

Micah Chapter 7

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[0 : 00] I'm hoping the reading is going to be from Micah chapter 7. Certainly that's where we find the passage. I should have been using the other Bible, but in my book it's 897.

935. And it's chapter 7 that we're going to read. Sorry.

I'll just find it myself. Apologies. Right.

This is entitled Israel's Misery. I'm going to read the whole chapter because it really helps to see the end when we come to the praise towards the end of the chapter.

Obviously in this misery, crying out to the Lord. What misery is mine? I am like one who gathers summer fruit. At the gleaning of the vineyard there is no cluster of grapes to eat.

[1 : 23] None of the early figs that I crave. The godly have been swept from the land. Not one upright man remains. All men lie in wait to shed blood.

Each hunts his brother with a net. Both hands are skilled in doing evil. The ruler demands gifts. The judge accepts bribes. The powerful dictate what they desire.

They all conspire together. The best of them is like a briar. The most upright, worse than a thorn hedge. The day of your watchman has come.

The day God visits you. Now is the time of their confusion. Do not trust a neighbor. Put no confidence in a friend. Even with her who lies in your embrace, be careful of your words.

For a son dishonors his father. A daughter rises up against her mother. A daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies are the members of his own household.

[2 : 26] But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord. I wait for God my Saviour. My God will hear me. Do not gloat over me, my enemy.

Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be my light. Because I have sinned against him, I will bear the Lord's wrath until he pleads my case and establishes my right.

He will bring me out into the light. I will see his righteousness. Then my enemy will see it and will be covered with shame. She who said to me, where is the Lord your God?

My eyes will see her downfall. Even now, she will be trampled underfoot like mire in the streets. The day for building your walls will come.

The day for extending your boundaries. In that day, people will come to you from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, even from Egypt to the Euphrates, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain.

[3 : 29] The earth will become desolate because of its inhabitants as the result of their deeds.

Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock of your inheritance, which lives by itself in a forest in fertile pasture lands.

Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in days long ago, as in the days when you came out of Egypt. I will show them my wonders.

Nations will see and be ashamed, deprived of all their power. They will lay their hands on their mouths, and their ears will become deaf. They will lick dust like a snake, like creatures that crawl on the ground.

They will come trembling out of their dens. They will turn in fear to the Lord our God, and will be afraid of you. Who is a God like you, who pardons sin, and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance?

You do not stay angry forever, but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us. You will tread our sins underfoot, and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

[4 : 41] You will be true to Jacob, and show mercy to Abraham, as you placed an oath to our fathers in days long ago. You can almost imagine that that's today, can't you?

When you read that first bit of that chapter, it describes pretty accurately the situation in our world at the moment. Seemingly everyone being in enmity with everyone else, nobody knowing who to trust. And yet this chapter ends in prayer and praise, and that's verse in 18. Who is a God like you, who pardons sin, and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance?

What wonderful promises we have there in this chapter. Well, let's... Well, good evening.

It's good to be with you. And again, I do apologize for perhaps a little bit of lateness. It's not my intention to raise Barry's blood level or blood pressure, but I do thank you.

[5 : 49] I'm going to John's a brief. Oh, right, okay. Well, thank you again. It's just slow traffic across the top there. Let's turn to God in prayer.

Let's pray together. Our gracious God and loving Father, we thank you for the joy of being together and sharing this time with you. Father, we thank you that you are the great and almighty God, and it is our privilege to come into your very presence.

Father, we thank you for the fact that you are gracious and compassionate and slow to anger, abounding in mercy. And, Father, we depend upon that because we realize just how sinful we can be at times and how soon we fall and fail.

But, Father, we thank you that there is forgiveness through the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is in his name we come.

And we ask, O God, for that pouring of your Holy Spirit as we seek your word together. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, as we come to this passage from Micah, again, I just want to concentrate on those verses from 18 to 20, where we read, Who is a God like you, who pardons sins and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance?

[7 : 24] You do not stay angry forever, but you like to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us. You will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

You will be true to Jacob and show mercy to Abraham as you pledged an oath to our fathers in days long ago. That question, Who is a God like you?

That's the opening question. It's a rhetorical question. And then Micah seems to answer that as he brings us into the presence of God and as he worships.

And that answer really constitutes good news to sinners such as you and I. And to appreciate Micah's question at the close of this book, again, we need to really know something of what has preceded this quotation in the book of Micah.

Micah is a prophet who ministered in sort of mid-8th, late 7th century before Christ. And it was written at a time when the people of God, Barry mentioned the fact that, you know, the world we live in is very much a description of the times that we read of.

[8 : 48] But really, as we come to this book of Micah, it is the people of God who are living a fashion in a very ungodly way.

They are ripe unto God's judgment. Indeed, God will bring judgment upon them very shortly. But we read of a time where the wealthy were exploiting the poor.

The rulers were oppressive, lovers of evil. The prophets and priests were self-serving teachers. And they acted out of personal gain.

It's not a very pleasant description. It's not a pleasant scene as we come to think upon this situation. But because of these sins and because of the people's idolatry, God warns that his hand of judgment was coming upon them.

And it did. And yet, as we think upon this promise, as it were, of judgment, then the wonderful thing is, Micah also describes the future glory that God will one day bring upon them.

[10 : 13] Though they were wicked and sinful, God still describes them as his inheritance. He has set his love upon them once and for all.

And he was not going to take that love away. Yes, he was going to bring judgment, but it was necessary. And even that act of judgment was an act of love towards his people.

An act of discipline. Of seeking to restore them into their proper relationship with himself.

And again, we find that the Lord will be exalted by the nations. And in this prophecy, again, we have that promise of God's appointed king born in Bethlehem.

When we read this whole book, you get a picture of two really remarkable things. Firstly, the righteous anger of God over his people's iniquity.

[11 : 32] But secondly, the grace of God. That grace of God which assures them that in spite of their sins, he will one day wash them and cleanse them and cause them to stand forgiven and that

he will fulfill every good promise that he has made towards them.

And it's the thought of these two realities is what inspired this question. Who is a God like you? And think of it when Micah goes on to describe God's greatness and supremacy, what does he concentrate upon?

Is it God's power? His glory? His judgment? No. The thing that Micah brings out is the pardoning grace of almighty God.

God. In other words, our God is a God to be praised and exalted as a God who remains faithful to his people. As a God who is willing to forgive them, who shows loving kindness towards them.

[12:47] This is the God that Micah draws our attention to. And it may be that as you come here this evening, that perhaps you have that sense of unworthiness before God.

Perhaps you reflect upon your life and you think, well, it's not what it should be. It should be better. Perhaps you think you're a failure.

Well, let's take heart from this passage. God is gracious and merciful, long-suffering. And again, we need to consider these things.

And again, with the psalmist, say, blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. So as we come then to this question, who is a God like you?

Again, I want us to think about some of the things which inspired Micah to write those words. Who is a God like our God who so completely and willingly forgives us for his own namesake?

[14:18] He says, who pardon sin who forgives the transgressions of the remnant of his inheritance? God wanted the people of Israel to know that in spite of their sin, he still looked upon them as his inheritance.

Remember as he called them from out of Ur of the Chaldees when Abram was appointed again as those promises were made to Isaac and Jacob and passed on through those generations.

How God delivered his people out of Egypt, out of slavery and brought them back to the promised land. God shows his faithfulness and he told them, for you are a people holy to the Lord your God. God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

What a wonderful description that you are the people of God. And for the church today, there is that similar description.

[15:42] we are the people of God. Again, back in Deuteronomy chapter 7. Why?

Why did God call Israel? He says, you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. The Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

And again, why? And the answer comes back to that same word, grace. Not because you were something special, not because you were more numerous, not because you were a strong nation, no.

You were the fewest in number. God called them because he loved them. why has God called you to be a Christian?

[17:09] Is it because you're someone special? You're wise or you're strong, powerful? No, not particularly.

Not all of us can, I can't certainly, put my hand up to those things. But God called me. because he loved me.

Why did God love me? I haven't got a clue. But he did. And each one of us who are Christians can say the same thing.

We are loved of God because he loved us. And again, we're told in order that we might know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

And that's how God looks upon us, as his inheritance. The Lord Jesus came to this earth to purchase us for himself with his own precious blood.

[18:22] God and again, he expressed how much he looked forward to taking us to himself. He said, Father, I want those whom you have given me to be with me where I am and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

Our presence with him in glory is a source of joy to our Savior, the joy that was set before him, that he would endure the cross on our behalf.

And so because God chose to preserve, as it were, a remnant for himself, from out of this inheritance, he set himself and was willing to pardon, to forgive the iniquities, to pass over the transgressions of his people.

He wasn't going to ignore it. He wasn't going to sweep things under the carpet. He can't do that because he is a holy God. And when God forgives us, it's not again just pretending.

No, sin has to be dealt with. And in many ways, as we think of this prophecy of Micah, for the Lord to be able to forgive and to pardon, there must be that looking forward to the cross of Calvary, sin and iniquity is dealt with once and for all.

[20 : 18] God, we read, presented him, that is, the Lord Jesus, as a sacrifice of atonement through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed before and punished.

He did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

God is right to be angry at sin. His anger is demonstrated most of all upon the cross where his own son bore the penalty of our sin.

sin. But as Micah tells us, you do not stay angry forever, but do like to show mercy.

Again, we can ask that question, who is like our God? One who pledges himself to his people, who calls them his inheritance before they were ever a people, the one who sets himself to forgive and to pardon, who does it for his own namesake, the one who delights to show mercy.

[21 : 45] Here, then, it is a God to whom we can safely come and know that as we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Again, further, we can say, who is a God like ours who purposes to deal with that sin, that sin which separates us from God?

From the standpoint of the people who read Micah's prophecy and read of all the punishment he was bringing upon them, you might have thought, well, they might have thought, well, God has turned himself away from us. But really, the truth is the people themselves are turned away from their God.

But now we find, Micah goes on to tell them, you will again have compassion on us. You will tread our sins underfoot and hurl our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

the original language says he will turn. Again, as I've mentioned, maybe to the Jewish people, it seems that God had already turned away from them.

[23 : 09] But now he says, well, he will turn towards them. He's turned away in judgment maybe, but now he turns to them.

it does involve a turning away. And again, we are reminded of the cross and those solemn words, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

When the Lord did turn away from his beloved son, because he was bearing upon himself the sin of the world, there was a turning away, so that there might be a turning to, so that God could have mercy and compassion upon us.

He will turn again. He will have compassion upon us. But it's not just that he will turn again to the people who sin had separated them from himself.

The Lord goes on to deal with that sin, to conquer that sin. And Michael goes on to say that God will tread underfoot our iniquities.

[24 : 35] And that picture of treading underfoot is having total dominion over, crushing it, making it as nothing.

and when God spoke at a late time to his covenant people, he made this promise through the prophet Jeremiah, again a promise which is realized through the Lord Jesus.

Jesus. The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt because they broke my covenant though I was a husband to them, declares the Lord.

This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after that time. I will put my law in their minds and write it upon their hearts.

I will be their God, they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor or man his brother saying know the Lord because they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest declares the Lord for I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more.

[25 : 55] under the old covenant when Micah was writing these words if someone sinned they broke the law they were under the condemnation of God.

But Hebrews 9 tells us Christ through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God so as to now cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

And now for this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant by means of death for the redemption of the transgression under the first covenant that those who are called may receive the promise of the internal inheritance.

through the death of the Lord Jesus upon the cross of Calvary God fully subdued our sin and our iniquities.

He as it were he crushed them under his feet and so we're able to say there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

[27 : 10] And it's on this basis that Micah affirms that promise before God that's very precious. You will hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

and again you think well what a picture. I remember watching one of the Transformers films but you see where the point is.

When the evil Transformers they were sort of alien robot type things that came into the world when they were defeated and things the remnants were thrown into the pit the deep trench of the sea because they were down well and again not to be recovered.

And really when you think about that that picture of being thrown into the depths of the sea not to be recovered the picture of our sins hurled into the depths of the sea just just just amazing isn't it that that is how the Lord deals with us and again we seem to read in Psalm 103 where we read as far as the east is from the west so far has God removed our sins from us not to be seen again not to be held to our account and again that is so wonderful who will bring any charge against those who God has chosen it is God who justifies who is he that condemns Christ Jesus who died more than that who was raised to life he is at the right hand of

God and he's also interceding for us and so when the enemy of our souls points and says you are guilty say yes I am but my sin has been dealt with upon the cross of Calvary I own it no more my Lord has been gracious and merciful to me I am forgiven who is a God like our God who doesn't turn away from us forever because of our sin he turns towards us in compassion he seduce our sin crushes them underfoot he throws them into the deepest part of the ocean so we are no longer condemned but we know that fellowship with God he is no fearsome judge he is a loving heavenly father that we embrace and then finally who is a God like ours who keeps his promises

[30 : 53] Micah goes on to affirm you will be true to Jacob you will show mercy to Abraham as you pledged an oath to our fathers in days long ago and again we can think of how faithful God was to Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to the patriarchs and all the way through he promised Abraham that he would be blessed I will make you into a great nation I will bless you I will make your name great and you will be a blessing I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you and God repeated his promise to him and passed it down through the generations and the Jewish people the people of the covenant the people of the promise they proved unfaithful time and time again they rebelled against God did what was right in their own eyes fell into idolatry cried out to God for salvation

God heard and answered their prayers and what happened the cycle was repeated in their complacency they forgot God they followed the ways of the world and God brought judgment upon them again and now the people of God were facing judgment they were going to face exile they were going to be taken out of the land but even though the people were faithless God remained faithful people Micah says God swore these things to their fathers and the word he used literally means to be seven one to seven oneself that is to bind oneself to do a thing with a promise that it is seven times certain seven being the perfect number the wholeness completeness it was a promise God made long before the day of Micah a promise made to their fathers from days of old and so even though the people had failed

God would never fail even though they'd been unfaithful to him God would not forget them and I love what the apostle Paul says to his believing friends in Philippi being confident of this that he who begun a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus and what is

that good work well in the book of Romans he writes and we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him those who have been called according to his purpose those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his son that he might be the first born among many brothers those he predestined he also called those he called he also justified those he justified he also glorified there will be many times we fail we stumble but we will never out sin the love of God we will never slip out of his grasp we are secure in the

Lord Jesus Christ so again who is a God like our God who sets himself to be to the purpose of bringing into full glory his sinful fallible unfaithful people he will in the end prove himself true and merciful this wonderful God of grace and what then are we to do with such a God especially when we realize how poor and needy we are how should we respond well again I believe Micah gives us a clue faced with the realization of an approaching judgment Micah puts the things we've just studied and perhaps when he writes do do not gloat over me my enemy though I have fallen I will rise though I sit in darkness the Lord will be my light because I have sinned against him I will bear the Lord's wrath until he pleads my cause and establishes my right he will bring me out of the light I will see his righteousness he will bring me out into his light I will see his righteousness we stumble we fall we fail so often but we have a loving faithful God and we can come to him freely and confidently approaching that throne of grace knowing we have a high priest who is able to sympathise in all our infirmities we have a great high priest who intercedes on our behalf and if we sin we have an advocate with the father even Jesus

[37 : 24] Christ the righteous one here we see a God who delights in mercy John says if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves the truth is not in us but if we confess our sins what yeah he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness who is who is a God like our God let's pray our God and our Father we again thank you for just being able to look briefly this evening at this question of who is a God like you Father Father you are gracious and merciful loving kind showing your loving kindness

Father we thank you that you are the faithful God who keeps his promises Father we thank you that you have called us as a people unto yourself and even though at times we may be poor examples of what it means to be the Lord's people Father we thank you that you do not cast us off but you continue to show your love and you continue to work in us and sanctify us according to your truth and so Father we thank you for the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives making us what you want us to be Father we thank you that there will be a day when sin will no longer have any rule over us a day when we will be in your presence when we will be with the Lord Jesus that we will be like him and Father we thank you that we read that whoever has this hope purifies himself just as he is pure Father again we pray for the forgiveness of our sins and we do so with that confidence that you will forgive and that you will as it were set us upon the road again and one day you will bring us unto glory Father we thank you for such a glorious hope and ask oh God that we might be encouraged as we go into this new week that we go forward as your people and we go with our purpose of living for you and living to your glory and seeking to speak to others concerning the good news of the Lord Jesus asking oh God that you will use us in the salvation of others so that we might rejoice before angels in heaven over sinners who repent

Father we are not doing these things to bring glory upon ourselves but to bring glory to you that people might see the beauty and the loveliness of the Lord Jesus that they might worship and know him Amen where we going to