

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Micah 6:1-8

English Standard Version

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, July 19, 2015

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, July 19, 2015**, is from **Micah 6:1-8**. Please Note: Some churches will only study **Micah 6:3-8**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses *Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further* to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the **International Bible Lessons Commentary** website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. A podcast for this commentary is also available at the **International Bible Lesson Forum**.

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Micah 6:1-8

(Micah 6:1) Hear what the LORD says: Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice.

Micah wrote of a vision where the LORD and His people appeared together in court. The LORD, the Creator of all, called the court into session before the mountains and the hills, and the LORD called upon the mountains and the hills to hear the testimony of His people, Israel, as well as His own testimony about the relationship between them. The mountains and the hills were used as a metaphor and represented a law court or a jury, for they had “seen” the behavior of God and His people. They could affirm that everything God said was true and God was in the right. From reading the Bible and studying history, we would also judge God was in the right in the controversy between God and Israel.

(Micah 6:2) Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the LORD, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the LORD has an indictment against his people, and he will contend with Israel.

God called the highest hills as well as the depths of the earth to consider what they had witnessed and what they would hear from God and His people. The LORD would not ignore the rebellion and transgressions of His people; after patiently calling them to repent through the preaching of His prophets, God would now contend with

them and show that His coming punishment of His people was necessary and just. The LORD would bring charges against His people. As the Supreme Judge and King over all, He would show all creation and His people that He had done and would only do what is right, just, and merciful – for God is love.

(Micah 6:3) “O my people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me!

The LORD asked His people to tell Him and “the court” (the symbolic mountains and the hills with ears to hear and eyes that had seen all that God had done) what He had done that would lead Israel to turn from Him and the good laws that He had given them to bless them. God wanted them to say how His requirements of them had so oppressed or failed them that they felt the need to turn to the idols of their neighbors and to practicing sins that these idols and their neighbors inspired them to commit.

(Micah 6:4) For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

Next, the LORD reminded them of what He had done for them. God had made them into a mighty kingdom after He had led them from slavery in Egypt and into the Promised Land. God did so with mighty miracles. God sent them

Moses as their primary leader. God also sent them additional leaders to meet all of their needs: Moses, Aaron and Miriam are emphasized by name. God led them and met all of their leadership needs when they left Egypt.

(Micah 6:5) O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD.”

King Balak wanted Balaam to curse Israel, but God stopped Balaam when God spoke to Balaam through a donkey and revealed to him an angel with a sword standing in his way on the path. Though Micah did not mention Joshua by name, “what happened from Shittim to Gilgal” was Joshua leading God’s people through the parted waters of the Jordan River, even as Moses had led them through the parted Red Sea. Shittim was the last place the Israelites camped before crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Gilgal was the first place they camped after crossing the Jordan River. God wanted them to recall all of His saving acts in their behalf.

(Micah 6:6) “With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

Micah represented the reply or asked the questions that God's people should have asked if they felt convicted of their sins against God in "court." After admitting that God was right and acknowledging God's saving acts, Micah "asked" in behalf of God's people how they should come before God as their King and Savior, as the holy God that they had offended by their transgressions. The list of sacrifices Micah named goes from the least valuable to the most valuable. The offerings are sent to God by burning them as whole burnt offerings; therefore, the offerings are no longer available for use by the giver. One year old calf would be worth less than a fully mature bull or ox capable of working.

(Micah 6:7) Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

King Solomon sacrificed thousands of rams to God while at the same time leading God's people into idolatry through his marriages to forbidden foreign wives. The religious rituals of rebellious King Solomon would not satisfy God or reverse the ruin that his idolatry and promotion of idolatry brought upon Israel. Child sacrifice was always forbidden by God, but encouraged by the priests who represented the idols that God's people had begun to worship. Therefore the people confused their idol

worship practices with the true worship of the true God. Only God's sacrifice of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, can bring God's just and merciful forgiveness of our transgressions and save our souls.

(Micah 6:8) He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah reminded God's people of the Law of God revealed through Moses; the Law that they would obey if they had true faith in the true God. Rituals and sacrifices could not substitute for right living to please God or to avert His just punishment for their sins. God wanted His people to treat others right, justly, and mercifully, as He treated to them. God wanted them to humbly walk with Him as had Moses and Joshua and other godly leaders of His people. We are reminded of how Adam and Eve walked with God in the garden before they rebelled against God.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What are some of the things that God did that wearied His people?
2. What land or kingdom was called "the house of slavery"?

3. Who did God send to lead His people from “the house of slavery”?
4. Which of the offerings for transgression listed in Micah will please the LORD?
5. What does God require from His people?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly
International Bible Lesson.

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