

# MERCY ME / Sunday, July 26, 2015

Unifying Topic: **GOD SHOWS CLEMENCY**

## Lesson Text

I. **God As Shepherd** (Micah 7:14-15)

II. **The Dread Of The Nations** (Micah 7:16-17)

III. **The Graciousness Of God** (Micah 7:18-20)

**The Main Thought:** 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. (Micah 7:18, KJV).

**Unifying Principle:** Sometimes evil and injustice are not met with corrective justice but are trumped by mercy. Who will meet evil and injustice with mercy rather than with punishment? God will show compassion and faithfulness to His people, even to the unjust.

**Lesson Aim:** To learn of God's mercy even when punishment seems in order.

**Life Aim:** To carry out acts of mercy and compassion.

## HISTORY:

**Chapter 7** Micah watched as society rotted around him. Rulers demanded gifts; judges accepted bribes; and corruption was everywhere. But God promised to lead the people out of the darkness of sin and into His light. Micah, the prophet pictures himself and the nation as an orchard and vineyard after each has been harvested. But, he admits "*Woe is me*"; he laments and confesses the circumstances of his day, for there was not even a cluster of grapes to eat; no good fruit left. In the land Micah couldn't find an honest man anywhere. They laid in wait for blood, turning against their own brothers (**vv.1-2**). The belief in the unconditional covenant God gave to Israel had perished in the land. Instead of seeking to do righteousness and seeking to serve Jehovah, they sought to do evil with both hands. The prince, judge, and great man used their sharpness to bring hurt as a brier and a thorn. Therefore, Israel's watchmen, the prophets of God predicted their judgment must come. It would be a visitation of judgment that would result in the sharp princes, judges, and notable men punished for the evil deeds that they had performed against the godly (**vv.3-4**).

Because sin was so rampant throughout the land, it affected, distorted and perverted every human relationship. A friend could not be trusted; a guide could not be given confidence; sons and daughters rebelled against their parents; a man's wife rebelled against his mother; and household servants turned against their masters (**vv.5-6**). In short, chaos reigned throughout the land, destroying every interpersonal relationship; for it was once again as it was in the days of the judges, with each man doing that which is right in his own eyes (Judges 1:25). The prophet expresses his confidence in Jehovah who alone remains faithful against the backdrop of such infidelity in every human relationship. Micah showed great faith in God as he proclaimed that:

1. He would wait upon God because God hears and saves when help is needed (**v.7**).
2. God would bring him through when times were tough (**v.8**).
3. He would be patient in punishment because of sin, and God would bring him and the nation out of darkness into the light when God begins to plead his case and execute judgment (**v.9**). Punishment does not mean rejection.
4. His enemies would be punished (**v.10**).
5. In that day, Israel's wall; cities will be rebuilt, and the decreed of sin is removed (**v.11**).
6. In that day, honor will come to the faithful remnant (**v.12**).

Micah returns back to the thought that before the nation can be a blessing to the world, it must be purged of its sin. Israel will be attacked and destroyed; immediate desolation as just recompense for their sin (**v.13**).

## LESSON:

**7:14 Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old.** The prophet Micah petitioned and prayed for Jehovah to shepherd and feed like a flock, and protect His people from danger; to meet temporal needs, for they were living

alone; avoiding the society of others; without companions, unattended in the woods, as without a shepherd in the midst of Carmel. The "rod" is not an instrument of punishment, but rather an instrument of provision, comfort, and protection as in Psalm 23:4. Carmel is set as a fruitful vintage looked at as woods. Bashan, and Gilead were fertile areas east of the Jordan. They were among the first lands that Israel gained (Josh.13:19-31) and the first lands lost (2Kgs.10:32-33; Jere.50:19). Micah wanted Jehovah to allow His people to feed in these lands once more as they did long ago.

**7:15 According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things.** Jehovah's response to Micah's prayer looked back to an earlier time when the Israelites were in Egypt. As He delivered them out of Egypt, God promises to also do wonderful and mighty things for them again.

**7:16 The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf.** God now looks forward into the future, when the nations see God's miracles and His deliverance. They will no longer brag about their power as they put their hands over their mouths, refusing to listen! They will be embarrassed that their power is so insignificant, for God promises to defeat the nations before them. And they will stand in silent awe, deaf to everything around them!

**7:17 They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of thee.** These are figures of abject defeat and servitude. <sup>1</sup>"*Lick the dust*" gives the example when a king has lost a battle. He will crawl to the king that has defeated him. He will lie down in front of that other king (Psalm 44:25). He will lie down because he will be afraid of that other king. It will be the same for all the nations except Israel. Those nations will come to the Lord in great fear. They will crawl out of the places where they have hidden like snakes (*worms*) (Genesis 3:14, 15). In other words, they will come out of their strong castles. The nations will tremble in front of the Lord. "*Lick the dust*" describes their actions. They will realize that they have no power. They will crawl in the dust in unconditional surrender. The reason for their fear is not the nation or its strength, but it's Israel's God, Jehovah, who had accomplished this.

**7:18 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.** The closing words of this prophesy are words of praise in which the prophet praises Jehovah for His dealings with the remnant He rescued. Micah's own name actually means "*Who is like Yahweh (God)?*" Jehovah God, who forgives and pardons sin, is shown to be a God who will not always be angry with His sinful people. He is a God who delights in mercy, so, therefore, "*Who is a God like unto thee?*" There is none like unto Him!

**7:19 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.** "*He will turn again*" means "*He has had compassion*" many times before, and He will do it again. The phrase "*He will subdue our iniquities,*" actually means that He will literally tread under foot our iniquities, consequently, totally rescuing us from their grasp; squash our guilt of sin that it may not condemn us. That sin will not have power over us; it will not rule us. "*He will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea*" means sin is obliterated and buried in the deep sea never to rise again.

**7:20 Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.** Micah concludes by allowing Israel see that in spite of their unfaithfulness, Jehovah will fulfill His unconditional promises He had sworn in days of old made to their forefathers. The prophet's confidence rests upon the revealed Word of God which he described as the truth to Jacob and the mercy to Abraham.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/micah-lbw.htm>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

## SUMMARY:

Micah prays that God would in due time bring His people back to feed in the plains of Bashan and Gilead, and no longer to be fed in the woods and mountains as in days of old (v.14). God answers that "*he will show them marvellous things*" when He took them out of Egypt (v.15).

Nations will see and be mystified. They will give up all their power; putting their hands over their mouths and their ears will become deaf (v.16). They will lick the dust and crawl out of their holes where they have hidden like snakes. They will fear God and be in awe of Him (v.17).

Because God is such an awesome God, there is no one like Him. He pardons sins; passes over wrong; doesn't retain anger forever because He delights in mercy (v.18). He will have compassion upon Israel, just as He has had before, and tread their sins under His feet, as He cast those sins into the depths of the sea (v.19). He will keep His promises as He has sworn to their fathers of old (v.20).