



LESSON 14 ISAIAH & MICAH

Israel		Judah	
Jeroboam	931–910	Rehoboam	931–913
Nadab	910–909	Abijah	913–911
Baasha	909–886	Asa	911–870
Elah	886–885		
Zimri	885		
Omri	885–874		
Ahab	874–853	Jehoshaphat	873–848
Ahaziah	853–852		
Joram	852–841	Jehoram	848–841
Jehu	841–814	Ahaziah	841
		Athaliah	841–835
Jehoahaz	814–798	Joash	835–796
Jehoash	798–782	Amaziah	796–767
Jeroboam II	793–753	Uzziah	792–740
Zechariah	753		
Shallum	752		
Menahem	752–742	Jotham	750–731
Pekahiah	742–740		
Pekah	752–732	Ahaz	735–715
Hoshea	732–722	Hezekiah	729–686
		Manasseh	696–642
		Amon	642–640
		Josiah	640–609
		Jehoahaz	609
		Jehoiakim	608–598
		Jehoiachin	598–597
		Zedekiah	597–586

Our last couple of lessons have examined the failing fortunes of Judah and Israel as both kingdoms continued to break their covenant with the Lord. Their unfaithfulness resulted in the covenant curses which the Lord had warned of generations ago (see Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28). Thus, both kingdoms were plagued by political instability, economic woes and military invasion. Most notable was the growing might of the Assyrian empire under Tiglath-pileser III; might which had already brought the subjugation of both Judah and Israel, and which would soon result in the destruction of the northern kingdom.

In the midst of this wickedness, turmoil and defeat, the Lord continued to send His prophets. In this lesson we want to consider the work of two prophets: Isaiah and Micah. These two prophets were contemporaries, serving as messengers of the Lord from the end of Uzziah's reign into the reign of Hezekiah (see Isaiah 1.1; 6.1; Micah 1.1). Both prophets would be tasked with confronting the people with their sins, calling them to repentance or suffer the righteous justice of the Lord. In His mercy, the Lord was offering His people yet another opportunity to turn from their wicked ways. The people would refuse to heed the message of God's prophets, but hope was not lost...

Isaiah

The book of Isaiah is too magnificent and grand to try and summarize in one lesson, so we won't attempt to do so. Two portions of the book are given historical circumstances. We've already noted the first one found in Isaiah 7 as

Ahaz was fearful of the combined might of Aram and Israel. The second historical section is found in Isaiah 36-39 and occurred during the reign of Hezekiah. We will have much more to say about this section when we study Hezekiah's reign. For now, let's consider some themes found in Isaiah's work that reflect the situation of the Lord's people at this time.

- 1. Sin, punishment and hope.** The first chapter sets forth the major points of the book: the Lord's people had been disobedient (Isaiah 1.2-4; cf. 2.5-9; 3.8-9) and they would be punished for their disobedience (Isaiah 1.5-15; cf. 2.10-11; 3.11). However, there was hope! They could repent and be forgiven (Isaiah 1.16-20), but an even greater hope was promised for the future (Isaiah 1.21ff; see 2.2-4; 4.2-6).
- 2. God's people contrasted with the Lord.** Isaiah 5 paints a dark picture for God's people. They are first described as a choice vineyard which would be destroyed for its failure to produce good fruit (vss. 1-7). A series of woes are then pronounced upon the people for their sinful behaviors (vss. 8-23) and their impending judgment is pronounced (vss. 24ff). Notably, God would summon a distant nation, a nation He describes as, "Its roaring is like a lioness, and it roars like young lions; It growls as it seizes the prey And carries it off with no one to deliver it. And it will growl over it in that day like the roaring of the sea. If one looks to the land, behold, there is darkness and distress; Even the light is darkened by its clouds." (Isaiah 5.29-30). This bleak picture is juxtaposed with the image of the Lord in His glory in Isaiah 6. Isaiah recognized his sinfulness in contrast to the holy One (vs. 5), but Israel would not (vss. 9-13).
- 3. Ahaz contrasted with the future King.** We've already noted how in Isaiah 7 the Lord gave Ahaz an opportunity to put his trust in the God of Israel, but the king chose to place his trust in the Assyrians instead. Ahaz's faithlessness is contrasted with Israel's future King, God Himself who would reign on David's throne and would free the people from their oppressors (Isaiah 9.1-7). This "shoot" from the "stem of Jesse" would have the Lord's Spirit reside on Him and would rule with righteousness and justice, resulting in peace for all people (Isaiah 11.1-10).
- 4. The earth contrasted with the city of God.** The Lord made it clear that it was He who summoned Assyria to execute His judgment on Israel, but that Assyria herself would suffer His divine wrath (Isaiah 10.5-12) as would Babylon (Isaiah 13). The Lord's rule over the nations is further expressed as He proclaims judgment on the nations (Isaiah 14-23) and declares, "the Lord lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants" (Isaiah 24.1). However, God's people could proclaim, "We have a strong city; He sets up walls and ramparts for security" (Isaiah 26.1).

Micah

Like his contemporary Isaiah, Micah would live to see the Assyrians destroy Israel and severely oppress Judah, events which we will cover in our next couple of lessons. Micah's hometown of Moresheth lay in the path of the invading Assyrians, a matter alluded to in his prophecy (Micah 1.10-16). We can only imagine the sorrow of Micah and his fellow prophets as they foretold the destruction that awaited their own people if they would not repent. Yet, Micah was faithful to the Lord's charge as even the prophet Jeremiah would reference several years later (Jeremiah 26.18).

The Message of Micah:

Micah's prophecy contains 3 cycles of judgment and restoration. Each cycle contains a call for the people to "hear".

Cycle One (Micah 1-2)

1. Judgment on Israel & Judah (1.2-2.11)
 - a. The Lord promises judgment on Israel & Judah (1.2-5)
 - b. Samaria judged (1.6-7)
 - c. Lament for Judah (1.8-16)
 - d. Judgment on wealthy oppressors (2.1-5)
 - e. They rejected true prophets in favor of the false (2.6-11)
2. Promise to gather Jacob (2.12-13)

Cycle Two (Micah 3-5)

1. Present leaders denounced (3.1-12)
 - a. Indictment of leaders (3.1-4)
 - b. Indictment of false prophets (3.5-8). Note the contrast with Micah in vs. 8.
 - c. Jerusalem and temple would be destroyed because of wicked leaders and false prophets (3.9-12)
2. God's Kingdom established (4.1-13)
 - a. Establishment of the Lord's kingdom (4.1-5)
 - b. Gathering of the Lord's people (4.6-8)
 - c. The Lord would deliver from their present distress (4.9-13)
3. The Shepherd-King (5.1-15)
 - a. Nations arrayed against Jerusalem and her King (5.1)
 - b. The shepherd-king from Bethlehem (5.2-6)
 - c. Remnant of Israel restored (5.7-9)

- d. Every source of false hope removed (5.10-15)

Cycle Three (Micah 6-7)

1. Indictment of the nation (6)
 - a. The Lord's indictment of the people (6.1-5)
 - b. What the Lord desired: justice, mercy & humility (6.6-8)
 - c. Call to fear the Lord (6.9-12)
 - d. Righteous judgment was coming (6.13-16)
2. The prophet's response (7)
 - a. Sorrow (7.1-6)
 - b. Trust (7.7-13)
 - c. Prayer and confidence (7.14-20)

Application:

1. The Glorious Reality. In the second cycle of Micah's prophecy, things did not look well for Jerusalem and her leaders. The Lord declared that "Zion will be plowed as a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the temple will become high places for a forest" (3.12). Jerusalem would fall, and so her ruler, "with a rod they will smite the judge of Israel on the cheek" (4.13). But out of this grim reality would spring some of the most glorious revelations of the future. The Lord's Kingdom would be established, based on His ways (4.1-2). This Kingdom would be for all the nations and it would be one of peace (4.3-5). Furthermore, even though the leaders of Jerusalem had failed, God would raise a Shepherd-King from lowly Bethlehem (5.2). He would care for His people and give them victory over their enemies (5.4-9). But what was a glorious future for the faithful of Micah's day, is the glorious reality the faithful have now. We have a Kingdom which cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12.28) and have a King who shepherds our souls (1 Peter 2.25)!
2. What The Lord Requires. In chapter 6 God indicted His people for leaving Him in spite of how He had protected them (vss. 1-5). Vss. 6-7 seem to be Israel's response, asking what action or sacrifice the Lord might desire from them. Their questions were insulting to God, implying that He could be bribed and forgetting that what they might offer to the Lord already belonged to Him! The Lord wanted one thing: themselves! He wanted a people committed to justice, a quality of God they had failed to implement (2.1-2). He wanted a people that love "kindness" (idea of the Hebrew word is covenant faithfulness). He wanted a people who would walk humbly before their God. If God's people then had truly given themselves to Him then they would never have to wonder what the Lord required of them, for they

would have already given Him their all. This is a principle for God's people throughout time.

3. The Righteous Response To A Sinful World. Following God's indictment of the people in 6.1-8, the Lord declared again that His righteous judgment was coming on these covenant breakers (6.9-16). Chapter 7 seems to contain Micah's response to God's impending judgment, and in his response we see how the righteous should feel about a sin-filled world that will receive its just punishment from God. We sorrow over this sinful world (vss. 1-6), while committing our trust to the Lord (vss. 7-13) who saves His people (vss. 14-20).