

## Minor prophets #6 MICAH

**HOSEA** took a faithless wife and spoke of judgement, love and life  
**JOEL** told of locust plagues The Spirit and the end of the age  
**AMOS** left his flocks and trees to call the nation to its knees  
**OBADIAH** prophesied of Edom and its foolish pride  
**JONAH** tried to run away, but lived to preach another day.  
**MICAH** spoke of God's great plan to change the world by changing man

### The question

If you were given the task of changing the world and making it a better place, how would you go about it? This was the challenge facing Micah...

### About Micah

Name: Who is like God

Date: Around 700 BC

The cause: Injustice, irreligion, iniquity

See chapters one and two

Micah is quoted in Jer 26:18

### Six great affirmations...

#### 1. Divine power (3:8)

- Micah was filled with the Holy Spirit
- Pentecostals tend to be preoccupied with power
- Liberals tend to be preoccupied with justice
- Micah put these together: both power and justice
- Compare Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:18
- In the New Testament, the same word is used for justice, righteousness and integrity (*dikaiousune*). When we live in integrity we have a passion for justice for all.
- The Holy Spirit empowers us to make a difference!

#### 2. Divine peace (4:2-3)

- In the New Testament, Zion represents the Church
- The gospel will bring everlasting peace
- Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6)

**3. The Divine Pastor (5:2, 4)**

- A remarkable prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem
- The text quoted to Herod (Matthew 2:1-18)

Eight great qualities of the Messiah:

- Ruler over Israel (= the Church)
- Eternal origins
- Shepherd of His flock
- Strong in the Lord
- Majestic in the name of God
- Great to the ends of the earth
- Our security
- Our peace

**4. The Divine Pattern (6:6-8)**

A 21<sup>st</sup> century version of verse 6 –

- Giving up my favourite TV shows?
- Going on a short term mission every year?
- Singing thousands of worship songs?
- Praying ten thousand words in tongues?
- Sacrificing my job/car/stereo/trip to the snow?

These are all good things – but not in place of three great qualities—

- Act justly (Matt 12:18-20)
- Love mercy (Matt 5:7)
- Walk humbly (1 Peter 5:5)

**5. Divine pickup (7:8)**

- When we fall, we can rise again in Jesus name
- Even at the last moment, we can rise up in victory
- In September 2005, the Sydney Swans football team were four goals down nearly half way through the last quarter. They kicked the winning score three seconds before the final siren – they were down but not out!
- When we find ourselves in darkness, the Lord is our light
- Christian in John Bunyan's classic *Pilgrim's Progress* in his fight with Apollyon quotes from Micah –

*Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, I am void of fear in this matter, prepare thyself to die; for I swear by my infernal Den, that thou shalt go no further; here will I spill thy soul.*

*And with that he threw a flaming Dart at his breast, but Christian had a Shield in his hand, with which he caught it, and so prevented the danger of that.*

*Then did Christian draw, for he saw 'twas time to bestir him: and Apollyon as fast made at him, throwing Darts as thick as Hail; by the which, notwithstanding all that Christian could do to avoid it, Apollyon wounded him in his head, his hand, and foot: This made Christian give a little back; Apollyon therefore followed his work amain, and Christian again took courage, and resisted as manfully as he could. This sore Combat lasted for above half a day, even till Christian was almost quite spent; for you must know that Christian, by reason of his wounds, must needs grow weaker and weaker.*

*Then Apollyon espying his opportunity, began to gather up close to Christian, and wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall; and with that Christian's Sword flew out of his hand. Then said Apollyon, I am sure of thee now: and with that he had almost pressed him to death, so that Christian began to despair of life: but as God would have it, while Apollyon was fetching of his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, Christian nimbly stretched out his hand for his Sword, and caught it, saying, **Rejoice not***

***against me, O mine Enemy! when I fall I shall arise;** and with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back, as one that had received his mortal wound: Christian, perceiving that, made at him again, saying, Nay, in all these things we are more than Conquerors through him that loved us. And with that Apollyon spread forth his Dragon's wings, and sped him away, that Christian for a season saw him no more.*

*In this Combat no man can imagine, unless he had seen and heard as I did, what yelling and hideous roaring Apollyon made all the time of the fight, he spake like a Dragon; and on the other side, what sighs and groans burst from Christian's heart. I never saw him all the while give so much as one pleasant look, till he perceived he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged Sword; then indeed he did smile, and look upward; but 'twas the dreadfullest sight that ever I saw.*

*A more unequal match can hardly be:*

*Christian must fight an Angel; but you see*

*The Valiant Man by handling Sword and Shield,*

*Doth make him, tho' a Dragon, quit the field.*

**6. Divine pardon (18-20)**

- God pardons iniquity and transgression
- He does not just show love to us, he *delights* in steadfast love and compassion
- He casts our sins into the depths of the sea. Even today, the depths of the ocean are beyond our reach
- He keeps his promise
- Note the changes from third person to second person: from praise to worship
- Samuel Davies, 18<sup>th</sup> century American Presbyterian hymn writer, said that God's pardoning grace was the greatest of all his wonders.

*GREAT God of wonders! all thy ways Display the attributes divine; But countless acts of pardoning grace Beyond thine other wonders shine: Who is a pardoning God like thee? Or who has grace so rich and free?*

*In wonder lost, with trembling joy We take the pardon of our God; Pardon for crimes of deepest dye, A pardon bought with Jesu's blood: Who is a pardoning God like thee? Or who has grace so rich and free?*

v Samuel Davies

**SOMETHING TO THINK OR TALK ABOUT**

**Remember:** You don't have to answer all the questions. Choose those that seem most relevant at this time.

**Text:** Micah

Biblical

1. What does 1:3-4 tell us about God?
2. What were the sins that Micah denounced? Make a list, describing them in contemporary language. Which of these sins are particularly prevalent today? (1:7; 2:1-2, 9; 3:2, 5, 9, 11).
3. What was the outcome of Micah being filled with the Spirit? (3:8) What are the implications for us?
4. If Zion is symbolic of the Church (Hebrews 12:22-24), what do you think 4:1-2 means?
5. How would Micah have written 4:3-4 if he lived today?

Personal and practical

6. How does 6:8 apply to your life? On a scale of 1 (little) to 5 (much), how would you rate your own expression or practice of each of these three qualities?
7. Read 7:8. Share your own experiences of how this passage has applied to your life. Are you facing a situation right now where this text would be appropriate for you? Talk about it if you like – and then claim the promise of 7:8 in prayer to meet your need.
8. What has been your personal experience of 7:18-20? Can you recall an occasion when you have experienced God's pardon in a particularly meaningful way?
9. Which is your favourite text of 3:8, 6:8, 7:8 and 7:18? Why?
10. Memorise your favourite text.

## About Dr Barry Chant

Barry Chant is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He was the initiator and former president of Tabor College, Australia.

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