

UNABANDONED

A Study in the Book of Micah

Week 6: Future Hope

This week's Text: 4:8-5:13

Since the fall of humankind in the Garden of Eden, people have rejected their original design, and followed their corrupted and sinful desires instead. We were made to be in perfect relationship with God, flourishing under his rule. Without sin, this state of being, would have been our perfect fit, where we would be the most secure, the most fulfilled and the most joyful. When fully submitted to God's ways, we would feel safe and yet free, because his parameters for us are for our blessing and protection. Without sin, we would have been unhindered in our relationship with God, never hiding, never getting confused or angry at his decisions or choices for us, never resenting his boundaries or ever accusing him of being unfair. None of these human reactions would be part of our lives. We would feel blessed and free all the time.

But with the corruption of sin, our desires changed, and we immediately gained a distorted and deceived perspective of reality, and we wrongly believed that we were better off making our own choices, boundaries, laws and moral choices, as though our insight into human nature was superior to the One who had created us. Since Adam and Eve sinned, human beings have actively rejected God's rule, in favour of their own. How foolish we are.

The book of Micah deals with God's people, once again rejecting his rule and ways, in favour of their own. Not only were they denying themselves the goodness and peace of living according to the design, in which they were made to flourish, they were also actively sinning against the holy God. Each week as we have read the book of Micah, we have read how God intended to punish Israel for their rebellion, which he eventually brought about through their conquer and exile. We learn clearly here that God is not tolerant of sin. If we continue to live in sin, we can be sure that God will deal with it. We should take the warning and turn from our sin immediately.

"Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in labour, for now you shall go out from the city and dwell in the open country; you shall go to Babylon." (Micah 4:10a ESVUK).

The Israelites were faced with a certain dismal future. This must have been quite terrifying, because they knew that there was no way to get around it. But God, in his kindness, spoke a promise of hope into their future as well. He told them that though they would be in exile, at some point he would come and rescue them out of there.

"...There you shall be rescued; there the LORD will redeem you from the hand of your enemies." (Micah 4:10b ESVUK).

So, although they were to go through the deeply painful discipline process, he would restore them again. What's important to note here is that God was not telling them that he *might* show up for them if they behaved better, or if he felt like it. He was telling them, that despite themselves, he

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would come in and rescue them. It was his initiative alone. Redemption was and still is an act of God towards those who don't deserve it.

The Israelites could not earn God's favour. They could not keep themselves free from sin long enough to keep their side of the bargain. Neither can we. We too, are totally reliant on God's favour to be given to us without condition. We cannot earn it or contribute towards it at all.

They were promised a rescue out of exile, but the message was also prophetic about the distant future, where Jesus would come as the divine rescuer, to redeem not only Israel, but the rest of humanity from sin. Again, this would be God's initiative entirely. So, Israel knew for certain that their future was secure, in the near future and in the distant future, because God was going to rescue them. This should have radically altered their decisions for how they lived the rest of their lives.

We have the distinct advantage of being able to read the completed Scriptures to see how the story unfolded, and how God did exactly what he said he would do. We read about the Messiah coming, and we read of the promise of his return at the end of the age. We too, know that our future is absolutely secure in Christ. This security should change how we live, so that we live lives with no reserves, no retreats and no regrets.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you think the Israelites must have felt when they received Micah's prophecy that their magnificent land would be conquered and ruined, and that they would soon be taken into exile, because of their own sin?
2. How do you think it would have impacted them, knowing that God would rescue them at some point, once they were in exile?
3. **Personal Reflection:** *Have you ever experienced the wait, knowing that you were going to be disciplined for something you did wrong, and that there was no way you would be able to escape it? How did you behave while you were waiting? How did you feel once the discipline had passed? Did you ever do the same wrong deed again after you had suffered the punishment?*
4. What does this text teach us about God's stance on sin, and how should this impact how we live our lives?
5. Why do you think that the hope of a future rescue should have encouraged the Israelites to start living differently?
6. Knowing that our future is secure in Christ should provoke us to live a life without reserves, retreat or regret. What kind of life do you think this would look like for a Christian?
7. In what way is God challenging you to live more like this for him? What things does he want you change so that you can live this life fully for his kingdom and his glory?

Reference: All scripture references are taken from: [English Standard Version Anglicised \(ESVUK\) The Holy Bible, English Standard Version](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=micah+4-5&version=ESVUK)
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