

MICAH - A TEACHER'S GUIDE

THE CENTRAL QUESTION:

What does this book/story say to us about God?

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
 - b. Why did He record it for our study?
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1. Does the book of Micah add anything significant to your picture of God? Would the message about God be just as clear without this small book? Amos, Isaiah and Hosea were contemporaries of Micah. Do you see any similarities in their writings?

Micah (short for *Mikayah*, the name means “Who is like Yahweh?”) prophesied between 739 - 686 BC - under kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. (See Micah 1:1) He probably began shortly after Hosea and Isaiah with whom he was contemporary. Amos was a few years earlier. Micah wrote to both kingdoms—Judah and Israel. He was a country person, and a champion of the poor. Nothing is known about Micah except what we have in the book itself, and possibly the statement in Jeremiah 26:18,19.

“‘Who is like the Lord?’ is the meaning of the name ‘Micah,’ which is a shorter form of ‘Micaiah.’ He was one of the eighth-century prophets, together with Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, and Jonah, and is mentioned in Jeremiah 26:18. Micah’s home was Moresheth Gath (1:14) in the lowlands of Judea, about 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem. He was a man of the countryside who was concerned for other countrymen.” (*Believer’s Study Bible*)

“Micah, like Amos, is a countryman. But unlike Amos he does not come from a bare desert; his home at Moresheth is green and fertile, with abundant cattle—grazing, cornfields and olive-groves. He has the sturdy independence of the man who lives on the land, and, being close to scenes of battle, he is contemptuous of those who ‘sit at ease in Zion’ and do not see the dangers.” (*The Four Prophets - Micah*, J. B. Phillips)

“Micah is certainly one of the lesser known prophets. Even prophetic books of similar size, such as Amos, Joel, and Jonah, seem to be more famous. Part of the reason is that these three divine spokesmen have interesting personal stories in their books, which add human interest. Micah lacks such tales. In particular Micah seems to live in the large shadow of his famous contemporary, Isaiah. I believe this obscurity is unjustified. Micah has an important message that deserves to be heard and that will richly reward the believer who takes the time to listen carefully to what he says.

“Micah’s book is unique in the way it is structured. The typical prophetic book follows a certain overall pattern made up of two major parts. Part one is doom or judgment. Often the doom is divided into two sections—a specific doom on God’s people and a general judgment or doom on surrounding nations. The second major part of the pattern is hope—hope that God will restore what has been lost in judgment. Typically, the doom section is longer than the hope section. Micah deviates from this usual pattern in that while most prophetic books go through only one doom—to—hope cycle, Micah repeats the cycle three times in his book. These three cycles are found in 1:2–2:13; 3:1–5:15; and 6:1– 7:20. Each of the three sections begin with the word hear or listen (1:2; 3:1; 6:1), and each of their hope sections contain the motif of shepherding (2:12; 4:8; 5:4 (NIV); 7:14) (see Alexander et al., 145). This pattern ties the book together in a unity that may not be apparent at first....

“Micah’s introduction (1:1) tells us that he prophesied under three Judahite kings—Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Although the prophet does comment on the northern kingdom of Israel, this statement shows that Micah clearly sees himself as a Judahite. His book demonstrates a deeply sensitive understanding of the social ills of his day, particularly as they relate to the southern kingdom. Jotham (750–735 B.C.), Ahaz (735–715), and Hezekiah (715–686), although of the same dynasty, had very

different characteristics. Jotham, according to 2 Kings (15:34, 35), did what was right in the sight of the Lord, even though his people still sacrificed and burned incense in the high places. Ahaz, his son and successor, was one of the most evil of Judahite kings. He even sacrificed his own children in the fire (2 Chron. 28:3) and did not shrink from putting an idol into the temple precincts itself (2 Kings 16:10-12, 14-17). Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, did all he could to reverse the religious evil endorsed by his father. He earned the praise of the writer of 2 Kings (18:5), 'There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him.' The bulk of the material in Micah seems to relate to the period of the first two of these three kings.

"The dominant foreign power during the period of Micah was Assyria. Both Judah and Israel, as well as their neighbors, were heavily influenced by what Assyria did. Most nations at that time had conscripted citizen armies, but Assyria had a large full-time professional army, which none could match. As conquests were made, mercenaries were hired on as soldiers as well. Supported by heavy tributes exacted from subjugated territories, this professional army was free to enforce Assyrian rule and make new conquests.

"Three significant events took place during the era of Micah that were related to Assyria (see Barker, 1370):

"1. In 734-732 B.C. Tiglath Pileser III led a campaign against parts of Israel and Judah, as well as Syria and the land of the Philistines. Assyria won a resounding victory. All the nations had to pay tribute, but the northern kingdom of Israel suffered the most and lost most of its territory (2 Kings 15:29).

"2. In 722-721 B.C. Shalmaneser V of Assyria besieged the northern kingdom's capital of Samaria (2 Kings 17:5, 6). The city eventually fell to Sargon II, and large numbers of its inhabitants were deported.

"3. During the reign of Hezekiah in 701 B.C., Judah unwisely joined a revolt against Assyria. King Sennacherib overran much of the country, but Jerusalem was spared in the end.

"Micah's book must be read in the light of these events. The prophet was obviously a keen observer of current events, and God's message to him speaks to his contemporary situation." (*Bible Amplifier Series - Micah*, Jon Dybdahl)

"Micah received his messages from the Lord in the reigns of Jotham, 750 (beginning his sole reign in 740) -731 B.C., Ahaz, 735(731)-715 B.C., and Hezekiah, 729(715)-686 B.C., kings of Judah (1:1). The historical background is relevant. Under Uzziah (Azariah), 792(767)-740 B.C., the southern kingdom of Judah, together with the northern kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam II, had prospered and gained territory while Assyria was weak. Assyria revived under Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B.C.), who made both Damascus and Israel his vassals by 739 B.C. These vassals tried to enlist Ahaz of Judah to join in rebellion against the Assyrians, but Ahaz told the Assyrians of their plan. As a result Ahaz became dependent upon the Assyrians and introduced Assyrian worship to Jerusalem. Damascus fell to the Assyrians (732 B.C.), as did Samaria, capital of Israel, in 722 B.C. The Assyrians, who had started deporting the people of Israel ten years before, vigorously continued the work of deportation. Hezekiah of Judah tried to secede from the Assyrian Empire, and as a result his country was overrun in 701 B.C., though Jerusalem was not taken (cf. 2 Kin. 19:34-37).

"In an age in which men's religion was making no difference to their lives, Micah insisted that the God of Israel and Judah expects His people 'to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God' (6:8). The result of living in defiance of God's covenant had always been clear (cf. Deut. 28:15-68). Disobedience brings judgment. Nevertheless, Micah sees beyond the fall of Israel and the Exile of Judah to the incarnation of Christ and to the blessings of the millennial kingdom. As the prophecy ends, he marvels at the grace of the God who forgives." (*Believer's Study Bible*)

“Much of Micah’s prophecy is very severe in tone, though it does contain much poetic beauty similar to that of Isaiah. In many ways the Book of Micah is a ‘sister-book’ to Isaiah. It has been called ‘Isaiah in shorthand’....

“The theme of the prophecy is sin, judgment, and restoration. This can be seen by the fact that the book consists of three discourses, each of which sets forth (1) the people’s sin, (2) God’s judgment, and (3) God’s ultimate restoration of His sinning people.” (*King James Version Study Bible*)

“The Book of Micah has numerous points of similarity with the much longer Book of Isaiah. In fact, virtually the same passage is found in both books (compare Micah 4:1-3 with Isa. 2:2-4). Some attribute this unusual phenomenon to one prophet borrowing from the other, but it is difficult to argue for the priority of either Micah or Isaiah from the texts. More likely both prophets made use of the same source, perhaps a psalm of confidence.

“It is often asserted that the Book of Micah was written by his disciples and followers many years after his ministry. However, the tone of Micah’s prophecies against Jerusalem indicates that they had not yet come to pass. It appears that Micah prophesied that the Assyrians would destroy Jerusalem in the same way they had already destroyed the city of Samaria (compare 1:6 with 3:12). While the Assyrians under Sennacherib did lay siege against Jerusalem in the campaign of 701 B.C., they did not finally destroy the city. Jerusalem was not destroyed until over a century later by the Babylonians (586 B.C.). It is almost inconceivable that disciples of Micah would collect, record, and promote his prophecies long after the fact if those prophecies had not come to pass as anticipated. It is far more likely that the prophecies of Micah were compiled by the prophet as an anthology of his own lengthy preaching career.” (*Nelson Study Bible*)

“Within Israel and Judah during this time, a shocking contrast between the extremely rich and the oppressed poor developed due to the exploitation of Israel’s middle class (Micah 2:8, 9) by greedy landholders (Micah 2:1-5). The oppressors were supported by Israel’s corrupt political and religious leaders (Micah 3). Because of this failed leadership, the whole nation became morally corrupt and ripe for judgment (Micah 6:9-16; 7:1-7).

“God raised up Assyria as His wrathful rod against His sinful people (Isaiah 10:5-11). As Micah predicted (Micah 1:2-7), Samaria did fall to the invading Assyrians. Judah felt the force of divine judgment when Sennacherib marched through the Shephelah (Judah’s western foothills) and up to the gate of Jerusalem, as Micah had also foretold (1:8-16).” (*New Geneva Study Bible*)

“‘Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah.’ These words of Jeremiah (26:18), confirmed by elements in the book of Micah itself, contain practically all that we know of the life of the prophet Micah. Moresheth (probably the same as Moresheth-Gath of 1:14) was a small town in SW Judah, not yet positively identified by archaeologists. Micah was active in Judah from before the fall of Samaria (1:2-7) in 722 B.C.E.; he lived under Ahaz (735-715) and Hezekiah (715-687) and was thus a contemporary of Isaiah, and he experienced (apparently) the devastation brought on by Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah in 701 B.C.E. The heading of the book (1:1) adds the name of King Jotham (742-735) in dating the prophet’s ministry, but nothing in the book confirms so early an appearance.

“Micah is grouped with other relatively brief prophetic books in the collection called the Twelve or the Minor Prophets. Among this group, Micah is sixth in the Hebrew canon and third in the Greek ordering (after Hosea and Amos). Both of these orderings were apparently intended to place Micah with contemporary books.” (*Anchor Bible Dictionary*)

“**Style.** Micah’s introductory statement (1:1) is in prose form, but the entire compilation of prophecies after that is poetry. **The advantage of poetry to his contemporaries was that the**

rhythmic message would be easier to remember. The disadvantage to us is that poetry is more difficult to translate into another language without loss. Micah depends on shortened units of thought (with the nonessential words implied), plentiful parallelisms and nameplays (since name meanings were important to Hebrews), and poetic prepositions. He also uses an abundance of word pictures. For instance, instead of abstractly saying the Lord will conceal or otherwise make invisible our sins, he declares: 'You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea' (7:19). He cannot avoid the abstract word 'sins,' but he concretely depicts for us their burial like weights into the ocean depths, never to be recoverable again." (*Spirit Filled Life Study Bible*)

"A *Taunt or Lament over Judah* (Micah 1:10–16)—of extraordinary obscurity—describes the destruction of the lesser towns of Judah, either as already suffered or as to come, evidently in the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib (701 B.C.E.). In most cases the lines of the poem are constructed on the principle that the name of the town is predictive, through punning, of its fate. The puns cannot, of course, be reproduced in translation; the effect is as though one said: 'Ashdod shall be ashes.'" (*Anchor Bible Dictionary*)

"The major theme of Micah's prophecies is that the people of Judah had become as spiritually and ethically corrupt as the apostate northern kingdom of Israel. The heirs to David's throne were practicing the same abominations as the illegitimate kings of the northern kingdom (see Mic. 1:5; 2 Kin. 16:1–10). A time of prosperity had hardened the rich, who were oppressing the poor to the extent of denying them justice in the courts (Mic. 2:1, 2; 6:9–12; 7:2,3). The priests and prophets were performing the religious rituals as prescribed by Yahweh, but for a fee. Micah cried out against the ethical and social corruption of his society. He announced impending disaster from the Lord and called for more than external repentance. He called God's people to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God (Mic. 6:8)." (*Woman's Study Bible*)

"It has been noticed as remarkable that this book commences with the last words of another prophet, 'Micaiah the son of Imlah' (1 Kings 22:28): 'Hearken, O people, every one of you.'" (*Easton's Bible Dictionary*)

"Prophets use words to remake the world. The world—heaven and earth, men and women, animals and birds—was made in the first place by God's Word. Prophets, arriving on the scene and finding that world in ruins, finding a world of moral rubble and spiritual disorder, take up the work of words again to rebuild what human disobedience and mistrust demolished. These prophets learn their speech from God. Their words are God-grounded, God-energized, God-passionate. As their words enter the language of our communities, men and women find themselves in the presence of God, who enters the mess of human sin to rebuke and renew.

"Left to ourselves we turn God into an object, something we can deal with, some *thing* we can use to our benefit, whether that thing is a feeling or an idea or an image. Prophets scorn all such stuff. They train us to respond to God's presence and voice.

"Micah, the final member of that powerful quartet of writing prophets who burst on the world scene in the eighth century B.C. (Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos were the others), like virtually all his fellow prophets—those charged with keeping people alive to God and alert to listening to the voice of God—was a master of metaphor. This means that he used words not simply to define or identify what can be seen, touched, smelled, heard, or tasted, but to plunge us into a world of *presence*. To experience presence is to enter that far larger world of reality that our sensory experiences point to but cannot describe—the realities of love and compassion, justice and faithfulness, sin and evil . . . and God. Mostly God. The realities that are Word-evoked are where most of the world's action takes place. There are no 'mere words.'" (*the Message* - intro to Micah)

2. What kind of society lies awake at night planning evil? Micah 2:1,2. Look at God's response.

Micah 2:1: “Woe to those who imagine wicked schemes,
Who work out evil plots while still in bed;
When daylight dawns they act—
For the power lies in their hands.
² They covet fields and seize them.
They covet houses and take them for themselves.
They break a man and his household;
Yes, they crush him and all his rightful inheritance.” (*Phillips*)

This sounds vaguely like what we hear on the morning news every morning! The suggestion here is that things have become very corrupt. Anybody who has influence or authority is taking advantage of all those who have none. God doesn't seem to hesitate in telling what He thinks of such a situation and He makes it clear that He intends to bring it to an end!

3. What do you think of the description of preaching in Micah 2:11? Can you imagine anyone preferring this type of preaching? How many congregations today are getting that kind of message?

Micah 2:11: ¹¹ “The sort of prophet this people wants is a windbag and a liar, Prophesying a future of ‘wines and spirits!’” (*Phillips*)

¹¹ “These people want the kind of prophet who goes about full of lies and deceit and says, ‘I prophesy that wine and liquor will flow for you.’” (*GNB*)

¹¹ “Liars and frauds may go around and say,
‘We will preach to you about wine and liquor.’
They would be just the type of preacher you want.” *God's Word*

¹¹ “If a man were to go about uttering
Windy, baseless falsehoods:
‘I'll preach to you in favor of wine and liquor’—
He would be a preacher [acceptable] to that people.” *Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures*

¹¹ “If a prophet came along and deceived you by telling you that there will be plenty of wine and leisure living, he would be just the prophet you would like to hear.” *Clear Word*

Is this passage essentially different than 2 Timothy 4:3,4? How many preachers today just preach what their congregations want to hear? If you were a pastor and your salary depended on the good will of your congregation, what would you preach? The real question that arises is, Do the people know that the preacher is preaching lies? Would they actually prefer lies (known lies) to the truth if the truth is not pleasant? Compare Jeremiah 14:13-15; 23:25-27; 28:1-17; Ezekiel 13:1-7.

2 Timothy 4:3,4: ³ “The time will come when people will not listen to sound doctrine, but will follow their own desires and will collect for themselves more and more teachers who will tell them what they are itching to hear. ⁴They will turn away from listening to the truth and give their attention to legends.” *Good News Bible: Today's English Version*

4. How could it be that false prophets, dishonest judges, and mercenary priests had become the norm for the land: Micah 3:5-11?

⁵ “As for the prophets that lead my people astray—
Those who cry, Peace, so long as their mouths are full
But declare war against them who will not feed them—
The Lord says this:

⁶ It shall be night for you, night without vision.
You shall know darkness in which you can divine nothing!
The sun shall set upon the prophets,

⁷ And their day shall end in darkness.
 The seers shall be disgraced,
 And the diviners openly shamed.
 All of them will hold their hands over their mouths,
 For no answer comes from God.
⁸ But as for me, I am filled with power
 Through the Spirit of the Lord!
 I can see what is just and right,
 And I have the strength to declare it,
 To tell Jacob plainly of his transgression,
 And Israel of his sin.
⁹ Listen to this, you leaders of Jacob,
 And rulers of the house of Israel,
 You who hate what is right and twist what is straight;
¹⁰ Who build Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with crime.
¹¹ Her leaders dispense justice—at a price,
 Her priests teach—what they are paid to teach,
 And her prophets see visions—according to the fees they receive.
 Yet they rest happily upon the Lord and say,
 Is not the Lord in our midst?
 No disaster could ever strike us.” *Phillips*

Once again as in the question above, if the normal means of supporting the clergy falls apart, then there may be a terrible temptation to do what this verse suggests. Each person tries to find ways to make a living from his “profession!” If people stop behaving from principle and begin operating simply on a selfish basis, then anything can happen. Such practices had been specifically prohibited: Exodus 23:8; Deuteronomy 16:18-20.

5. Compare Micah 4:2,3 with Isaiah 2:2-4. Who do you think borrowed from whom? Does this example of “plagiarism” destroy your confidence in either of these prophets? Why does the message of these two passages seem to conflict with Joel 3:10?

Micah 4:2,3: ² and their people will say,
 “Let us go up the hill of the Lord,
 to the Temple of Israel’s God.
 He will teach us what he wants us to do;
 we will walk in the paths he has chosen.
 For the Lord’s teaching comes from Jerusalem;
 from Zion he speaks to his people.”
³ He will settle disputes among the nations,
 among the great powers near and far.
 They will hammer their swords into ploughs
 and their spears into pruning knives.
 Nations will never again go to war,
 never prepare for battle again. *Good News Bible: Today’s English Version*

Isaiah 2:3,4:

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 “Let us go up the hill of the Lord,
 to the Temple of Israel’s God.
 He will teach us what he wants us to do;
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For the Lord's teaching comes from Jerusalem;
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Isaiah says that these words were given to him by God. (Isaiah 2:1) Can we be sure that Micah borrowed them from Isaiah? Much of Jude is in 2 Peter 2. Almost ninety percent of Mark is in either Matthew or Luke. Isaiah 37 is essentially verbatim the same as 2 Kings 19. 2 Samuel 22 is identical to Psalms 18. Are these cases of plagiarism? Some will claim that there were no plagiarism laws in those days. That is probably true, but does there have to be a law to make it wrong? If it is wrong to borrow other people's original work, then it is wrong whether or not there is a law saying so!

Does the Bible contradict itself? What do we do with Joel 3:10, after reading the passages from Isaiah and Micah?

Joel 3:10: "Hammer the points of your ploughs into swords and your pruning knives into spears. Even the weak must fight." *Good News Bible: Today's English Version*

6. What is implied by Micah 4:11,12? What experiences do you think are being referred to? What did the heathen nations looking on think when it was necessary for God to discipline His people?

Micah 4:11,12: ¹¹ "Many nations have gathered to attack you. They say, 'Jerusalem must be destroyed! We will see this city in ruins!' ¹² **But these nations do not know what is in the Lord's mind.** They do not realize that they have been gathered together to be punished in the same way that corn is brought in to be threshed." *Good News Bible: Today's English Version*

¹¹ "Now, great nations are gathered against you and they say,
Let her be defiled that we may feast our eyes upon Zion.

¹² **But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord,**

Nor do they understand his plan.

For he will collect them up

Like sheaves for the threshing floor." *Phillips*

It is clear that the heathen nations misunderstood God's act of discipline for His people. Since in ancient times it was the custom to judge the power of a "god" by the current status of his people, when Yahweh needed to discipline His people, it appeared that their God was powerless to protect them. We might ask why God would use other heathen nations to discipline His own people, but that is what He chose to do. If God had moved in and done the disciplining Himself, conditions might have become even worse!

7. Did the Jews regard Micah 4:13-5:1 as their key text?

4:13: The Lord says, "People of Jerusalem, go and punish your enemies! I will make you as strong as a bull with iron horns and bronze hoofs. You will crush many nations, and the wealth they got by violence you will present to me, the Lord of the whole world.

5:1: "People of Jerusalem, gather your forces! We are besieged! They are attacking the leader of Israel!" *Good News Bible: Today's English Version*

¹³ Get up and thresh, people of Zion.

I will make your horns as hard as iron

and your hoofs as hard as bronze.

You will smash many nations into small pieces.

You will claim their loot for the LORD,
their wealth for the Lord of the whole earth. *God's Word*

Doesn't this sound like a key text that the Pharisees would want to quote when thinking of the Romans? What did God intend for these verses to mean?

“4:13 Believe that God will eventually funnel the world's wealth to those who will serve His kingdom's concerns and interests.” (*Spirit Filled Life Study Bible*)

Notice that even modern Christians are looking forward to God's bringing to them the wealth of the world! The “health and wealth gospel” has always been popular!

8. What do you understand is the context of the famous Messianic prophecy in Micah 5:2? Why would God give such a message of promise or warning to people who were acting as the people were acting at this time?

2 “The Lord says, “Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are one of the smallest towns in Judah, but out of you I will bring a ruler for Israel, whose family line goes back to ancient times.” (*GNB*)

At a time when disaster is being prophesied for Judah, similar to what had recently taken place in Israel, it was important for God to point out that He had plans for these people and this place for hundreds of years to come. At times it seemed that the Davidic line of kings had disappeared and all the promises that had been given to David would fail. But then the Messiah was born, just as Micah had predicted in the region of Ephrathah, in the town of Bethlehem, and all that changed. The eternal King was a descendant of King David and will represent his line forever. So the prophecy served as a reminder for those who cared enough to read it and believe in Yahweh that He still had plans for the children of His friends Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob or Israel.

9. Is it clear what God really wants of us as described in Micah 6 & 7? What does God want us to bring when we come to Him? According to Micah, is the solution to the whole ceremonial system to be sure that you bring the “correct blood” so as to satisfy the legal requirements of the law? Or does Micah suggest that we should do what is implied by believing in the real meaning of the death (the blood) of the Son or Messiah? How do you fit these verses with Exodus 6:2-9; Leviticus 1:1-3,10,14; 2:1; 3:1; 5:11; Deuteronomy 10:12-22; 1 Samuel 15:22,23; Psalms 51:16-19; Isaiah 1:10-20; 29:13; Jeremiah 3:7-18; 7:16-26; 29:10-14; 31:31-34; Hosea 6:4-6; Amos 5:21-24; Matthew 9:13; 12:7; Romans 2:17-29; and Hebrews 9:16-10:4? Has God made it clear in Scripture what He really wants from us?

It has always proven to be easier for humans to offer “sacrifices” than to really change their behavior. Micah helps us to realize that “sacrifices” will never take the place of doing what is right. Many prophets reflect that same idea. **From the beginning God has asked, as His most basic request, that we come back to Him, get to know Him, and become more like Him.** Offerings and sacrifices have never been more than a simple “stop-gap” substitute for what God really wants. God wants us to learn that sin leads to death. Sometimes it leads to the death of innocent victims. These ideas were supposed to be suggested by the offering of animal sacrifices. But they came to mean something very different. People came to believe that if they were willing to offer a sacrifice it almost paid for their sin!

10. It is absolutely essential to understand the meaning here because we know historically that the ceremonial system can be turned into a terrible curse, just as the Sabbath can be turned into a curse. On the other hand the ceremonial system and the Sabbath, properly understood, can be a tremendous blessing. What would make the difference between the Sabbath or the law being a blessing or a curse even in our day?

It is almost guaranteed that if you don't understand fully why you are doing something it will be turned into something very different than what was intended before long. Virtually every religious practice has been perverted in one way or another. But if our religion is understood as a joyous opportunity to get to know our Father and God better, it is much less likely that we will lose its meaning. Why was this apparently so hard to understand? Do you see any evidence that the people in Micah's and Isaiah's day were delighted about their growing relationship with Yahweh? Think of all that Jesus and Paul said about how the Jewish system had been corrupted in their day. How can we prevent this from happening in our day? Has it already begun to happen?

11. If David, Hosea, Jeremiah, or Micah, after living their lives and writing what they did, could have lived until the time of Christ, would they have understood and gotten the message of the cross?

This is supposed to be a thought or discussion question. Certainly these men seemed to get the picture at times in their writings. But even if they had been present and had gotten the message, would it have made any difference for the millions of others who didn't get the message? If Christ couldn't manage to get the message across, do we think that someone else could have done a better job?

12. Does your religion ever seem like one of the following:

Micah 6:3:

"...wherein have I wearied thee?" (*KJV, Darby, ASV*)

"...How have I wearied you?" (*New American Bible, NASB, NASB 1995; NKJV*)

"...In what have I wearied you?" (*RSV, NRSV*)

"...have I wronged you in any way at all?" *Contemporary English Version*

"...How have I tried your patience?" *God's Word*

"...Tell me why your patience is exhausted!" *The Living Bible, NLT*

"...How did I make you tired of me?" (*NCV*)

"...how have I made you tired of me?" *New Jerusalem Bible*

"...How have I been a burden to you?" (*GNB, NIV*)

"...In what way have I been a burden to you?" *Clear Word*

"...How have I injured you?" *Moffatt*

Does God intend for us to enjoy our relationship with Him? Does He want it to be just a routine ceremony? How do you think He would change your church to make it more fun?

13. Does God pour out anger and retribution on nations who disobey Him? How do you explain this kind of language in scripture? (Micah 2:7; Isaiah 9:19; 10:6; 13:13; Jeremiah 10:10; 32:37; Ezekiel 7:19; Romans 1:18,24,26,28; 4:25; include Revelation 14:10,11) How do you fit these with Romans 2:4; John 15:15; 1 John 4:18 etc.? If you substitute righteousness for "justice" in these passages (as you should) it doesn't make any sense! Does God have to punish the wicked in order not to be considered weak?

Was God ever tempted to give up on the descendants of Abraham? What did He ultimately accomplish through them? If we understand the correct meaning of God's wrath as discussed repeatedly in Scripture, then it should be apparent that when nations turn from God, He is forced finally to turn from them. It is very serious to be abandoned by God. Look at what happened to Jesus on the cross! (See Matthew 27:46)

For a more complete discussion of God's wrath look at **Judges - A Teacher's Guide #9; Hosea - A Teacher's Guide #13; Major Study Questions for Judges #2; Psalms - a Teacher's Guide - #6; Nahum - A Teacher's Guide - #2,3; 2 Samuel - A Teacher's Guide #5**

14. After reading this book is it clearer what God wants of us? Does Micah 6 & 7 help? What do you think of a God who chooses as His highest aim to walk humbly with His children?

It certainly should be clear that God is looking for love, kindness, mercy, righteousness, justice, and care for our fellow humans. If we can't get this part right, then all of the rest of whatever we call our "religion" is pretty worthless.

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