - c. *Zion* (mark the same as *Jerusalem*)
 - d. *justice*
2. The second message in Micah is once again about Samaria and Jerusalem. Make a list of all you learn about each in this second message.

Samaria

Jerusalem

3. Now we will focus the rest of our lesson on Micah Chapter 3. It is broken into two sections. Read each section and note the main point:
 - a. Verses 1-4

- b. Verses 5-12 (Note that 3:9 has the word “*hear*” in it, but it echoes what was said in 3:1, so it is not a new message.)

- 4. Micah Chapter 3 addresses different classes of people. List them and what you learn about them.

- 5. *Justice* is a key word that appears for the first time in Micah in Chapter 3.
 - a. Read Deuteronomy 16:18-20. What do you learn about *justice* and *ruling* from Deuteronomy and Micah?

 - b. God is a God of justice and judgement. His warning is relevant today. Do you see how opinion and popularity can play a role in the corruption of leaders today? Without getting into a political debate or character bashing of leaders, tell how you’ve observed how this can happen.

6. Prophets are another group of people that are talked about in this book. Do you see a difference between Micah and the prophets that are leading God's people astray? List your comparisons below.

Micah

False Prophets

7. There is a cross reference in Jeremiah that is interesting and gives insight to this second message. In Jeremiah 26 priests, prophets, and people are all calling for Jeremiah's death because they don't like what he's prophesying. Does this still happen today? Do we turn off our TV or turn a deaf ear or even change churches when this happens? Read Jeremiah 26:16-19. In the middle of them calling for his death, note what is said and answer the following:
- a. Who do the elders use as an example in order to protect Jeremiah?
 - b. According to the passage in Jeremiah, how was Micah's message received? What happened?
 - c. When did Micah prophesy? In other words, when were these messages given to the people? (This is an important point to note.)

✿ Jeremiah followed Micah 30 years later. Jeremiah was prophesying the same message to the people. God had two prophets prophesying the same thing to the same people!

8. I want us to consider one more passage that gives us an historical account of someone who was a contemporary of Micah (this is exciting!). Look up 2 Chronicles 32:20-22. What prophet was also alive and working during this time period?

✿ Isn't that amazing?! Isaiah prophesies of Christ coming and so does Micah. They both spoke of the future event to come. And without the Jeremiah passage we would not know the time period of Micah's ministry nor would we know that in response to Micah's message King Hezekiah cried out to the Lord and the Lord saved them.

Can you imagine what could happen in our city if people like you and me spoke and taught the whole counsel of God, *with the love of God*, about sin and the justice of our just God?! God must judge sin before He can restore; that is the pattern of the prophets: sin, judgment, and restoration. But restoration can come if we are obedient like Micah.

9. Let's conclude this lesson by looking at some New Testament passages concerning true messengers. List what you learn:

a. 2 Peter 1:19-2:3

b. 2 Timothy 4:1-4

✠ Wow! Let us pause for a moment. These scriptures tell us that God asks us to consecrate ourselves to be faithful and willing spokes(wo)men for Him. I encourage you to pray and ask God to open doors and create divine appointments for you to share Him. Each day His mercies are new, and our lives can be open books, the conduits through which He reveals Himself to others. How humbling and powerful it is to know that it is God, not we, that does this. We are just the vessels He uses, which means that we are not responsible for the result or the action of those receiving it. We are just called to be faithful and share His message. Just like the prophets of old.

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. How do you handle “messages” you don’t like? How are these messages “delivered” to you, and what is your typical response?
2. What does it mean for you that you are charged with being God’s spokesperson? What are your thoughts or feelings about this? How is this an area of growth for you?

Micah – Lesson 7

(Chapters 4-5; Message 2, part 2)

Our lesson today will focus on Chapters 4-5. Remember to ask the Lord for His wisdom and insight as you begin. These are incredible chapters.

1. Read Micah 4:1 – 5:1 and mark the following. (Side note: Micah 5:1 is actually part of the message in Chapter 4. The original Hebrew Bible has them together, but our translations have separated them.)
 - a. references to time (*in that day*, *never*, and *from now on and forever*).
 - b. *mountain(s)*
 - c. *nation(s)*
2. How did the content of this chapter strike you? Can you summarize the message?
3. What did you learn from the key words *mountain(s)* and *nation(s)*?
4. We know from Lesson 6 that Isaiah was a contemporary of Micah and that God spoke the same things through both prophets. Read Isaiah 60:1-3 and 10-14 and note any parallels with Micah's message.

✚ These are exciting prophecies about the end times (last days) and about God restoring Israel. We have exciting things to talk about!

5. According to Micah 4:1-8, when is this all going to take place?

6. Read Micah 4:9-13 and mark the pronouns. Read the text carefully again to see who the “you” is. List what’s going to happen to “you.” Micah is predicting their future!

7. God told Jerusalem He would redeem them and rescue them. Was there any promise like this given to Samaria? This leads us to believe that Jerusalem must have a significant future compared to Samaria. Knowing all that you have studied about Jesus’ life and death, can you see how the future of Jerusalem was important? (We will discuss this more in the lecture.)

8. We are now going to turn our attention to Chapter 5, where the call for the heads of Jacob and the rulers of the house of Israel to hear God’s message continues. Read Chapter 5 and mark the time phrases (*in that day*, *never*, and *from now on and forever*), being sure to include “*then*” which only appears in Chapter 5. Also mark the words *remnant*, *Assyria*, and *nations*.

9. How is the person in verses 2-5 described? Do you recognize who that person is?

✚ There were two cities called Bethlehem (thus the distinction of Bethlehem Ephrathah). One was in the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the other was in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The distinction between the two is significant because it is in the Southern Kingdom where we find the Bethlehem where Jesus was born.

10. We are going to look up some verses to help tie in what you learned about the person you identified in verses 2-5. List what you learn.

a. Genesis 48:7

b. Genesis 49:8-10

c. Ruth 1:1-2; 4:13-14; and 21-22 (Note the last name mentioned, and remember Jesus came through the lineage of David.)

d. 1 Samuel 16:1; 17:12

e. Matthew 2:1, 3-6

f. Isaiah 9:6-7

g. Revelation 19:11-16; 20:4

✚ Remember that Jesus is from the tribe of Judah. In reading the verses above do you see how this 2nd message in Micah was relating to a future event?

11. Now we will look at how Micah's second message closes in Chapter 5.

What happens from the second sentence of verse 5 through verse 6? Read 2 Chronicles 32:1-23 briefly and see God in action. How did God fulfill the prophecy in Micah?

12. Look back to the time references you marked. Do you see how the second message ends? Micah prophesied that they would be attacked but that then God would cut off their enemies. We saw in the 2 Chronicles passage we just read the record of how this prophecy came true. God had a plan for Israel. If we also are God's people, do you see that God has a plan for us too?

✚ God does what He says He will do. As we look at all of Scripture, we see how our Father weaves the scarlet thread of the Messiah through the tapestry of His Word, including the book of Micah. Many of the promises in the Old Testament have been fulfilled in the New Testament. The fulfillment of Micah's prophecy in Micah 5:2 is found in Luke 2:4-7 and 10-11, hundreds of years later. We can trust that God is going to fulfill all that He says in His timing. We get to go along on the journey with Him until He brings us to the final destination! Wow! God is a God of hope and of a future. Give Him thanks and praise today!

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Read Jeremiah 29:11. How does this verse confirm what we've studied so far in Micah?
2. Write out Micah 5:4-5a. Is there an area of your life where you need the Lord to restore you? Or do you need to know His strength, majesty, greatness, or peace?

Micah – Lesson 8

(Chapter 6; Message 3, part 1)

As we continue our study, I pray that we will see God and understand Him as One who does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in His love for us. I pray, too, that this will make a difference in our relationship with Him. It will help us understand the heart and mind of God, how He is just and gives mercy and grace. It should bring us comfort to know that even in our disobedience, God is faithful to forgive us. Even during our rebellion, He is always looking for restoration and reconciliation with us. What an amazing God, the ONE TRUE GOD, forever and always!

We have come to the beginning of Micah's final message. And what a message it is! (If you don't understand it or any of the questions in this lesson, don't worry. We will unpack it together. The Old Testament can be hard to understand sometimes.) Start with prayer again, asking for God's direction, wisdom, and discernment.

1. Read Micah Chapter 6.
 - a. How does the message begin?
 - b. What does it cover?
 - c. How does it end?
2. In Micah Chapter 6 "*indictment*" is used only once, but it is a key word. I suggest you mark it in some distinct way. This chapter is divided into three sections. Below, note any themes you pick up on.
 - a. Verses 1-5

b. Verses 6-8

c. Verses 9-16

3. What do you learn about the “*indictment*”?

a. Who is the indictment against?

b. Why is there an indictment?

c. Who must hear this indictment?

4. God wanted the “mountains” and “foundations of the earth” (v. 2) to hear His indictment against His people. Why does he call to the mountains and the hills to “hear”? Let us look up some verses to help us understand this.

a. Romans 8:18-22

b. Leviticus 25:23. To whom does the land belong?

c. 1 King 14:22-23 and Jeremiah 17:2-3. What do the people do to the land?

d. Ezekiel 36:8-12. What does the future hold for the “mountains”?

e. Amos 9:13-15. What and where is the future that the prophet Amos spoke of and for whom?

5. In Chapter 6 Micah tells us the Lord's case against His people is about their rebellion. Then of what does he remind them? He reminds them of how He has delivered them in the past. (For a brief refresher about His deliverance from slavery in Egypt you can read Exodus 2:23-3:10.) Remembering God's works in the past reinforces His character for our current situation. It causes us to remember God's faithfulness. (Paul does this in his epistles, continually reminding the reader of the important things so they don't forget.) Read Psalm 105 and jot down a few highlights to help you remember how God has delivered His people. He still redeems today!

6. Read Micah 6:6-8. How does this address the evil actions we consider doing? What does God require, according to verse 8?

✿ The people rebelled against God and turned to idolatry. They had a religiosity without heart obedience, the empty motions of religion without the *humble* transformation of their hearts. They allowed the worship of idols to integrate into their worship practices. And they went through the motions of "religion" without the humble reverence of worshipping God in all that they did.

7. Sin has a way of creeping into our lives and redirecting the course of our “walk”. Mark the two instances the word “walk” is used in Chapter 6. How are they contrasted?

8. *Let's pause and consider our own “walk”. Ask God to search your heart with His Word (Psalm 139:23-24). Talk to God. He is waiting for us, always availing Himself to us for forgiveness and restoration. Write out a response or prayer that answers/addresses the questions, “Is there empty religiosity in how I walk with God? Has sin crept into my life and redirected my “walk” in a way that is not honoring of God?”*

9. Read Micah 6:9-16. List the sins God mentions in His indictment and then list the consequences of those sins.

Sins

Consequences

10. Micah 6:16 talks about “statutes of Omri, and all the works of the house of Ahab...” This is a reference to two kings in the Old Testament. Read 1 Kings 16:23-33. What is the relationship between these two men? How are they described and what is the connection they have to Samaria? (**Note: Omri starts a new dynasty in the Northern Kingdom.)

✚ Wow! Don't things become clear as we put all the pieces together? I love how the Word fits together!

11. What do you learn from the word “therefore” in Micah 6:16? What is God going to do?

In review, Micah 1:5 calls Samaria the “rebellion of Jacob.” From the Northern Kingdom's capital of Samaria, the worship of Baal spread to the rest of the kingdom. And it became the incurable wound that spread to Jerusalem, too. God had a case against His people, an indictment, a legal case based on His law. Israel broke God's law with their idol worship, and as a result He had a case against them. Micah 6:16 says that because of this God would give them up for destruction and reproach.

But God wanted His people to remember His righteous acts. His desire for them was repentance, not destruction and reproach, which is ultimately still what God desires today. Let's walk in the light of the Word!

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. What are some things you remember that God has done for you in the past?
2. How does remembering God's faithfulness in the past affect you in the present?

Micah – Lesson 9

(Chapter 7; Message 3, part 2)

This is the last lesson in the book of Micah. I pray we have gained a deeper understanding of Micah's messages and have been able to apply these warnings to our own lives. Remember Hebrews 5:14 which says, "Solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained..." Micah teaches some challenging truths. I realize this is not easy to study. But we need this "solid food" to help us grow in understanding God. If we don't progress to solid food, we will become dull in hearing and regress to needing milk again. Remember the old saying "Use it or lose it!" Thanks for using it and hanging in there!

Let us pray. *Father, thank You for the richness of Your Word and the inspiration through the Holy Spirit so that even things written long ago can direct us back to You. May we seek Your face and know that You are Love, You are Righteous, and You are Judge. As we conclude this book, give us eyes to see and ears to hear what You would like to speak to and mold in our hearts and lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

1. Read Micah Chapter 7 and mark time phrases and the following key words:

- *remnant*
- *Lord*
- *love*

2. Now we will look at the chapter through the paragraph breakdown below.

Each grouping of verses forms its own unique and different paragraph within the chapter. Write out your own summary of each paragraph.

- Paragraph 1 (v. 1-6)
- Paragraph 2 (v. 7-8)
- Paragraph 3 (v. 9-13)

- Paragraph 4 (v. 14-20)

3. What does this chapter tell you is the general condition of the people?
4. Compare Micah 7:6 with Matthew 10:34-36. How would you describe the difference in the contexts?
5. What do you learn when you follow the pronouns in Micah 7:1-13? Who are the three people/groups in these verses? (1-6; 7-10; 11-13)
6. Based on Micah 7:11, what is being built and extended? (Remember the cities mentioned in Micah 1:1.)
7. Recalling what you have read in Micah, what is said about Jerusalem? Does Micah talk about a future for Jerusalem?

✿ Micah 7:11-13 could refer to both Jerusalem and ultimately the world's future. This may be hard to understand. I've included some commentaries at the end of this lesson to help clarify this idea.

8. Read Isaiah 10:20-23 and 11:11-12. What insights do you have now that you have studied Micah?

✿ Micah 7:16-18 describes what God will do to the nations on behalf of His people after they are punished—the nations will be conquered and ashamed; they “will lick the dust like a serpent” and be full of dread.

But God is unique. There is none like Him. He pardons iniquity. Micah ends his book with praise for God's faithfulness and compassion.

9. Read Micah 7:18-20. What are some of the ways God is described in these verses?

✿ His Word to His people is based on a covenant. Praise the Lord for His unchanging love. He is a covenant-keeping God, and that should bring us much assurance. Praise Him!

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Has studying Micah given you any new understanding of God?

2. What is a takeaway from this book for you personally?

✿ Remember, Micah's name means "Who is like Jehovah?" If God will do all these things for His elect remnant, what will He do for you, the one who has come into the family of God by receiving the gracious gift of His Son? This is the epitome of His unchanging love.

Let us end these lessons knowing the heart of God—holiness and redemption. His heart is for you, for your good. He wants us to become like Him. Keep walking in faithfulness to Him!

Excerpts from commentaries:

Boice - The prophet has been writing about judgment to come: he is not retracing that now. Judgment will come. The people will be carried off to Babylon. But as the book draws to a close, he looks beyond the deportation to another deliverance and regathering into the Promised Land. In that day the enemies of the people will be defeated, Jerusalem will be rebuilt, and the borders of the nation will be extended as they were previously. (Boice Expositional Commentary – The Minor Prophets, Volume 2: Micah-Malachi)

It would have been easy for Micah to look around his society and begin to wonder if God were still working, still able to right the wrongs that had become endemic. And yet instead of viewing the glass half empty, he chose to view the glass half full and to patiently wait for God to move in His perfect timing. As I write these words in December, 2014, I look around America and see a ravaged moral, ethical landscape, and wonder whether God still sees us, whether He still cares. But when I read of the hope filled attitude in godly men like Micah, it encourages me to trust that God is still on the throne and that "He is able"....He is able to right the wrongs, able to send revival, able to restore broken marriages and families, etc. And so I will wait and watch for the God of our salvation.

McComiskey - The clouds of gloom began to separate as the prophet, speaking as the representative of the remnant, described the attitude of the godly person amid such difficult circumstances...The godly man will look expectantly for God. As a watchman observes every shadow and listens to every night sound, so the godly man looks for every evidence of God's working. To close one's eyes to the working of God, no matter how small the evidence may be, is to open the door to despair.

Along this same line, it is worth noting that about 1 out of every 20 verses in the NT speaks directly or indirectly about the Second Coming of the Messiah. Such Spirit inspired prevalence is undoubtedly meant to cause **all** of God's children to keep "**looking**" (see the great verb **prosdechomai**, which in the **present tense** calls for expectation and anticipation to be a saint's continual mindset! Like godly Simeon and Anna - Lk 2:25, 38. **Is it your heart attitude beloved?**) for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." (Titus 2:13-note) Remember that what (Who) you are **looking** for will (should) directly impact what (Who) you are **living** for! If you are convicted, join the "club!"

Micah's words also remind me of Joshua's final words to Israel just before he dies (always good to pay attention to a dying man's last words, especially if he is a godly man!) - "And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but **as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD** = Job 5:8, Ps 5:7, 26:11, 31:14, 52:8, 59:16, 69:13, 71:14, 73:2, 28, 75:9, 119:87, Jer 17:16, 18, Da 2:30)

The phrase **but as for me** signals that this is the prophet's personal choice. He is not being forced or coerced to choose for God. This phrase (but as for me) could be a great qualifier so to speak for believers as we conduct ourselves in the world and are tempted to compromise our righteousness, our morals, our ethics (in Christ). Indeed, may the Spirit enable us in those manifold, variegated tempting situations to quickly speak to ourselves the "tagline" - "But as for me....". Amen.

In this section from Micah 7:7-20 we see primarily the confession and intercession of Micah who identifies himself with Israel, much like Daniel did in his great intercessory prayer (Da 9:3-19). Clearly intercession was a role fulfilled by God's prophets (Ge 20:7 Jer 27:18).

Watch...wait - These actions (attitudes) are a reflection of faith or trust in Jehovah's faithfulness.

James Smith applies these passages to our lives - The upward look to the believing soul is always a clear one, even when the outward and the inward look is dark, cloudy, and foreboding. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved." The look may be like a flash, but we must also quietly wait for Him The waiting time may be the testing time; but if we are waiting for God's salvation it will surely come. (Handfuls of Purpose)

I will watch expectantly - NIV has "I watch in hope". The Lxx translates watch expectantly with the verb epiblepo which means to pay close attention, look attentively and in James 2:3 is rendered "pay special attention to." This verb is applied figuratively to the prophets who were Israel's watchmen who were to see Lord's purposes and communicate them to their people (Hos 9:8 cf Isa 56:10,11 Jer 6:17 Ezek 3:17 Mic 7:4,7).

John Phillips - Coming to the closing stanzas of his prophecy, Micah fixed his eye on the Savior, who was his only ultimate hope (Ed: And our only ultimate hope - Hope is not just a concept but a Person - 1Ti 1:1). The prophet could see end-time

Israel in the hands of her enemies. As George Adam Smith said, "Other nations have been our teachers in art and wisdom and government. But [Israel] is our mistress in pain and in patience." In her suffering Israel at last will say, "I will look unto the Lord" (7:7). She will be like the prodigal son in the far country, who said when he came to his senses, "I will arise and go to my father" (Luke 15:18).

Watch (06822) (tsaphah) literally speaks of keeping watch for some event. To look. To wait expectantly. See more detailed discussion of tsaphah in Micah 7:4 above.

For the LORD. - This reminds me of the great passage in where Paul describes believers as those who are "looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." (Titus 2:13) And take care to not be deluded (James 1:22-24-note) for there is a connection -- **What (Who) you are looking for will (should) radically effect (impact) what (Who) you are living for! How are you doing? Are you reading great passages like this and then walking away with your eye fixed more on the things of the world then upon Jesus imminent return?** God grant us grace and power from His Spirit to enable us to be like the man or woman in James 1:25-note. Amen.

Here is a good practice by David we would do well to imitate - "In the morning, O LORD, Thou wilt hear my voice; In the morning I will order [my] [prayer] to Thee and [eagerly] **watch** (tsaphah; Lxx = epeidon = fix one's gaze on, concern oneself with!). (Ps 5:3)

Kaiser - The Hebrew words for to "look to" (**watch for**) and to "wait for" are not passive verbs, as our English words suggest, but involve active participation through faith, prayer and certain hope. So while the whole society was coming apart, one man plus God was a majority!

