

Text: Micah 7:14-20

Title/Truth: Lord's Table Service Remembrance: God forgives sinners

Date/Location: Sunday February 7, 2021 at FBC

Introduction

Offer time for salvation testimonies.

Hymn #369, 388, 392

Background: Micah is prophesying sometime between 740 – 686 B.C.

He delivers a prophecy to the nations and to the leaders of the southern and northern kingdoms of Israel. Then he makes a proclamation to the nation in general.

He ends with a marvelous prayer to God. Let's listen in: <read 7:14-20>

I. Asking God to Provide, 7:14-17

Micah asking for God to shepherd and feed His people once again.

Imagine the need for this in their sad situation—living in national disgrace, the north about to be destroyed, the south a while later dragged off to Babylon, a remnant of poor left behind with no effective governance.

Micah wants God to lead His people, not man. He desires that God provide nourishment for them in fertile pastures, in green regions of the land.

When the people came out of Egypt 700 years earlier, they saw God's hand in miracles. They saw judgments on Pharaoh, they saw the army of Egypt destroyed, they saw provision of manna and water and meat, and leadership and judgment, all in miracle form. And many a good providence came their way besides. But in verse 15, Micah focuses on the miraculous wonders God did (Psalm 78:12, Exodus 34:10).

The nations of the world will see all of this—when Jesus returns to shepherd His people in the Kingdom of Heaven, and God's provision for His people Israel—and these nations will stand in awed silence. They will look at their own military and economic

might and recognize that it is nothing. They will look at their “gods” and be ashamed. What God does will humiliate them. That will have to be a big display of God’s power, because the people of earth are very haughty. The result will be that, as verse 17 says, they will be afraid of the Lord and will fear Him. They will have a healthy respect for God—finally.

Transition

The remnant of Israel are those who will be shepherded and fed by God and elevated in the sight of the nations. They will be repentant because they will recognize their past rebellions against God and turn from them. They will seek God’s pardon. They will believe in the true God. This disposition indicates that they have become a spiritually saved people. The exercise of repentance and faith is the first step of the Christian life.

II. Relying on God’s Forgiveness, 7:18-20

The initial question is rhetorical—it states a fact that there is *no* God who is like the Christian God.¹ He is the God who:

1. Pardons iniquity. God “takes away” our guilt. He removes the sin from our record and the guilt that goes with it. Iniquity is often not exactly a synonym for sin—the bad things we do—but it refers to the *guilt* of those things. God removes that guilt from us.
2. Passes over transgressions. Those offences the people had done—God forgives it.
3. Does not retain anger forever. Although God was angry with His people for their sin, He always planned to pardon the penitent and restore the nation to a state of grace. Why? Because God...

¹ I write “Christian” on purpose. “Jewish” is accurate at this point in the history of the Bible’s narrative. But without a final sacrifice for sins, the Jewish religion falls short of because it does not provide the ultimate foundation of forgiveness in Christ, which Christianity does. Truly the Jewish God *is* the Christian God, but the Jewish faith does not recognize the truth that God is a trinitarian monotheistic God.

4. Delights in mercy. This is God's character. He takes pleasure in offering mercy. Mercy shows God's kindness, His greatness, His love, His faithfulness. Great offenses are forgiven by a greater God.
5. Will have compassion. What a kind and gracious God. Toward people who do not deserve compassion and mercy He shows it anyway.
6. Subdues iniquities. He will subjugate the sins and guilt of them so they cannot do us harm. Some translations have that He will tread our sins underfoot, utterly destroying them. They will have no power against us. They are like an enemy of our souls and need to be defeated. God will do that.
7. Casts all our sins into the depths of the sea. This is comprehensive, dear reader. That is, God will remove ALL of our sins by throwing them into the deepest ocean. The idea is that they are gone forever. There is no deep-sea submersible, nor sonar search vessel, that can find our sins again. They are gone as if into the Laurentian abyss or the Marianas Trench and its Challenger Deep, the deepest point known on earth. In fact, our sin is farther gone than that if it is washed away in Christ!

In the end, verse 20 says that God will give truth and mercy to His people, that which He promised in ages past. He will be faithful to His promises, and merciful to His people.

Conclusion

Read Isaiah 43:25 and Psalm 103:8-14.

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