

# Dr. Elaine Phillips, Micah, Prophet Outside the Beltway

## Session 7, Micah 6

### Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

#### 1. Abstract of Phillips, Micah, Session 7, Micah 6, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture excerpt from Dr. Elaine Phillips's teaching on Micah 6 focuses on a covenant dispute between God and Israel. **The lecture analyzes Micah's depiction of God's charges against the Israelites for their disobedience and broken covenant, highlighting God's past acts of faithfulness and the Israelites' failure to live justly and lovingly. Key themes include God's call to remember his past acts, the Israelites' inadequate responses, and the consequences of their actions. Dr. Phillips explores the challenging Hebrew text, offering interpretations of key verses and exploring the historical and theological context.** The lecture uses a verse-by-verse approach to explain Micah 6, covering the summons to a dispute, God's recounting of His acts of salvation, the Israelites' questions about proper worship, God's response emphasizing justice and faithfulness, and finally God's condemnation of Israel's continued wickedness and the resulting consequences. The overall message underscores the importance of remembering God's faithfulness and the need for righteous living.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Phillips, Micah, Session 7 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Minor Prophets → Micah).**



**Phillips\_Micah\_Session07.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Elaine Phillips' lecture on Micah 6.

#### Briefing Document: Dr. Elaine Phillips on Micah 6

**Overview:** Dr. Phillips' lecture focuses on Micah chapter 6, a pivotal chapter characterized by a covenant dispute between God and his people. This chapter is famous for verse 8 which sums up what the Lord requires of his people: "to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God". She emphasizes that this chapter builds on the previous themes in Micah and highlights the consistent pattern of God's grace and the people's repeated disobedience. The lecture emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical and theological background of the text.

#### Key Themes & Ideas:

##### 1. Covenant Relationship as Foundation:

- The entire chapter is rooted in the covenant relationship between the Lord and his people. This includes the concept of "my people" and their relationship with God.
  - Covenant involves blessings for obedience and chastisements for disobedience.
  - The prophets were called to address broken covenant when the people were disobedient.
  - The chapter is a covenant dispute, highlighting the broken covenant between God and Israel.
1. *"In the covenant relationship, it's the Lord and people that are in relationship...We're going to see God's mighty acts and his prophetic word for his people...Part of the covenant relationship is also being well aware that there are consequences as these people live within relationship."*

##### 2. The Covenant Dispute:

- Micah 6 opens with a formal covenant dispute, with the Lord as prosecutor and the people as defendants.
- Heaven and earth are typically called as witnesses in such disputes (referencing Deuteronomy and Isaiah 1), but in Micah 6, it is specifically the mountains and

hills that are called as witnesses. This may be a reference to the local terrain around Micah where his words would echo.

- The Lord begins by asking, *"My people, what have I done to you or for you? How have I wearied you? Answer me."* God is asking them to testify *against* him if they have anything to accuse Him of.
- This question is rhetorical, as the Lord then launches into a recital of His past acts of faithfulness toward them.
- 1. *"At the beginning of chapter six, when the Lord, through Micah, calls them into a covenant dispute, generally speaking, heaven and earth are called as witnesses...Here in the biblical narrative, it's mountains."*

*"My people, what have I done? And then, of course, the next preposition is interesting. What have I done to you or for you?"*

#### 1. **God's Faithful Acts:**

- The Lord reminds them of their deliverance from Egypt, using stronger wording for "brought up" to emphasize their arrival in the promised land, not just their escape.
- He reminds them that "I redeemed you from the house of bondage."
- He emphasizes the sending of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam as leaders, highlighting the unusual inclusion of Miriam in prophetic literature as a leader and prophet. The three leaders are presented as a sharp contrast to the current leaders who were corrupt and self-serving.
- Dr. Phillips notes that Miriam serves as a key figure in the redemption narrative: from watching over Moses as a child to teaching the song of deliverance.
- 1. *"For I brought you up from the land of Egypt...And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam...It's the only place in the prophets where we have all three of those together." "Miriam was a very interesting presence because from the time she stood on the bank of the Nile watching that little craft carrying Moses through the bulrushes, all the way to teaching the song of their deliverance..."*

#### 2. **The Call to Remember:**

- God calls them to "remember" His acts of faithfulness and the historical narrative.

- This includes what Balak, king of Moab, did and how Balaam, the son of Beor, answered him. The audience is meant to be aware of this entire interaction as well as how God intervened to turn the curses into blessings.
  - They are expected to "fill in the blanks," recalling God's provision and guidance during their wilderness wanderings (e.g., water from the rock, manna, etc.) and throughout their history, including key events such as Sinai, Kadesh, and the defeat of the Amorite kings.
  - They are also to remember the journey from Shittim to Gilgal. The crossing of the Jordan River was a reminder of how they were brought across on dry land (like the Red Sea), and they are to fear the Lord as a result.
  - They were also to remember the apostasy that occurred at Shittim and the negative connotations associated with the worship that took place at Gilgal.
  - The Lord's righteousness is demonstrated by these historical acts of deliverance and faithfulness.
1. *"Remember, my people, remember. Whoa, look what they're supposed to remember...remember what Balak, king of Moab, counseled and what Balaam, son of Beor, answered him." "...they should recall God's faithful provision between Egypt and the Promised Land as well, which included, well, God's righteous acts."*
  2. **The People's Response (Questions and Failed Liturgy):**
    - The people respond with questions about how to approach the Lord, seemingly in an attempt at an entrance liturgy. These questions show a flawed understanding of God's requirements.
    - They ask: *"With what shall I come before the Lord?... Should I come before him with burnt offerings, with year-old calves?"*
    - They then escalate to hyperbolic questions: *"Does the Lord desire...a thousand rams, myriads of streams of oil?...Should I give my firstborn for my transgression?"*
    - These questions suggest a possible sarcasm from Micah, portraying an audience with shallow memories and an emphasis on costly external rituals while ignoring inner transformation.

- The mention of child sacrifice highlights the dark side of Israel's history, and it may not be mere hyperbole. Dr. Phillips references Psalm 106, which speaks of child sacrifice.
  - The focus here is that they have the right questions but are going about them in the wrong way.
1. *"With what shall I come before the Lord? In other words, how should I enter into the Lord's presence?" "Does the Lord desire...a thousand rams, myriads of streams of oil, and then, should I give my firstborn for my transgression?"*
  2. **God's True Requirements (Micah 6:8):**
    - God's answer is succinct and profound. He states: *"He has told you, O Adam, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?"* (NRSV)
    - The translation in the provided text uses the word "Adam" instead of "human" to suggest a wider human responsibility.
    - The three requirements are:
      - **Doing Justice** (mishpat) – Acting fairly and rightly.
      - **Loving Kindness (hesed)** – Unfailing covenant love, acting out of a loyal, committed relationship.
      - **Walking Humbly (or circumspectly, wisely) with God** – Living in wise, decorum with God.
    - Dr. Phillips points out the rare instance of the phrase "loving hesed" used here and that it typically is represented as "doing hesed".
    - She also notes that despite focusing on the translation of "humbly", the main point is simply to *walk with God*.
    - She emphasizes that this does not negate the importance of sacrifice, but it highlights that true worship requires a correct heart as well.
  1. *"He has told you, O Adam... What does the Lord seek from you except doing justice and love of unfailing covenant love?...And be careful to walk with your God." "The main point is to walk with God. Walk with God. If we're walking with God, however that word is supposed to be translated, will be working itself out quite nicely."*

## 2. Accusations and Consequences:

- Following God's declaration, the chapter transitions to accusations of the people's wickedness and economic exploitation.
- They are guilty of *"treasuries of wickedness,"* cursed weights, deceptive scales, violence, deceit, and treachery.
- The Lord declares judgment, highlighting their lack of justice, love, and faithful walking with God. He will punish them according to the covenant curses.
- This includes not being satisfied in their eating, a dark and hopeless future, and their harvest will fail.
- The people are reminded of the covenant curses in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 27 and 28.
- Their enemies will overrun the land. The harvest of grain, wine, and oil will fail.

*"Her rich men are filled with violence. Her inhabitants have spoken falsehood. Her tongue is treachery." >\*"You will sow and not reap...You will tread the olive and not anoint with oil, and from new wine you shall not drink."\**

## 1. The Example of Omri and Ahab:

- The chapter concludes by highlighting the people's perverse commitment to the "statutes of Omri" and the "deeds of the house of Ahab."
  - This references the idolatry of the Omri dynasty, which embraced pagan religious practices. Jezebel's introduction of Baal worship is explicitly mentioned.
  - The dynasty is presented as embracing the wealth and socio-economic advantage at the expense of the nation's moral and spiritual health.
  - This is an ironic juxtaposition, as they cannot follow God's instructions but eagerly follow that of the Omri dynasty.
  - Their choice is what leads to destruction, humiliation, and reproach.
1. *"The statutes of Omri have been kept...and every deed of the house of Ahab, well, you've walked according to their counsel. And I am giving you to destruction and your inhabitants to hissing, and you will bear the reproach of my people." "Socio-economically it appeared to be good. Religiously, horrible."*

**Concluding Thoughts:** Dr. Phillips concludes by reminding her audience that they are no better than the Israelites and are also guilty of falling away from God. She states that people must be mindful to not fall into the wider culture's values at the expense of God's. She concludes that even after being called to "do justice, love kindness and walk humbly" they fall back into destructive and self-serving patterns. She sets the stage for the next chapter by reminding them that despite all of this, there is still chapter 7 to cover.

## 4. Phillips, Micah, Session 7, Micah 6

### Micah Chapter 6 Study Guide

#### Quiz

1. What is the primary focus of Micah chapter 6, and what theological theme underlies it?
2. In the opening verses of Micah 6, who or what is called to be a witness in the covenant dispute? How is this different from the usual formula for covenant witnesses?
3. What does the Lord declare about His actions towards Israel in verses 3-5 of Micah 6, and why is this declaration significant?
4. According to Micah 6, what event from the past is Israel called to remember, and why is this particular memory important in the context of the chapter?
5. What question do the people of Israel pose in Micah 6:6-7, and what does the nature of their question suggest about their understanding of God?
6. What response does God give through Micah in verse 8, and what are the three key elements of this response?
7. In Micah 6:9, what is the challenging word and why is its translation difficult?
8. According to Micah 6:10-12, what specific sins and injustices are the people of Israel guilty of?
9. What are the consequences outlined by the Lord in Micah 6:13-15, and what do these punishments reveal about God's response to their disobedience?
10. According to Micah 6:16, what specific king's statutes and whose house's deeds are the people adhering to, and what does this choice reveal about them?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The primary focus of Micah chapter 6 is a covenant dispute between God and His people. The underlying theological theme is the broken covenant and the consequences of Israel's disobedience.
2. The mountains and enduring foundations of the earth are called to be witnesses in the covenant dispute in Micah 6. This is different from the usual formula, which calls heaven and earth as witnesses.



3. The Lord declares that He brought them out of slavery in Egypt, redeemed them, and sent them leaders, Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. This declaration is significant because it highlights God's faithfulness and actions on their behalf.
4. Israel is called to remember what Balak, king of Moab, counseled, and what Balaam, the son of Beor, answered him. This is important because it reveals how the Lord has consistently turned curses into blessings for Israel.
5. The people ask what they should bring before the Lord. They are asking about the proper sacrifices to bring to the sanctuary. This suggests they misunderstand what God truly desires, focusing on rituals over justice and obedience.
6. God's response in verse 8 is that He requires doing justice, loving unfailing covenant love, and walking carefully with Him. This response emphasizes moral conduct and covenant faithfulness as more important than ritualistic sacrifice.
7. The challenging word is the one that can be translated "rod" or "tribe." It's difficult because the text can be read as describing the Lord's voice or as a description of the Lord's people.
8. The people of Israel are guilty of economic exploitation, dishonest scales, violence, deceit, and treachery. These sins are contrary to God's requirements of justice and love.
9. The consequences are weakness, ravaging, and deprivation: They will eat but not be satisfied and not reap what they sow. These punishments reveal that God's response to their disobedience was to remove the blessings promised in the covenant.
10. The people are adhering to the statutes of Omri and the deeds of the house of Ahab, a dynasty known for idolatry and injustice. This choice reveals their disregard for God's law and their adoption of sinful cultural practices.

## Essay Questions

1. Analyze the significance of the covenant dispute in Micah 6, and discuss how the prophet uses the legal framework of a covenant lawsuit to highlight Israel's broken relationship with God.
2. Explore the themes of remembrance and forgetting in Micah 6, examining how Israel's failure to remember God's past faithfulness contributes to their present disobedience.

3. Compare and contrast the people's understanding of worship in Micah 6:6-7 with the Lord's response in verse 8. How does this reveal the true nature of worship that God desires?
4. Discuss the role of leadership in Micah 6, comparing the iconic leadership of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam with the corrupt and unjust leaders of Micah's time. How does this comparison impact the overall message of the chapter?
5. Analyze the prophetic message of judgment in Micah 6, examining the nature of the punishments described and how they reflect the covenant curses associated with disobedience.

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Covenant:** A binding agreement between two parties, in this case, between God and His people, outlining the terms of their relationship with stipulations, responsibilities, and consequences.
- **Covenant Dispute (Rib):** A legal challenge or indictment brought by God against Israel for their covenant violations and unfaithfulness.
- **Unfailing Covenant Love (Hesed):** A term that describes God's steadfast love and commitment to His covenant with Israel.
- **Justice (Mishpat):** Righteousness and equity as defined by God's law. This word describes God's way of setting the world to right, and a standard that people are called to emulate.
- **Torah:** The first five books of the Hebrew Bible, also known as the Law of Moses. This includes the stipulations of the covenant and the manner of worship.
- **Burnt Offerings (Olah):** Sacrifices offered to God, usually in the form of animals, meant to atone for sins. This form of offering required the entire animal to be given to God.
- **Hyperbole:** The use of exaggeration for emphasis or effect.
- **Shittim and Gilgal:** Historical locations in the Israelites' journey from Egypt to the promised land. Shittim is the last stop before crossing the Jordan; Gilgal is the first place they camp in the promised land.
- **Omri and Ahab:** Kings of Israel who were known for their idolatry, injustice and disregard for the covenant. The dynasty of Omri was a particularly negative turning point in Israel's history.

## 5. FAQs on Phillips, Micah, Session 7, Micah 6, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ on Micah 6 based on Dr. Elaine Phillips' Lecture

**1. What is the significance of the covenant relationship in understanding Micah 6?**

Dr. Phillips emphasizes that Micah 6 is rooted in the covenant relationship between the Lord and His people. This relationship entails specific responsibilities, including knowing God's acts for them and adhering to His requirements. It also includes a clear understanding of blessings for obedience and consequences for disobedience. The prophets, including Micah, were called to address broken covenants, initiating disputes and bringing charges when the people strayed. This chapter is essentially a covenant dispute, built on warnings and historical vignettes from the previous chapters.

**2. Why does the Lord call upon the mountains and hills as witnesses in this covenant dispute?**

The summoning of mountains and hills as witnesses is a significant departure from the typical "heavens and earth" formula found in Deuteronomy and Isaiah. Dr. Phillips explains that mountains, known for their enduring and silent presence, serve as powerful personifications of God's creation, engaged in the dispute. It's a form of rhetorical device that may also be reflective of Micah's geographical context, where his words might have echoed. The mountains' role underscores the gravity and seriousness of the charges against the people, emphasizing how even the most steadfast aspects of creation are witnesses to their covenant breach.

**3. What are the primary charges the Lord brings against His people in Micah 6?**

The Lord's charges begin with a passionate appeal to His people to testify against Him, asking, "What have I done to you?". When they can't accuse Him, He reminds them of His mighty acts like bringing them out of Egypt, redeeming them, and sending them leaders such as Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. The core issue becomes their forgetfulness of God's faithfulness and their failure to learn from the past. Then, the chapter devolves into accusations of economic exploitation, dishonesty in business dealings (like the use of wicked scales and short measures), violence, deceit, and treachery which all violate the covenant. They've forgotten how to "do justice and love unfailing covenant love" which he asks of them.

4. **Why is the remembrance of the Balak and Balaam story significant in this context?** The Lord directs the people to recall the episode with Balak, king of Moab, and Balaam, son of Beor. This story is meant to remind them that God intervened to turn curses into blessings. However, it is also meant to highlight Balaam's subsequent wicked counsel in seducing the Israelites at Baal Peor, demonstrating the danger of prophets who prioritize personal gain over God's will. By asking them to remember the historical act of deliverance through the Jordan River after their time at Shittim and at Gilgal, he's demonstrating that they have again forgotten his mercy and faithfulness. The historical events are used as a mirror to expose the corruption and faithlessness of Micah's contemporary society.
5. **What is the purpose of the rhetorical questions posed by the people about how to approach God?** The questions about approaching God with burnt offerings, streams of oil, and even the sacrifice of a firstborn son, are not genuine expressions of a desire to worship correctly. Dr. Phillips suggests they may reflect sarcasm on Micah's part, showcasing the people's distorted understanding of worship. It is a mixture of panicked, frantic hyperbole, and a thinly-veiled ignorance of the essence of true devotion. It may even be pointing to the actual historical practice of child sacrifice among the Israelites. They focus on external rituals instead of the internal transformation that God requires. These questions highlight their reliance on empty religious forms and their utter lack of true covenant relationship.
6. **What does the Lord ultimately require of His people, as revealed in Micah 6:8?** The Lord responds to the people's questions with a concise, three-part requirement: "to do justice, and to love hesed (unfailing covenant love), and to walk carefully with your God." This verse encapsulates the core of covenant faithfulness. "Doing justice" emphasizes righteousness in their actions and relationships. "Loving unfailing covenant love" (hesed) refers to steadfast devotion and kindness towards God and others. "Walking carefully with God" implies a humble, circumspect, wise conduct that acknowledges His presence and guidance. It's meant to call them away from outward rituals toward true internal heart transformation.

7. **What are the main sins that the Lord accuses them of and what are their consequences?** Following the pronouncement of the true requirements in verse 8, the chapter devolves into a laundry list of their sins. These include economic exploitation, using dishonest weights and measures, amassing wealth through unjust means, violence, deceit, and treachery. The consequences of these transgressions include weakness, ravaging, and destruction. The people will eat but not be satisfied, sow but not reap, they will be economically ruined and productive efforts will be thwarted.
8. **Why is the reference to Omri and Ahab important in the concluding verses of Micah 6?** The reference to Omri and Ahab in verse 16 is a stark indictment of the people's misplaced allegiances. They failed to keep God's law and instead have wholeheartedly followed the statutes and deeds of these idolatrous rulers. Omri and Ahab, known for introducing Baal worship and embracing social-economic opulence, represent a history of rebellion and religious syncretism. The fact that the people faithfully kept the statutes of Omri, but not God's, shows how easily they stray from God's covenant and are swayed by cultural values of the world, leading to their ultimate destruction and humiliation.