



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

**JONAH, MICAH
AND NAHUM**

Week 2

DAY 8

Turning Up the Heat

Jonah 4:5-10

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

Have you ever been in a place so hot that you almost fainted? Where were you? How hot did it get?

1. Why do you think Jonah “waited to see what would happen to the city” (v. 5), when he had already been told that it would not be destroyed?
2. God not only provided a vine to shade Jonah and ease his comfort; he just as quickly took it away (vs. 6-7). Why do you think God did this?
3. This is the second time Jonah begged to die (vs. 3, 8). What do the two events have in common (vs. 4, 9)?
4. What was God concerned with, and what was Jonah concerned with (v. 10)? What message was God sending Jonah?

LIVING
out the Word

1. While Jonah understood God’s character, he sometimes resisted it. Are there areas where you resist God?
2. List what you feel are the three most important things God wants you to do. List the three most important things you want to do. How does your list compare to God’s?
3. At times, God removes us from our comfort zone in order to teach us something important. Has God ever done this in your life? What did you learn?
4. What is the most valuable lesson you’ve learned about God through the loss of something precious?

WINDOW
on the Word

A **scorching east wind** (v. 8) is called a sirocco in Arabic. During a sirocco, the temperature rises dramatically, sometimes even at night, and may remain 15 to 20 degrees above normal, sapping the moisture out of plants. **“One hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left”** (v. 11). Some scholars say this number refers to the children—too young to tell their right hand from their left. If that were true, the population of Nineveh might have been around 600,000 people. Others believe this number refers only to adults who were so spiritually blind that they could not tell right from wrong. If that interpretation is correct, the total population of the city may have been 300,000 or less.

JONAH LEARNS FROM A

PLANT

Jonah and the Plant

Jonah was responsible for
for a plant.

Jonah was not the creator
of the plant.

Jonah was focussed on
himself and his own
personal comfort.

The plant had physical
value.

Jonah did nothing to help
the plant.

God and the Ninevites

God was responsible for the
people of Nineveh.

God created the people and
animals of Nineveh.

God was focussed on the
welfare of others—human
life and spiritual sensitivity
toward him.

The people of Nineveh had
both physical and spiritual
value.

God reached out to help the
people of Nineveh.

Our attitude toward other people—especially
our enemies—can reveal a great deal about our
values. Apart from God we are self-absorbed.
The mind of Jesus Christ, as he lives his risen
life within us, will focus us on loving God and
our neighbor, centering our lives on the needs of
others.

Introduction to Micah

Authorship: Not much is known about the author of this book, the prophet Micah. His name is a shortened version of *Micaiah*, which means, “who is like Yahweh?” The elders referred to Micah in Jeremiah’s day, quoting Micah 3:12 (Jer 26:18). Micah was from Moresheth, a Judean town about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem near the Philistine city of Gath.

Date: Micah prophesied in the 8th century B.C. during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah—all kings of Judah. Micah was contemporary with the prophet Isaiah, and also prophesied about the destruction of the northern kingdom by the Assyrians and the later defeat of the southern kingdom by the Babylonians.

Setting and purpose: The situation was familiar: the northern kingdom of Israel had already broken the covenant they had made with God long before. The people in Judah, the southern kingdom, weren’t far behind them. To these two groups of people, who represented the entire 12 tribes, the message of Micah came. It was a message that made clear that the people of Israel had failed to live up to the covenant to which they had agreed. As a result, they would realize the negative consequences of their actions, clearly articulated in the old covenant.

Yet, even though Micah prophesied the curses Judah and Israel were bringing upon themselves, he was also led by God to promise future restoration under the Messiah. Micah is quoted twice in the New Testament: Matthew 2:5-6 quotes Micah 5:2, and Matthew 10:35-36 quotes Micah 7:6. Micah wrote about the Messiah’s birthplace, lineage, origin (Mic 5:2, 4) and his reign (4:1-7).

Reading outline:

I. THE COMING JUDGMENT, 1-2

- A. The Lord is Coming, and He's Not Happy, 1:1-7
- B. Tears of Regret, 1:8-16
- C. What Goes Around Comes Around, 2:1-5
- D. Misleading Prophet Statements, 2:6-13

II. BLESSING AFTER THE JUDGMENT, 3-5

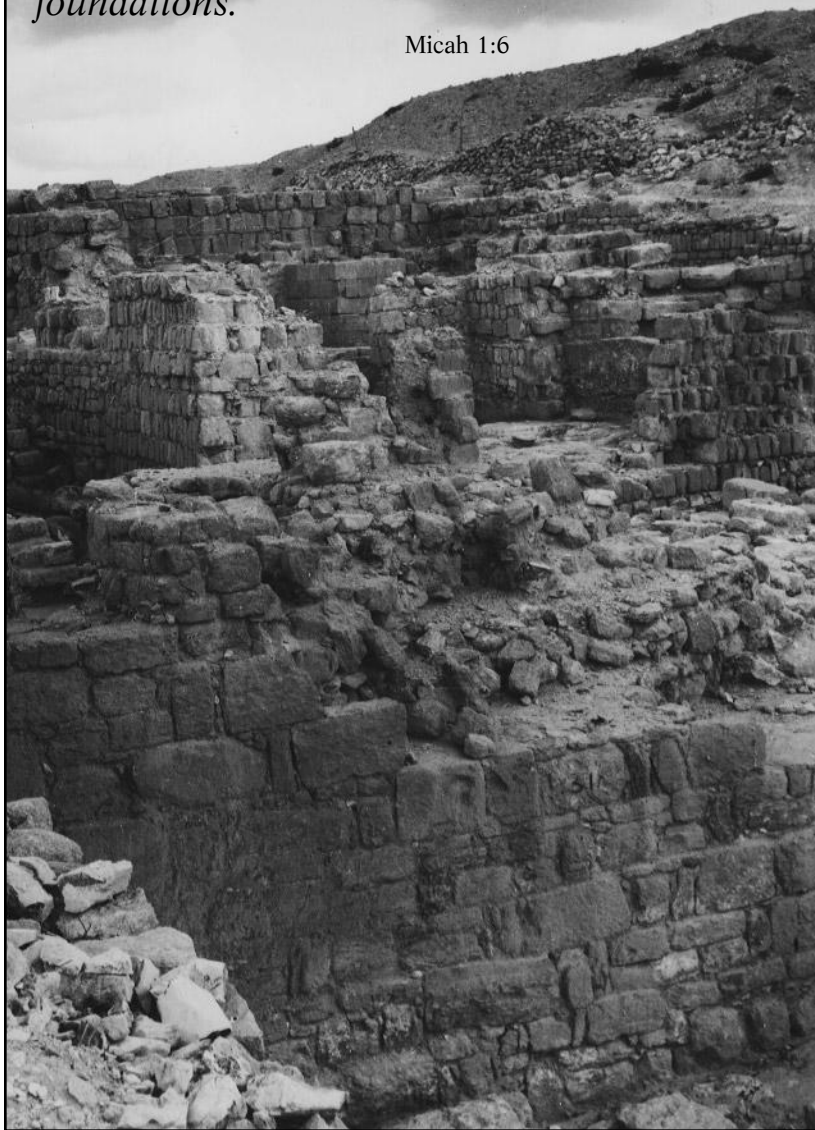
- A. Left in the Dark, 3:1-7
- B. The Price for Selling Out, 3:8-12
- C. Preview of Coming Attractions, 4:1-5
- D. Present Pain, Future Glory, 4:6-13
- E. Bethlehem's Promise, 5:1-5
- F. When the Tables Are Turned, 5:5-15

III. THE SIN AND THE BLESSING, 6-7

- A. Stating the Case, 6:1-8
- B. Unmasking Israel's Scams, 6:9-16
- C. Condemned, 7:1-7
- D. A Ray of Hope, 7:8-13
- E. The Final Scene, 7:14-20

*“Therefore I will make
Samaria a heap of rubble, a
place for planting vineyards.
I will pour her stones into
the valley and lay bare her
foundations.”*

Micah 1:6



Ruins of Samaria—Matson Photo Service

The Lord is Coming, and He's Not Happy

DAY 9

Micah 1:1-7

When you were little, did you ever get in trouble and then have to wait for your parent to come and punish you?

1. What did Micah say the Lord was going to do from his holy Temple (v. 2)?
2. In verses 3 and 4, there are several vivid descriptions of the Lord's coming in judgment on Samaria and Jerusalem. While they are symbolic, what do all of these images have in common?
3. What does Micah mean when he says that Jacob's transgression is Samaria and Judah's high place is Jerusalem (v. 5)?
4. Are the "wages of prostitutes" (v. 7) to be taken literally or figuratively?

1. When someone fails you and hurts your feelings, how do you tend to react? How do you wish you'd respond?
2. When you have failed God, do you start to fear him? Do you picture him as disappointed yet filled with love, or angry—seeking vengeance and retribution?
3. Read Romans 8:1 and ask yourself how God views you, even when you've failed him.

Samaria was the capital of the Kingdom of Israel, while **Jerusalem** was the capital of the Kingdom of Judah. These cities were representative of the rest of the nation; they reflected the spiritual deterioration of both kingdoms. "**Wages of prostitutes**" (v. 7). Sacred prostitutes were used in the worship of Baal. Wages paid to these prostitutes were then given to the temple as gifts. These gifts would be taken by the Assyrians and used in Assyrian worship. Judah and Israel would be sent into captivity to a nation that worshiped idols, since that's what they seemed to want.

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

DAY 10

Tears of Regret

Micah 1:8-16

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever watched someone you love do something so dangerous and self-destructive that it brought you to tears?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What kind of a wound did Micah say that Judah had sustained (v. 9)?

2. Micah uses some strong language to describe what these people and cities were going to experience (vs. 11-12). What words does he use and what kind of a picture does that create in your mind?

3. What particular sin was the town and people of Lachish guilty of (vs. 13-14), and what penalties would their behavior cause them to experience (vs. 14-15)?

4. Who is Micah referring to as the “glory of Israel” in verse 15?

5. What was going to happen to their children as a result (v. 16)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. When you see a friend, relative, or loved one doing something harmful, or choosing a direction that is dangerous, what is your usual response? (a) warn them, (b) say nothing, (c) try to ignore it, (d) pray that they change their mind.

2. Is there anyone today whose actions have prompted tears of regret in you as you’ve seen them bear the consequences of their foolish actions?

3. Is there some activity you are engaged in right now that might cause those who love you to shed tears of regret?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Micah suggested that the citizens of **Lachish**, who were known for their horses, should prepare chariots to escape the Assyrians, though it was hopeless. They are called the beginning of sin, so apparently it was in Lachish that idolatry first blossomed in Judah. Some feel that “**the glory of Israel**” (v. 15) refers to the people of Israel themselves, others believe that it refers to their leaders.*

*“Shave your heads
in mourning for
the children in
whom you delight;
make yourselves as
bald as the
vulture, for they
will go from you
into exile.”*

Micah 1:16



What Goes Around Comes Around

Micah 2:1-5

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever found yourself the victim of something you had done to someone else? What did you do, and how did it come back upon you?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Did the people Micah is describing in verse 1 do their evil spontaneously without thinking about it, or was it planned?
2. What was the motive behind the stealing and plundering of homes and possessions (v. 2)?
3. Were people's homes and possessions literally stolen, or did the wicked find another way to gain possession of things that did not belong to them (v. 2)?
4. As the people had planned evil against their neighbor, how would they reap what they sowed (Galatians 6:7)?
5. How was God planning to teach the wicked a lesson about taking other people's land and possessions from them (vs. 4-5)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. What habit or activity do you feel you need to sow far more frequently in your life and why?
2. What habit or activity do you feel you need to sow less frequently in your life and why?

WINDOW
on the Word

"They will taunt you with this mournful song" (v. 4).
The very song that described evil people stealing others' land will be sung when God takes the evil people's land away from them through the Assyrians.

Misleading Prophet Statements

DAY 12

Micah 2:6-13

How can you tell when someone is really speaking on behalf of God, and when they aren't?

1. What were most of the prophets demanding that Micah stop saying (v. 6)?
2. In what way were the people offending God with their actions (vs. 8-9)?
3. What did God say they had defiled, and therefore had to leave (v. 10)?
4. God described the perfect prophecy for the people—one they would easily accept. What was it (v. 11)?
5. Despite the present sins of the people, what hope did God promise for their future (vs. 12-13)?

1. When someone claims to represent God, what credentials do you look for to confirm their claim? (a) a seminary degree, (b) the religious, pious language they use, (c) a minister's license, (d) the humility and mind of Christ.
2. Has anyone ever misled you spiritually? If so, how, and what did their bad advice cost you?
3. What is a sure sign to you that someone is a false prophet?

"Is the Spirit of the Lord angry?" (v. 7). The NIV has translated a Hebrew word as "anger" when it may also be understood as "impatient," "distressed" or "exhausted." God is not "angry" in the sense of losing his temper and becoming vengeful.

OPENING

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Left in the Dark

Micah 3:1-7

OPENING
up to the Word

Are you afraid of the dark? Why do you think people are afraid of places in the dark that they aren't afraid of in the light?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. In verses 2 and 3, Micah uses gruesome language to describe the way the leaders of Israel treated their people. While this is not a literal description of what was happening, what picture do you think Micah was trying to create in their minds?

2. Micah points out that as long as they were paid well, the prophets always brought a message of peace and prosperity to the people. What was the response if a prophet didn't bring that message (v. 5)?

3. How did Micah describe the loss of power the prophets would experience (v. 6)?

4. Were the *seers* and *diviners* the same as prophets of God (v. 7)?

5. What would be the ultimate punishment for the false prophets (v. 7)?

LIVING
out the Word

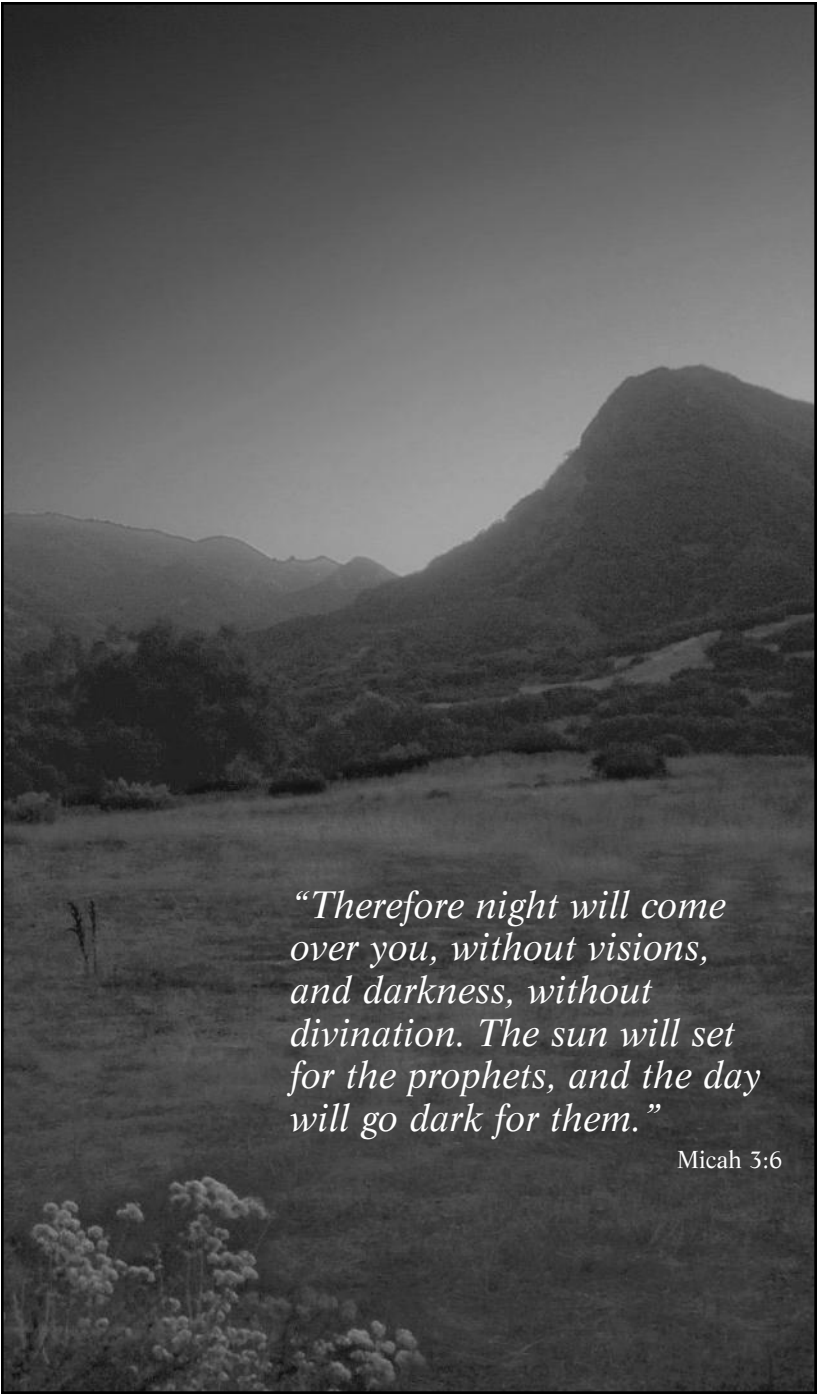
1. Do you know what it is like to be in the dark spiritually?

2. What did God finally use to turn on the light so you could see the Light of Jesus Christ?

3. What great truths of God were you blinded to for years that now seem clear and obvious to you?

WINDOW
on the Word

***"Eat my people's flesh"** (v. 3). Micah describes the leaders of Israel as hunters who are not satisfied with just killing their prey—they tear it apart like wild animals.*



*“Therefore night will come
over you, without visions,
and darkness, without
divination. The sun will set
for the prophets, and the day
will go dark for them.”*

Micah 3:6

The Price for Selling Out

Micah 3:8-12

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever had anyone change his or her opinion of you one way or another due to your financial condition?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What did Micah claim to be filled with in contrast to the false prophets (v. 8)?
2. What were the leaders and rulers of Israel despising and distorting (v. 9)?
3. What one thing did all the leaders, prophets and priests in Israel have in common (v. 11)?
4. The party line among the leaders of Israel, both political and spiritual, was that (v. 11): (a) things are bad, but not that bad; (b) the Lord has left us; (c) the Lord is among us, we're safe; (d) things are good, but they could get worse.
5. In what terms did Micah describe the fate of Israel (v. 12)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Are you affected by someone's financial and social status? (a) no, never; (b) sometimes a little; (c) more than I'd like to admit; (d) yes, definitely.
2. Are most of your friends at a certain financial or social level or status? If so, is this intentional on your part?
3. Have you ever found yourself unwittingly treating one person differently from another because of their financial or social status? How are Christ-followers empowered to treat people who are in a different financial condition than they are (Jas 2:1-6)?