



Micah

The Prophet Micah was a contemporary of prophets Isaiah, Amos and Hosea during the 700s BC tumultuous period when both Israel and Judah were disobeying God's covenant. Micah addresses the common problem of religious ritual, whereby the people thought that if they participated in the ceremonial rituals then surely God would be pleased. Micah stresses that God is not pleased, no matter how outrageously large these rituals may be (thousands of rams, etc).

Like Amos who came a few years before, Micah also targets the people who abuse power and privilege. But Micah also targets the *victims* of society's elite for taking their pleas to idols, instead of God. Micah sets the record straight, "**The Lord has told you what is good and this is what He requires of you to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God**" (6:8). Most of the people and the leaders do not repent so Micah warns that invaders will come and dismantle the two Jewish nations and exile God's people. The Jews failed to understand that God cares more about His people than He does about any real estate. God will give up His Home on earth, as many Jews consider Jerusalem to be, if this is what it takes to eventually win back His people.

The book of Micah still ends with an encouraging theme because he reaffirms that God will not leave the survivors in exile forever, a remnant will eventually be allowed to return and rebuild the nation (4:7). Furthermore, Micah provides clear identification of Bethlehem as the place where the coming Messiah will be born (5:2).

Micah's main message is that God does not want religious rituals as mere ceremonies from His people. No, God wants His people to live lives that are characterized by justice and a deep zeal for love and mercy in close relationship with Him. It is only in this context that our "rituals" have acceptable meaning and reflect true worship of our loving God.