

# **Dr. Perry Phillips, Micah, Prophet Outside the Beltway**

## **Session 8, Micah 7**

### **Resources from NotebookLM**

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

#### **1. Abstract of Phillips, Micah, Session 8, Micah 7, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

This is an academic lecture by Dr. Perry Phillips on Micah chapter 7. **The lecture provides a verse-by-verse exposition of the chapter**, exploring themes of societal decay, spiritual hopelessness, and eventual divine restoration. **Dr. Phillips uses various biblical and historical contexts to illuminate the text**, including agricultural practices and imagery from other biblical books. **He draws parallels between Micah's prophecies and the life of Jesus**, connecting the themes of judgment, redemption, and lasting covenant love. Finally, **he highlights the eschatological significance of Micah's prophecies, relating them to future events and the ultimate triumph of God.**

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Phillips, Micah, Session 8 – 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\_Session08.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. Perry Phillips' Session 8 lecture on Micah 7:

#### Briefing Document: Dr. Perry Phillips on Micah 7

**Introduction** This document summarizes Dr. Perry Phillips' eighth session on the Book of Micah, focusing on chapter 7. This chapter, while addressing the immediate societal problems of Micah's time, also offers hope and looks towards a future restoration. Phillips divides the chapter into sections that show a progression from lament to praise.

#### Key Themes and Ideas

##### 1. The Miserable Situation and Lack of Godliness (Micah 7:1-4)

- **Woe and Lament:** Micah begins with deep sorrow, using the phrase "Woe is me" (Holman Christian Standard Bible), highlighting the profound distress over the lack of godliness and moral decay in the land. This is more than just "alas"; it's a deep, personal grief.
- **Depleted Harvest:** Micah uses the metaphor of a harvest where even the gleanings are gone, emphasizing the complete lack of righteousness. There is nothing left for the poor, symbolically representing the disappearance of righteousness and compassion.
- "For I'm like one who when the summer fruit has been gathered after the gleaning of the grape harvest finds no grape cluster to eat, no early fig which I crave."
- **Echoes of Isaiah 5:** This image of the fruitless harvest mirrors the Lord's vineyard in Isaiah 5, where the vineyard fails to produce good fruit, demonstrating a direct parallel between the failure of the land and the failure of the people to live righteously.
- **Absence of the Godly:** The lack of gleanings signifies the absence of upright people. "The godly person has perished from the land, and there is no upright person among men." The Hebrew word *hasid* (godly) is linked to *hesed* (covenant love), implying that this covenant love is missing in the land.
- **Corruption and Oppression:** The social system has become corrupt, with rulers, judges, and elites oppressing the poor. They "lie in wait for bloodshed" and use a "net" of bribery, false prophecy, and idolatry to trap the righteous.

- "The prince also asks the judge for a bribe, and a great man speaks the desire of his soul, so they weave it together."
- **Complete Moral Breakdown:** Even the "best" among them is like a briar or thorn hedge, highlighting that there is no righteousness to be found.
- "The best of them is like a briar, the most upright like a thorn hedge."
- **Confusion and Judgment:** The "thorn hedge," meant to define boundaries and protect, has become a source of confusion (a play on words between "mesuka" and "mevuka"), leading to panic and subjugation. This is a reference to the breaking of boundaries by the wealthy, who are more concerned about increasing their land holdings than justice. The watchman will not help against the coming disaster. The Lord is not guarding the city.

#### 1. **Societal Breakdown and Distrust (Micah 7:5-6)**

- **Complete Distrust:** Trust is broken down at every level. You cannot trust your neighbor, friend, or even your own family. The ascending scale of distrust highlights the severity of the situation.
- "Do not trust in a neighbor. Do not have confidence in a friend. From her who lies in your bosom, guard your lips."
- **Family Breakdown:** The family unit is fractured. Sons treat fathers with contempt, daughters rise up against mothers, and daughters-in-law against mothers-in-law. "A man's enemies are the men of his own household." This is a complete reversal of the traditional family structure and morality of the time.

#### 1. **Hope and Salvation from the Lord (Micah 7:7)**

- **Looking to the Lord:** Despite the overwhelming problems, Micah declares, "But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me." This is a turning point, where the focus shifts from despair to hope in God. This is the hinge verse of chapter 7.
- **Watchful Expectation:** Micah is watching for God's intervention, contrasting with the watchman in verse 4 who awaits destruction. This is similar to Habakkuk's response to seeing the coming Babylonian invasion.

#### 1. **Victory Over Enemies and the Lord as Light (Micah 7:8-10)**

- **Inclusio:** These verses are structured as an inclusio, where verses 8 and 10 share the same theme, bracketing verse 9. This highlights that God's victory will come.

- **Faith in Vindication:** Though experiencing the consequences of judgment, Micah's faith remains strong. "Though I fall, I will rise; though I dwell in darkness, the Lord is a light for me."
- **Light and Freedom:** The imagery of light contrasted with darkness evokes a prisoner breaking out of a dungeon into the sunlight. This represents the future freedom and vindication for Israel. There are connections between Micah's metaphor of light to Jesus being called the "light of the world."
- **Confession and Justification:** Zion confesses its sin, and then God will act as a defense attorney. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him, until he pleads my case and executes judgment for me."
- **Shaming of Enemies:** The enemies will be shamed for mocking God and Israel. Shame, in the Middle Eastern culture, is worse than death.
- "Then my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me, 'Where is the Lord your God?'"

#### 1. **Rebuilding of Zion and Return of Exiles (Micah 7:11-13)**

- **Shift in Speaker:** The Lord speaks directly to Zion, offering hope for the future.
- **Building and Expansion:** The focus shifts to the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The boundaries will be extended and the walls will be rebuilt.
- **Return from Exile:** Exiles from Assyria and Egypt will return to the land, emphasizing a comprehensive restoration from all directions. The land will extend from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean and from Mount Hor to Mount Hor.
- **Desolation Precedes Restoration:** The land will become desolate before the gathering of the exiles, just as predicted.

#### 1. **Prayer for Restoration and Shepherding (Micah 7:14)**

- **Shepherding Prayer:** Micah prays for God to shepherd his people and restore them to a fruitful land. "Shepherd your people with your scepter, the flock of your possession which dwells by itself in the woodland, in the midst of a fruitful field."
- **Return to Fruitfulness:** The land, once desolate, will become fertile again, particularly in regions like Bashan and Gilead.
- **Shift from Wildness:** A shift from woodlands to meadows, representing the taming of the wilderness and the establishment of a pleasant and fruitful land.

### 1. God's Shepherding and Miracles (Micah 7:15-17)

- **Miraculous Redemption:** The Lord promises to perform miracles even greater than those of the Exodus.
- "As in the days when you came out from the land of Egypt, I will show you miracles."
- **Shame and Humiliation of Nations:** Nations will be ashamed of their own power in the face of God's might. They will be speechless and unable to comprehend God's actions on behalf of Israel. "Nations will see and be ashamed of all their might. They will put their hand on their mouth, their ears will be deaf."
- **Repentance:** The nations will come trembling out of their fortresses and recognize God's authority. They will prostrate before the Lord, like a serpent licking dust, indicating total humiliation and submission.

### 1. Praise for God's Forgiveness and Covenant Love (Micah 7:18-20)

- **God's Unique Forgiveness:** Micah asks "Who is like you?" recognizing God's unique ability to pardon sin, based on his *hesed* (covenant love).
- "Who is like you who pardons iniquity and passes over the disobedience of the remnant of his heritage? He doesn't retain his anger forever because he delights in *hesed*."
- **Full Forgiveness:** God's forgiveness is complete, taking away guilt and shame, and casting sins into the depths of the sea.
- "He will again have compassion on us. He will tread our iniquities underfoot, and you will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."
- **Faithfulness to Promises:** God will keep his promises to Jacob and Abraham, as he has sworn from the days of old.

### Concluding Remarks

- **God's Sovereignty:** God uses even opposing nations to carry out his justice and judgment but will also judge them for their deeds.
- **Faithfulness Through Suffering:** God's people, through faithful action as Hasids (godly people), can rely on his ultimate *hesed*, even amidst suffering and deprivation.

- **Fulfillment through Christ:** The ultimate justice and peace on earth will come through the ruler mentioned in Micah 5:2 (Jesus Christ).
- **Parallel Themes:** There are many interesting parallels between the Old and New Testaments regarding God's promises and fulfillment through Jesus Christ. The ruler in Micah 5 was fulfilled by Matthew 2. The shepherd in Micah 5 and 7 was fulfilled by Jesus in John 10. The defeat of Satan in Micah 4, 5, and 7 was fulfilled on the cross. The ultimate peace that the prophets looked forward to will be fulfilled in Revelation 21.

## **Conclusion**

Dr. Phillips' session on Micah 7 underscores a journey from deep despair caused by societal and spiritual decay to a powerful message of hope and restoration through God's mercy and covenant love. The chapter, while addressing the immediate situation in Micah's time, is also forward-looking towards the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises in Christ. The lecture emphasizes the importance of faith and faithfulness in the face of difficulty.

## 4. Phillips, Micah, Session 8, Micah 7

### Micah 7 Study Guide

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 complete sentences.

1. What does Micah mean when he says, "Woe is me," in the beginning of the chapter?
2. What is "gleaning," and what significance does it have in the context of Micah 7?
3. According to Micah 7:2, what has happened to the "godly person" (hasid)?
4. Describe the "net" of corruption that is trapping the righteous, as mentioned in the passage.
5. Explain the significance of the "thorn hedge" in Micah 7:4, and how it relates to the theme of confusion.
6. What does Micah say about the breakdown of trust in society and family in verses 5 and 6?
7. In verse 7, what does Micah resolve to do despite the social and familial collapse?
8. Explain the inclusio found in verses 8-10, highlighting the concepts of darkness, light, and the enemy's shame.
9. What does Micah say about the rebuilding of Zion in verses 11-13 and the return of the exiles?
10. How does Micah conclude the book of Micah in verses 18-20, emphasizing God's character and promises?

#### Answer Key

1. Micah's "Woe is me" is not simply an expression of sadness but a deep lament and personal despair reflecting the dire situation of the land. It signifies the intense sorrow he feels over the lack of godliness and the suffering of his people.
2. "Gleaning" refers to the practice of leaving leftover crops in the field after harvest for the poor to collect, as a means of providing for them. In Micah 7, the fact that there is "nothing to glean" illustrates the extent of the greed and injustice, indicating even the basic needs of the poor are being disregarded.

3. According to Micah 7:2, the "godly person" (hasid) has perished from the land, meaning that there are no righteous individuals left in the community. This demonstrates the total corruption and absence of piety that prevails.
4. The "net" of corruption is a complex system woven together by political, religious, and sacerdotal leaders who use their power to oppress the righteous. It's comprised of bribery, false prophecy, and idolatry, trapping those who disagree with the corrupt system.
5. The "thorn hedge," which was meant to define boundaries, represents confusion and breakdown of societal order. Because of the leaders' greed and disregard for boundaries, the protective hedge becomes a source of harm and chaos, further symbolizing the moral breakdown in the land.
6. Micah states that the level of distrust is pervasive. It has infiltrated society, reaching into families where neighbors, friends, and even spouses can't be trusted. The family structure has broken down with sons rising against fathers, daughters against mothers, and daughters-in-law against their mothers-in-law.
7. Despite the overwhelming societal and familial collapse, Micah resolves to watch expectantly for the Lord. He will wait for the God of his salvation, trusting that God will hear him. He is turning away from earthly problems and to God for hope.
8. The inclusio in verses 8-10 uses the concepts of darkness and light to show the transformation that the Lord brings. Micah acknowledges his fall into darkness due to sin, but then God's light brings vindication. It then concludes with the shaming of the enemy who once mocked God.
9. Micah states that Zion will be rebuilt and the exiles will return to their promised land. These are to occur after God has acted on behalf of his people and after the judgment of the nation. The boundaries of the city will be extended, demonstrating a restoration far beyond the present state.
10. Micah concludes the book by praising God as one who pardons sin, maintains covenant love (hesed), and shows compassion. He declares that God will cast their sins into the depths of the sea and fulfills his promises. He is also giving a message of hope.



## Essay Questions

**Instructions:** Consider the following questions and formulate a well-supported response drawing from the provided source material.

1. Explore the various ways that the corruption of Israel's leaders manifests itself in Micah 7, and how does this corruption impact the community as a whole?
2. Analyze the significance of the "watchman" imagery in Micah 7:4, contrasting it with the imagery of Micah as one who watches in 7:7. How do these verses illuminate the themes of judgment and hope within the chapter?
3. Discuss the role of shame in Micah 7, analyzing how it operates as a form of punishment for the enemies of Israel and as a motivator for Israel's restoration.
4. Compare and contrast the promises of restoration in Micah 7 with the historical realities of the return from exile, and discuss whether Micah's prophecies are limited to those events or extend to a future fulfillment.
5. How does Micah 7 articulate God's character, particularly in relation to the themes of judgment, forgiveness, and covenant love? How does this portrayal of God connect with the broader message of the book of Micah?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Hesed:** A Hebrew word that is often translated as "covenant love," "loving-kindness," "mercy," or "steadfast love." It describes God's unwavering, faithful love and commitment to his covenant with his people.
- **Hasid:** A Hebrew term referring to a "godly person" or a person who embodies *hesed*. In modern use, it is a term for a very religious or pious person.
- **Gleaning:** The practice of leaving leftover crops in the field after harvest for the poor to collect. It was a provision in the Mosaic Law to ensure that the needy had a means of sustenance.
- **Inclusio:** A literary device where a passage or section of text is bracketed by similar themes, phrases, or words at the beginning and end. In Micah 7, verses 8 and 10 form an inclusio around verses 9 using the imagery of light and the shaming of enemies.
- **Merism:** A literary device in which a whole is represented by two contrasting parts (e.g., "heavens and earth" representing all creation).
- **Metonymy:** A figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated (e.g., referring to a country by its capital city).
- **Mevuka:** The Hebrew word for "confusion," used in Micah 7:4, as a play on words with *mesuka*.
- **Mesuka:** The Hebrew word for "thorn hedge," used in Micah 7:4, representing a boundary.
- **Sacerdotal:** Relating to priests or the priesthood; priestly.
- **Septuagint:** The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, used as a version in the time of Jesus.

## 5. FAQs on Phillips, Micah, Session 8, Micah 7, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ on Micah Chapter 7

1. **What is the significance of the "gleaning" imagery in Micah 7:1?** Micah uses the image of gleaning after a harvest, specifically of grapes and figs, to illustrate the utter lack of righteousness and godliness in the land. Normally, gleanings were left for the poor, but in this scenario, nothing remains, implying that not even the most basic acts of justice or compassion are present, and that not even one righteous person (a *hasid*) can be found in the land. This emphasizes a complete societal breakdown.
2. **How does Micah describe the corruption of the leaders in Micah 7:3?** Micah describes the political, religious, and social elite (princes, judges, and great men) as forming a corrupt network. They work in tandem, using bribes, false prophecy, and idolatry as a net to ensnare the righteous and oppress the poor. They are depicted as acting in unison, with both hands, to do evil, highlighting their thorough and intentional corruption.
3. **What is the connection between "thorn hedges" and "confusion" in Micah 7:4?** Thorn hedges were traditionally used as boundaries, for instance, to keep animals in or to mark property lines. However, in this context, they have become a source of confusion. The boundary markers that should provide clarity are turned into a *mevuka* (confusion), suggesting the moral and social lines have blurred to the point where there is no longer any order or justice. This is linked to the idea of land barons moving boundary stones, further contributing to the chaos.
4. **Why does Micah say that the people should not trust their neighbors, friends, or even family (Micah 7:5-6)?** Micah emphasizes that corruption has penetrated so deeply into the society that trust has been completely eroded. He illustrates this through an escalating distrust starting with neighbors, then friends, and finally reaching even the closest family members. The breakdown of trust is a consequence of the systemic evil described earlier, leading to a state of "every man for himself." This includes family members rising against each other, creating a situation where no one is safe.

5. **How does Micah 7:7 provide a turning point from despair to hope?** Verse 7 acts as a hinge point, shifting from the pervasive corruption and lack of hope to an affirmation of faith. Despite the societal and family breakdown, Micah declares that he will "watch expectantly for the Lord" and "wait for the God of [his] salvation." This is a personal act of faith, contrasting the actions of the corrupt leaders. The people are no longer waiting for judgment, but rather relying on God and waiting for His intervention.
6. **What is the significance of the imagery of light and darkness in Micah 7:8-9?** The imagery of darkness and light is used to depict Israel's state as a prisoner of war, currently in a metaphorical dungeon of darkness. The promise that the Lord will be a light to the people and bring them out of darkness indicates their eventual liberation from captivity and into a state of truth, freedom, and righteousness. This theme also relates to the idea of breaking out of prison and also being the light to the world.
7. **How does Micah describe the restoration of Zion in Micah 7:11-13?** Micah describes a future where Zion's walls are rebuilt and its boundaries are extended significantly. The exiles will return from all regions, including Assyria and Egypt, and the land will stretch from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean and from mountain to mountain. This restoration of Zion will only happen after a period where the land has become desolate because of the deeds of its people.
8. **What is the final message of praise and hope in Micah 7:18-20?** The book concludes with praise to God who pardons sin and maintains covenant love. God's hesed, or steadfast love, is emphasized as the reason for his mercy and forgiveness. He will tread their sins underfoot and cast them into the depths of the sea, never to be remembered. The message concludes by affirming God's faithfulness to his promises to Jacob and Abraham. This ultimately points to God's sovereignty and the ultimate justice he will bring through his Messiah, Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of prophecies about the ruler in Micah 5:2.