

2025 BIBLE STUDY SERIES
THEME: "HOPE IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTY"

January 8, 2025

FREEDOM FOUND IN FORGIVENESS:
"God's Forgiveness"
Micah 7:1-20 (7:19)

Topics

- Reflection Questions
- Important Emphasis
- Key Terms
- Scripture Reference
- Outline
- Introduction
- Background and Context
- Exploring The Text
- Check For Understanding
- Life Application

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

A. In one word, how would you describe the current state of the world?

B. Have you experienced unfair treatment in the U.S. court system by a police officer, an attorney, or a judge? If so, briefly describe the situation and the ultimate outcome.

IMPORTANT EMPHASIS

Micah 7:1-20

Forgiveness! Desmond Tutu says that without Forgiveness there is no Future. So, when we don't engage in forgiveness it is impacting our future. First this impacts us *Vertically* **Matthew 6:14-15** and **Psalms 51:10**. Then it impacts us *Horizontally* **Matthew 6:12**.

Forgiveness is the wiping out of an offense from memory; Once eradicated the offense no longer conditions the relationship between the offender and the affronted, and harmony is restored between the two. *Anchors Bible Dictionary*

There is **human Forgiveness** and then there is **Divine Forgiveness**

Forgiveness in etymology in the Hebrew it is nasa to take away(sin) and salach, to pardon. God is always the subject of the latter. In the LXX (Greek version of the Hebrew Text)it extends this to 20 terms.

God is characterized early in life of Israel as a God who both forgives and holds the guilty accountable. An appeal to God for forgiveness is a regular feature of intercessory prayer. **Exodus 34:9 and Exodus 32:2**

Forgiveness has a physiological imagery. This was reflected through the sacrificial system. This process was meticulous. There were designated people to render the sacrifice and how it should be prepared for God. **Lev. 4:20 and Romans 12:1-2**

There are wonderful narratives, episodic encounters that demonstrate the forgiveness of God. This minor prophet Micah surely doesn't take a back seat. It is rare for a prophet to be mentioned in the OT outside of the book attributed to them. There is no mentioning of Hosea, Amos, Jeremiah or Ezekiel. **Jeremiah 26:1-19** They cite the example of Micah. Micah prophesied the destruction of the temple during the reign of Hezekiah.

Even in the unrighteous conduct or behavior of the people God still has a promise of deliverance that outpace the perversion of the people. **Micah 2:12-13 , 4:1-8, 5:2-9 and Micah 7:1-20**.

Micah was an implacable opponent of what he regarded as the inhumane policies of the rulers of Jerusalem. Micah therefore written in the 7th chapter in first person. During this time all honesty and decency have vanished no one can be trusted and even families are arenas of strife.

The prophet looking in vain for justice as a hungry man might look for food after all the fruit of the trees have been harvested.

Let's look at some key elements of Micah

- **Peculiar nature of God**
- **Pardoning of the Guilty**
- **Passing on of Grace**

Micah 7:18b Because he delights in unchanging love.

God Forgives them and God forgives us!!

- **God's belief in us**
- **Guilt is beneath His Feet**
- **Grounds for banishing our Sin**

The gulf between God and humanity can be bridged is an occasion for awe, wonder and gratitude!

KEY TERMS

Bashan
Briar
Compassion
Desolate
Enemy
Euphrates
Faith
Faithfulness
Forefathers
Forgiveness
Gilead
God

Hope
Iniquities
Justice
Lament
Light
Lord
Love
Pardon
Perish
Piety
Punishment

Remnant
Salvation
Scepter
Sea
Shepherd
Sin
Thorn Hedge
Trust
Unchanging
Watchmen

Scripture Reference (Micah 7:1-20 NKJV)

¹Woe is me! For I am like those who gather summer fruits, Like those who glean vintage grapes; *There is no* cluster to eat Of the first-ripe fruit *which* my soul desires. ²The faithful *man* has perished from the earth, And *there is* no one upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood; Every man hunts his brother with a net. ³That they may successfully do evil with both hands—The prince asks *for gifts*, The judge *seeks* a bribe, And the great *man* utters his evil desire; So they scheme

together. ⁴ The best of them *is* like a brier; The most upright *is sharper* than a thorn hedge; The day of your watchman and your punishment comes; Now shall be their perplexity. ⁵ Do not trust in a friend; Do not put your confidence in a companion; Guard the doors of your mouth From her who lies in our bosom. ⁶ For son dishonors father, Daughter rises against her mother, Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; A man's enemies *are* the men of his own household. ⁷ Therefore I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; My God will hear me. ⁸ Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; When I fall, I will arise; When I sit in darkness, The Lord *will be* a light to me. ⁹ I will bear the indignation of the Lord, Because I have sinned against Him, Until He pleads my case And executes justice for me. He will bring me forth to the light; I will see His righteousness. ¹⁰ Then *she who is* my enemy will see, And shame will cover her who said to me, "Where is the Lord your God?" My eyes will see her; Now she will be trampled down Like mud in the streets. ¹¹ *In* the day when your walls are to be built, *In* that day the decree shall go far and wide. ¹² *In* that day they shall come to you from Assyria and the fortified cities, From the fortress to the River, From sea to sea, And mountain *to* mountain. ¹³ Yet the land shall be desolate Because of those who dwell in it, And for the fruit of their deeds. ¹⁴ Shepherd Your people with Your staff, The flock of Your heritage, Who well solitarily *in* a woodland, In the midst of Carmel; Let them feed *in* Bashan and Gilead, As in days of old. ¹⁵ "As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders." ¹⁶ The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; They shall put *their* hand over *their* mouth; Their ears shall be deaf. ¹⁷ They shall lick the dust like a serpent; They shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth. They shall be afraid of the Lord our God and shall fear because of You. ¹⁸ Who *is* a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights *in* mercy. ¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea. ²⁰ You will give truth to Jacob *And* mercy to Abraham, Which You have sworn to our fathers From days of old.

Outline

- I. **The Prophet's Pain (Micah 7:1-6)**
 - A. Finding Good Fruit is Hard
 - B. Finding a Good Man is Hard
 - C. Finding a Good Brother is Hard
- II. **The Prophet's Prediction (Micah 7:7-10)**
 - A. There is Hope in the Lord
 - B. There is Deliverance in the Lord
 - C. There is Vindication in the Lord
- III. **The Prophet's Proclamation (Micah 7:11-13)**
 - A. The Lord will Rebuild
 - B. The Lord will Restore

- C. The Lord will Renew
- IV. The Prophet's Prayer (Micah 7:14-17)**
 - A. Trust the Lord as Our Shepherd
 - B. Trust the Lord as Our Providence
- V. The Prophet's Praise (Micah 7:18-20)**
 - A. Praise the Lord for His Mercy
 - B. Praise the Lord for His Forgiveness
 - C. Praise the Lord for His Faithfulness

INTRODUCTION

The People Must Come to God

The prophetic messages of Micah occurred during a tumultuous period in Judah, particularly under King Manasseh's reign. Micah criticizes the people for forgetting God's past deliverance from Egypt and for their reliance on empty rituals rather than genuine righteousness. He emphasizes that God desires justice, kindness, and humility from His people. Amidst the pervasive violence and corruption, Micah expresses his despair over the apparent loss of the faithful. However, he finds hope in God's promise of salvation and restoration. Despite mockery from others, Micah remains confident that the people of Judah will eventually return from exile and rebuild Jerusalem. He reassures them that God will guide them back to their homeland, reminiscent of their exodus from Egypt. Ultimately, Micah praises God for His unwavering love, forgiveness, and compassion, which offer hope for the future.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The superscription of Micah's prophecy provides important information for the book as a whole. Micah hails from the city of Moresheth in the Shephelah region of Judah. The Shephelah was the lowland region extending from the base of the Judean Mountains to the coastal plains. Micah, unlike Isaiah, was not from the religious and political epicenter, Jerusalem. However, Micah ministered during the eighth century BC, like his contemporary Isaiah. Most importantly, Micah was a servant of the Lord's word. He, like Isaiah, acknowledged his sin along with the sin of the people to whom he prophesied. (**Isaiah 6:5-7; Micah 7:9**)

The book's message, summarized by Micah's name, which in Hebrew means "who is like God," and the question "Who is a God like you?" at its conclusion (Micah 7:18), emphasizes the incomparable nature of God in holiness, power, and love. Micah's prophecy alternates between doom and hope, focusing on divine judgment and deliverance. His preaching was impactful, with one commentator noting that Micah succeeded in bringing about a change of heart in the king and people.

Micah's ministry, dated between 700 and 650 B.C., addressed the people of Israel and Judah, particularly criticizing oppressive landgrabbers and corrupt political and religious leaders. As world-weary King Solomon stated in **Ecclesiastes 1:9**, "What has been again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun." From the 8th century to the 21st century the headlines

The corruption is universal in the 8th century, and the chosen remnant, driven from every human confidence, turns to God; triumphs by faith over her enemies; is comforted by God's promises in answer to prayer, and by the confusion of her enemies, and so breaks forth into praises of God's character.

EXPLORING THE TEXT

I. The Prophet's Pain (Micah 7:1-6)

A. Finding Good Fruit is Hard

¹Woe is me! For I am like those who gather summer fruits, like those who glean vintage grapes; There is no cluster to eat of the first-ripe fruit which my soul desires.

Here the prophet Micah highlights the scarcity of morally upright individuals in the land. He views himself as a lone remaining grape after the harvest, indicating his isolation in _____. The term *kayits* [Hebrew for "summer"] is used to differentiate between late figs and superior early figs, symbolizing a lack of _____. [godliness, holiness]. References to **Hosea 9:10** and **Amos 8:1-2** further illustrate his disappointment in finding only mediocre devotion instead of exemplary piety.

B. Finding a Good Man is Hard

²The faithful man has perished from the earth, And there is no one upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood; Every man hunts his brother with a net. ³That they may successfully do evil with both hands—The prince asks for gifts, The judge seeks a bribe, And the great man utters his evil desire; So they scheme together. ⁴The best of them is like a brier; The most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge; The day of your watchman and your punishment comes; Now shall be their perplexity.

The prophet describes a lack of _____ and upright men, highlighting widespread corruption and violence. Leaders and judges act with greed and malice, resulting in a society where even the best

individuals are harmful (sharper than a “**thorn hedge**”). The word “thorn” means something that causes annoyance or irritation. For example, “He’s a thorn in my flesh.” A “thorn hedge” is made up of trees, shrubs, or bushes that have thorns. The word “hedge” means to enclose or protect with a dense row of low trees or shrubs. It can also mean to confine or obstruct, preventing freedom of movement or action. The latter definition is most likely what is meant by the prophet Micah. Future judgment and confusion are prophesied as a result.

C. Finding a Good Brother is Hard

*⁵ Do not trust in a friend; Do not put your confidence in a companion;
Guard the doors of your mouth From her who lies in your bosom.*

⁶ For son dishonors father, Daughter rises against her mother, Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; A man’s enemies are the men of his own household.

Micah warns against trusting even close friends and some family members declaring that a man’s enemies are the men of his own household.

Commentator Adam Clarke argues for the validity of Micah’s warnings:

Trust ye not in a friend—These times will be so evil, and the people so wicked, that all bonds will be dissolved; and even the most intimate will betray each other, when they can hope to serve themselves by it.

On this passage, in the year 1798, I find I have written as follows:—

"Trust ye not in a friend.—Several of those whom I have delighted to call by that name have deceived me.

"Put ye not confidence in a guide.—Had I followed some of these I should have gone to perdition.

"Keep the door of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.—My wife alone never deceived me."

It is now twenty-seven years since, and I find no cause to alter what I then wrote.

Luke recorded the words of Jesus as he warned the disciples and the 1st century Christians to guard against pharisaic hypocrisy (**Luke 12:53**).

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. How does Micah 7:2-4 depict the moral and societal degradation of Israel?

2. Can you see parallels in today's society? List some. (7:2-4)

3. What is the impact of **sin** on relationships, according to Micah? (7:5-6)

EXPLORING THE TEXT**II. The Prophet's Prediction (Micah 7:7-10)**

- A. There is Hope in the Lord

⁷ Therefore I will look to the Lord;

Therefore I will look unto the Lord (NKJV)

But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord; (NASB)

—Because things are so, I will trust in the Lord more firmly. (**Proverbs 3:5-6**)

- B. There is Deliverance in the Lord

I will wait for the God of my salvation;

I will wait for God more patiently, and more confidently expect to be supported, defended, and saved (**Psalms 27:14; Isaiah 40:31; Exodus 14:13-14**).

- C. There is Vindication in the Lord

My God will hear me. ⁸ Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; When I fall, I will arise; When I sit in darkness, The Lord will be a light to me. ⁹ I will bear the indignation of the Lord, Because I have sinned against Him,

Until He pleads my case And executes justice for me. He will bring me forth to the light; I will see His righteousness.¹⁰ Then she who is my enemy will see, And shame will cover her who said to me, "Where is the Lord your God?" My eyes will see her; Now she will be trampled down Like mud in the streets.

Do not rejoice over me, O mine enemy—The captive Israelites are introduced as speaking here and in the preceding verse. The enemy are the Assyrians and Chaldeans; the fall is their [the Israelites] idolatry and consequent captivity; the darkness, the calamities they suffered in that captivity; their rise and light, their restoration and consequent blessedness.

To rejoice over the fall or miseries of any man, betrays an evil spirit. There have been instances where people professing to hold a very pure and Christian creed, having become unfaithful and fallen into sin, their opponents, who held a very impure and unchristian creed, have gloated with "Ha, ha! so would we have it!" and have shown their evil spirit more fully, by giving all possible publicity and circulation to such accounts.

I will bear the indignation of the Lord—The words of the penitent captives, acknowledging their sins and praying for mercy.

Until he plead my cause—And woe to the slanderers, when God undertakes to plead for the fallen who have returned to him with deep compunction of heart, seeking redemption in the blood of the cross.

Then she that is mine enemy—This may refer particularly to the city of Babylon.

Shall she be trodden down—Literally fulfilled in the routing of Babylon by the Persians in 539 B.C. and its consequent total ruin. It became as mire; its walls, formed of brick kneaded with straw and baked in the sun, becoming exposed to the wet, dissolved, so that a not a trace of the city remains except a few bricks dug from under the rubbish, and show the perishing materials of which the head of this proud empire was composed. (**Proverbs 26:27**)

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

4. What does Micah's statement "Therefore, I will look to the Lord" in verse 7 reveal about his faith despite the surrounding corruption? (7:7)

5. How do you respond to the idea of bearing the Lord's indignation due to your sins?

EXPLORING THE TEXT

III. The Prophet's Proclamation (Micah 7:11-13)

A. The Lord will Rebuild

¹¹ In the day when your walls are to be built, in that day the decree shall go far and wide.

In the day that thy walls are to be built—This refers to Jerusalem; the decree, to the purpose of God to deliver the people into captivity. "This shall be far removed." God having promised their return.

B. The Lord will Restore

¹² In that day they shall come to you from Assyria and the fortified cities, From the fortress to the River, From sea to sea, and mountain to mountain.

In the context of Israel's chaotic history, this verse offers a powerful prophecy concerning the future restoration of the land. Micah paints a vivid picture of a time when not only will the Israelites return to their own land, but they will also witness former enemies flocking to them from all corners of the earth.

C. The Lord will Renew

¹³ Yet the land shall be desolate Because of those who dwell in it, And for the fruit of their deeds.

Jerusalem's **walls** will be rebuilt, and Israel will be renewed (7:11–13). Although, however glorious the prospect of restoration, the Jews are not to forget the visitation on their "land" which is to intervene for the "fruit of (evil caused by) their doings" (compare **Proverbs 1:31; Isaiah 3:10, 11; Jeremiah 21:14**).

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

6. How do these verses about restoration and rebuilding resonate with your personal journey?

7. Are there areas in your life that need rebuilding or renewal?

EXPLORING THE TEXT

IV. The Prophet's Prayer (Micah 7:14-17)

A. Trust the Lord as Our Shepherd

¹⁴ Shepherd Your people with Your staff, The flock of Your heritage, Who well solitarily in a woodland, In the midst of Carmel; Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, As in days of old.

God would shepherd them back to their land just as He did when they came out of Egypt (7:14–17).

Feed thy people—Prayer of the prophet, in the name of his people to God, which, as God fulfils believing prayer, is prophetic of what God *would* do. When God is about to deliver His people, He stirs up their friends to pray for them.

Feed—including the idea of both pastoral *rule* and care over His people (Mic 5:4), regarded as a flock. Our calamity must be fatal to the nation, unless Thou of Thy unmerited grace, remembering Thy covenant with "Thine heritage" (**Deuteronomy 4:20; Deuteronomy 7:6; Deuteronomy 32:9**), shalt **restore** us.

thy rod—the shepherd's rod, wherewith He directs the flock (Psalm 23:4). No longer the rod of punishment (**Micah 6:9**).

Bashan—famed for its cattle (Psalm 22:12; Amos 4:1).

B. Trust the Lord as Our Providence

¹⁵ “As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders.”

¹⁶ The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; They shall put their hand over their mouth; Their ears shall be deaf.

¹⁷ They shall lick the dust like a serpent; They shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth. They shall be afraid of the Lord our God and shall fear because of You.

As in the days—This is the answer to the prophet's prayer; and God says he will protect, save, defend, and work miracles for them in their restoration, such as he wrought for their fathers in their return from Egypt to the promised land.

The nations shall see and be ashamed—Whether the words in these verses (verses 15-17) be applied to the return from the Babylonish captivity, or to the prosperity of the Jews under the Maccabees, they may be understood as ultimately applicable to the final restoration of this people, and their lasting prosperity under the Gospel.

They shall lick the dust like a serpent.—The doom of the determined enemies of the Lord and His people recalls that of Satan, the great enemy, as personified by the serpent. “Dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life” (**Genesis 3:14**).

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

8. How do you perceive God as your shepherd? (7:14)

9. What areas in your life require God's guidance and provision? (7:14)

EXPLORING THE TEXT

V. The Prophet's Praise (Micah 7:18-20)

A. Praise the Lord for His Mercy

¹⁸ Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever; Because He delights in mercy.

Who is a God like unto thee—Here is a challenge to all idol worshippers, and to all those who take false views of the true God, to show his like.

B. Praise the Lord for His Forgiveness

¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea.

Because he is such a God—

He pardons iniquity.

He passes by transgression.

He retains not his anger forever.

He delights in mercy.

"He will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." He will plunge them into eternal oblivion, never more to come into sight or remembrance; like a stone dropped into the "depths of the sea."

C. Praise the Lord for His Faithfulness

²⁰ You will give truth to Jacob And mercy to Abraham, Which You have sworn to our fathers From days of old.

Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob—

Here we see God's promises to Jacob and his descendants, particularly the blessing through Abraham's seed that would benefit all families of the earth. It highlights the fulfillment of these promises through the coming of Christ, who serves as a light to the Gentiles and the glory of Israel, offering blessings and turning individuals away from iniquities. Repentance and remission of sins are now preached in his name to all nations.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

10. How does the reaction of the nations in these verses impact your understanding of God's power and authority?
-
-

LIFE APPLICATION**Think about it—**

- What do these verses teach you about God's character, particularly His mercy and forgiveness?
- How can you embrace and reflect these attributes in your own life?
- How do the themes of justice, mercy, and restoration throughout Micah 7 challenge or encourage you in your faith journey?

RESOURCES

Adam Clarke's Commentary.

Brown, Jamieson-Fausset, A Commentary: Critical, Experimental, and Practical on the Old and New Testaments.

Evans, Tony. 2019. *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary*. Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

Exploring the Old Testament, p 164

Gavigan, James, Brian McCarthy, and Thomas McGovern, eds. 2005. *Minor Prophets*. The Navarre Bible. Dublin; New York: Four Courts Press; Scepter Publishers.

Holman Bible Publishers. 2017. *CSB Disciple's Study Bible: Notes*. Nashville, TN: Mangum, Douglas, ed. 2020. *Lexham Context Commentary: Old Testament*. Lexham Context Commentary. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Barker, Kenneth L., John H. Stek, Mark L. Strauss, and Ronald F. Youngblood. 2008. *Zondervan NIV Study Bible: Notes and Introductions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Longman, Tremper, III, ed. 2010. *Daniel Thru Malachi*. Vol. 7. Layman's Bible Commentary. Barbour Publishing.