

Are We What We Appear?

Micah 6: 1-8

Micah was a prophet during the time of Isaiah and King Hezekiah. These were deceptive times in Israel. The people were very devoted to religious ceremony and traditions, but their lives apart from Temple worship told a much different story, (greed, indulgence, and idolatry). Outwardly they were religious and upright, but inwardly they were rebellious and undone. The object of religion took precedence over obedience and genuine worship.

We have the mechanics of religion worked out, but what about obedience? We know how to dress the part, talk the talk, and be religious, but what do our hearts reveal? Does our relationship and desire for Jesus extend beyond the worship service?

This challenge was given to Israel prior to the Babylonian captivity, but there is great application for us as well. The scene revealed in the text is that of a courtroom. The LORD has issued the charges against Israel. Let's take a moment to examine the [challenges](#) listed in the text as we consider the question: [Are We What We Appear?](#)

I. A Time of Consideration (4-5) – The people of Israel had turned their backs on God. They continued in religious practices, but had forgotten the Lord. Micah preached repentance to avoid God's judgment. God has called on them to consider what He has done for them. He is offering yet another opportunity to turn from their wicked ways. I'm glad we serve a long-suffering God. He has reminded them of four areas for consideration. They were to consider:

A. Their Past (4a) – [For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.](#) God reminded them of the bondage of their father's in Egypt. The people had grown fat in their prosperity from God's goodness and had forgotten where they had been. They were to consider how their father's worked under the heavy burdens of the task masters, how the children were destroyed, and the utter wickedness of the Egyptians.

- I have no desire to go back to the bondage of sin. There is nothing there for me. There is no glory or joy in the life I once lived. I do not dwell in the past, but once and awhile we ought to consider the bondage we were under. Satan was a brutal task master; the heavier the burden, the happier he was. Consider the lives that have been destroyed because of sin. It does us good to be reminded of where we have been brought from!

B. Their Purchase (4a) – For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; God reminded them of His mighty hand that brought deliverance. They were helpless and hopeless in themselves. They could do nothing about their situation, but one day God sent Moses, a representative of I AM.

- I remember the day that my Representative, my Redeemer came to me! Thank God He delivered me from my bondage to sin. Had Jesus not come, I'd still be lost and so would you! We must take time to consider our redemption, being purchased from sin through the blood of Christ.

C. Their Provision (4b) – and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. They were also reminded of God's divine guidance. He didn't simply secure their redemption; He led them out. God prepared Moses and others to lead the people. He parted the Red Sea, provided a cloud and pillar of fire, brought them through the wilderness, and provided water and manna in that barren land.

- Aren't you glad we are not alone? Take a moment to consider His guidance. He has never left or forsaken us! Our every need He does supply, our every step He does guide. We don't wonder about in darkness, but walk in the light of Jesus. What a Savior we have!

D. Their Preservation (5) – O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD. God also challenged them to consider His hand of protection and preservation. They were reminded of the conspiracy between Balak and Balaam, an effort to destroy Israel. God thwarted their plot and protected His people. He hadn't brought them out of the wilderness to be defeated by the enemy. He led them all the way to the Promised Land.

- We too ought to consider our preservation. We were loved of the Father so much that He sent His only begotten Son to die for our sin. Christ willingly bore our sin and shame upon the cross, purchasing our redemption. Those who come to Him by faith in salvation are sealed by the Holy Spirit. God has not brought us this far to forsake us now. We are kept by His mighty power, preserved in Christ! Eph.4:30 – And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. John 10:28 – And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

II. A Time of Confrontation (6-7) – The people were forced to consider the goodness of God. There is no doubt He had blessed them. They are now confronted with their sin. God knows the secrets of the heart. Notice:

A. Their Boasting (6a) – *Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God?* The people seem to have a bit of arrogance and indifference toward the Lord’s word. After all, they are His chosen people, the seed of Abraham. They had enjoyed God’s abundance so long that the thought of Him ever removing His divine hand was unimaginable. They literally thought a few sacrifices would satisfy God. Israel assumed, because of their heritage, they had received a “blank check.”

- It is dangerous to get too forward or presumptuous with God. He is holy and righteous and we must approach Him with reverence. I pray we never get to the place that we feel we’re above God’s judgment. We are His bride, but He expects us to behave as such!

B. Their Bargaining (6b-7) – *shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? ^[7] Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or 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?* They foolishly thought of bargaining with God. “Shall we bring a few calves as a sacrifice? Well if that isn’t enough, what about a thousand rams, or rivers of oil? What about the ultimate sacrifice, our firstborn?” They kept raising the bar hoping to appease God with their abundant sacrifice.

- Have you ever bargained with God? Lord I’ll give up this sin or that area in my life if you’ll answer my prayer. And if that isn’t enough, I’ll throw in this “pet sin” I’ve carried for years. We are not in a position to bargain with God! We must be willing to forsake anything that comes between us and His fellowship. How could we ever offer Jesus enough to repay what He did for us on Calvary? It is impossible; don’t try!

C. Their Blindness – They never realized that God wasn’t as interested in sacrifices as He was their hearts. All the sacrifice in the world is futile if the heart isn’t right with God. *1 Sam.15:22 – And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.* (Illus. Saul’s blunder with the spoils of the Amalekites.)

- Good works or intentions will never replace an obedient heart. God is more concerned with your heart than He is the works of your hands. It is possible to do works that normally are pleasing to God and still be far away because the heart isn’t focused on Christ. Often we offer everything but what the Lord wants, our hearts. Give Him your best; give Him your life!

III. A Time of Consecration (8) – *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* They had

considered their redemption, been confronted about their rebellion, and now God reveals the consecration He requires. Our lives aren't about what we desire, but what God requires! These requirements involve three areas:

A. Their Labor – God required that we [do justly](#). We must understand that their standard of living had been compromised. They were consumed with greed and self indulgence, [Vv.10-12](#). They somehow had the idea that if their religious activity was OK, then nothing else mattered.

- We are ambassadors of the King everywhere we go and in whatever we do. The Christian is expected to live a life above reproach. Our lives, public and private, are a reflection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is no wonder many don't want to become a Christian. We are responsible to represent Christ well. [Eph.5:27 – That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish](#). We are not Christians only at church. May we represent Jesus well at all times!

B. Their Love – We are also required to [love mercy](#). This speaks of our compassion and care for others. There seems to be a lack of compassion in our day. We are far too quick to judge and much too slow to show mercy.

- The church needs to regain her compassion. We need a heart for people, regardless of whom or what they are. Jesus loved us when we were unlovable, (we still are at times), and we must love others as He does. [1 Pet.3:8 – Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous](#). We must love mercy.

C. Their Loyalty – Lastly the Lord requires that we [walk humbly with our God](#). That is enjoying a constant fellowship with Him, completely submitted to His will for our lives. This involves much more than an outward sacrifice; it involves sacrifice within the heart. God must be the priority in our lives. He should never have to “compete” with this world for our loyalty! This can only be achieved through total submission. We must want what God wants more than what we want. [Rom.12:1 – I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service](#).

Conclusion: The people appeared to be in pretty good standing with the Lord, but in reality, they were far from God. Things are not always as they appear. Often familiarity brings complacency. I hope that we haven't become so familiar with the mechanics of worship that we've left God out.

I want to draw closer to Him in these days. I trust you've considered your relationship with the Lord. Is it what it should be? Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus? He stands ready to meet either need.