

What Doth the Lord Require?

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”

Micah 6:8

Introduction:

1. We studied Romans 8:28-39 for the last two weeks and delighted in God’s promises and guarantees, but His mercies described there and elsewhere should elicit our own devoted service (Rom 12:1-2).
2. Here is a simple but strong chapter of God reasoning with His own for a relationship and obedience.
3. Micah prophesied just before Assyria destroyed Israel and well before Babylon did the same to Judah.
 - a. Micah prophesied in the reign of Hezekiah (1:1); Israel was taken in his sixth year (II Kgs 18:10).
 - b. Micah’s warning prophecies of God’s wrath were directed to both nations and both capitals (1:1).
 - c. Micah contains a prophecy of Jesus (5:2; Matt 2:4-6) and one about apostolic sign gifts (7:14-20).
4. A short outline of the chapter will aid in properly viewing the overall message and grasping the point.
 - a. God has a controversy against Israel for unrighteousness in light of His kindness to them (1-5).
 - b. God’s requirements for His people are not nearly as difficult and onerous as they complain (6-9).
 - c. God will punish them for their unjust and unmerciful financial dealings with one another (10-15).
 - d. God will punish them for their attachment to traditions carried forward from pagan religion (16).

1 Hear ye now what the LORD saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice.

- A. The chapter opens with an introduction that the prophet’s words are from the LORD Himself.
 1. When we hear or read the Bible, we must always remember it is Almighty God speaking.
 2. It is not the word of the preacher or of the Bible writer, but of God Himself (I Thes 2:13).
 3. The book opens by identifying the words of the LORD from his holy temple (1:1-2).
 4. Micah was full of power by the spirit of the LORD the sins of God’s people (3:8).
 5. The LORD addresses the prophet in this verse and the prophet the people in the next.
- B. Ministers must stand up to make up the hedge and stand in the gap for the land (Ezek 22:30).
- C. Ministers must stand up and blast with the mouth as with trumpets against sin (Isaiah 58:1).
- D. A public proclamation is made before mountains and hills as witnesses, as elsewhere (1:2; Deut 4:26; 30:19; 31:28; 32:1; Is 1:2; Jer 2:12; 6:19; 22:29; Ezek 36:4).

2 Hear ye, O mountains, the LORD’S controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.

- A. A public proclamation is made before mountains and foundations as witnesses, as elsewhere in the Bible (1:2; Deut 4:26; 30:19; 31:28; 32:1; Isaiah 1:2; Jer 2:12; 6:19; 22:29; Ezek 36:4).
- B. The LORD Jehovah has controversies with His people when they do not live wholly for Him.
 1. He pleads with them to consider and weigh the justice of returning evil for His good.
 2. Our God, Jehovah of the Bible, is rational and logical. He loves to reason (I Samuel 12:7; Isaiah 1:18; 5:4; 41:21; 43:26; Jer 2:5; Ezek 16:1-2; Acts 17:2; 18:4; 24:25; Rom 12:1-2).
 3. Job found out that calling on God to defend Himself was not wise (Job 40:1-5; 42:1-6).
 4. His religious is not an esoteric, mysterious religion for the initiated only. It is very plain.

3 *O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.*

- A. Our God, Jehovah of the Bible, is rational and logical. He loves to reason (I Samuel 12:7; Isaiah 1:18; 5:1-4; 41:21; 43:26; Jer 2:5; Ezek 16:1-2; Acts 17:2; 18:4; 24:25; Rom 12:1-2).
- B. He reasons from His goodness to bring repentance (Deut 8:2-4; Ps 106:7; Is 5:1-4; Jer 2:4-5).
- C. Remember one certain thing, no matter how evil your outlook, God is righteous (Ps 50:1-6).
- D. And if you are bored or sleeping in God's house, then He has a just controversy against you.
- E. Saints under the New Testament have much greater obligation to love and obey, therefore the reasoning against sinners is hard (Matt 21:33-44; 22:1-7; Phil 3:18-19; Heb 12:25-26; etc.).

4 *For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.*

- A. The first argument He brought forth was His merciful deliverance of all the Jews from Egypt.
 - 1. They would not have saved themselves, for they could not resist the power of Pharaoh.
 - 2. There were servants in Egypt, but God delivered from servitude to masters of Canaan.
 - 3. He prepared a trio from one family for them – legislator and judge, priest, and prophetess.
- B. God appealed to the exodus from Egypt for the Jews; He has much more to appeal to with us.
 - 1. He has delivered us from eternal wrath to come, and we owe Him every thing in return.
 - 2. We sing a very reasonable song, "I gave my life for thee, what hast thou done for me?"

5 *O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD.*

- A. The second argument He brought forth was His merciful deliverance of Israel from Balaam.
- B. Though Balak hired Balaam to curse Israel, God turned Balaam to bless Israel instead.
- C. From Shittim and whoredom with Moab women to the first rest in Canaan at Gilgal, the prophecy from Balaam of God's blessing on Israel for victory over Moab had come true.
- D. Though Balaam may have been feared by Israel, they got to see him dead (Num 31:8).
- E. The *righteousness of God* here is His right to their worship for His goodness and kindness.

6 *Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?*

- A. Since there was not wide repentance, we understand this question framed by the prophet.
- B. It is an excuse of a wicked heart to believe that God is pleased with mere ceremonial ritual.
- C. God cannot stand ceremonial worship without right (Is 1:10-15; 58:3-7; 66:3-4; II Tim 3:5).
- D. We identify this scorner from 6:8, where the "O man" is given the well-known answer.

7 *Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*

- A. Since there was not wide repentance, we understand this question framed by the prophet.
- B. An honest Israelite with a tender heart would not raise such profane questions as this.
- C. It is an excuse of a wicked heart to believe that God requires costly and expensive sacrifices.
- D. We identify this scorner from 6:8, where the "O man" is given the well-known answer.

8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

- A. They were not ignorant of God's will; He *had shewed* it (Deut 10:12; I Sam 15:22; Hos 6:6).
1. What follows is *good* – pure religion – it is how we approach Jehovah and seek His favor.
 2. The simple rules here were in contrast to Israel's sins (2:1-2; 3:1-3,9-11; 5:12-14; 7:2-6).
 3. What God requires of us may be reduced to three heads of duty to others and to God.
 4. There are two tables of the Ten Commandments – one toward man, and one toward God.
- B. First, God requires His people to *do justly* by treating others fairly, rightly, and equitably.
1. Do you treat your spouse justly (I Cor 7:1-5; 11:9; Eph 5:24-33; Col 3:18-19; I Pet 3:1-7)?
 2. Do you obey all the laws of our nation (Rom 13:1-7; I Pet 2:13-17; Tit 3:1; Jude 1:8-10)?
 3. Do you earn, give, and save monies you should (Pr 11:24-26; 30:25; Gal 2:10; Ep 4:28)?
 4. Do you treat your master as God charges servants (Eph 6:5-8; Tit 2:9-10; I Pet 2:18-20)?
 5. Do you treat your servants as God charges (Eph 6:9; Lev 19:13; Job 31:13-15; Pr 29:21)?
 6. Do you honor your parents and in-laws justly (De 27:16; Pr 30:17; Eph 6:1-3; I Tim 5:4)?
 7. Do you love and train children carefully (Pr 4:3-4; 13:22; 22:6,15; Eph 6:4; Titus 2:4)?
 8. Do you scrupulously conduct all money matters (Pr 20:14; Jer 22:13-14; II Cor 8:20-21)?
 9. Do you exalt impeccable honesty at all times (Proverbs 12:19; 19:9; I Peter 2:12)?
 10. Do you do everything with faithful zeal (Pr 20:6; 22:29; Ecc 9:10; Rom 12:11; Gal 4:18)?
- C. Second, God requires to *love mercy* toward others by charity, compassion, and forgiveness.
1. Do you delight in showing mercy toward others when you could accuse or charge them?
 2. Do the poor trigger godly instincts to leap to their help (Pr 19:17; 21:13; 28:27; 29:7)?
 3. Do you pity and make allowances for the weak (I Sa 30:21-25; Ps 103:13-14; I Pet 3:7)?
 4. Do you provide hope for the hopeless, including your teenagers (Prov 13:12; Col 3:21)?
 5. Do you do good to yourself by not overworking, as God's religion requires (Pr 11:17)?
 6. When someone apologizes, do you quickly and sincerely forgive them (Matt 18:21-35)?
 7. When others offend, as they often will, do you pass over their transgressions (Pr 19:11)?
 8. When giving to others, do you love to be as generous, or as conservative, as possible?
 9. Do you make sure you are not looking around your beam for others' motes (Matt 7:1-5)?
 10. In your authority relationships, do you exalt mercy to your charges (Pr 20:28; 29:14)?
- D. Third, God requires His people to love and *walk with Him humbly* as their only portion.
1. How much are you like Enoch or Joshua and their love of Him (Gen 5:22-24; Ex 33:11)?
 2. Do you confess your sins fully, often, and clearly (Job 33:27-28; Is 59:1-2; I John 1:9)?
 3. Do you delight in God and His things, as did David (I Chron 22:5; Ps 37:4; Jer 9:23-24)?
 4. Do you tremble at God's words and doing things to please Him (Is 66:1-2; Deut 10:12)?
 5. Do you come to God with a broken and contrite spirit of humility (Ps 51:17; Is 57:15)?
 6. Do you remember friendship with the world is spiritual adultery (Ezek 16:15; Jas 4:4)?
 7. Is the sanctuary of God's worship your favorite place (Ps 42:1-4; 84:1-4,10; 122:1-9)?
 8. Remember the role of music in pleasing God and your soul (Ps 69:30-32; Jas 5:13)?
 9. Are you as eager as Greeks and Mary Magdalene to see Jesus (John 12:21; 21:11-18)?
 10. Do you love the thought of Jesus Christ coming again (Rom 8:23; II Tim 4:8; Tit 2:13)?

9 The LORD'S voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.

- A. The Lord had a controversy with Israel, and He cried to them by Micah (6:1-3). Do you hear?
1. God sent prophets repeatedly, but they would not hear (Je 7:12-15,25-28; 29:15-23; etc.).
 2. God sends ministers to cry unto His people, and you should pay attention (I Thess 5:20).
 3. His ministers cry on His behalf by lifting up voices like trumpets (Is 58:1; II Tim 4:1-4).

4. When men reject the words of judge, prophet, or preacher, they reject God (I Sam 8:7).
 5. God judges under either testament those who reject His words (Heb 2:1-4; 10:26-31).
- B. Wise men and women perceive in preaching the warning from God Himself, and they listen.
1. Micah earlier identified the difference of righteous men hearing the word of God (2:7).
 2. In churches with the called crowds, as in Israel, only a chosen few take heed (Mat 22:14).
 3. They have spiritual discernment and come with humility to hear the man of God speak.
 4. They know the words are not man's, but the words of God (Acts 10:33; I Thess 2:13).
- C. The message they were to hear was God's rod was coming by His irresistible appointment.
1. The rod is a metonym for the punishments God would bring on Israel for their sinfulness.
 2. When preachers threaten, remember that it is God's rod by His appointment, not theirs.

10 Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable?

- A. God asked by the prophet, Are wicked men of this city still acquiring riches by wickedness?
- B. He asked further, Are there yet false measures (or weights by inference) that I abominate?
1. The Law of Moses had condemned false measurements (Lev 19:35-36; Deut 25:13-16).
 2. The Proverbs of Solomon had condemned them as well (Prov 11:1; 16:11; 20:10,23).
 3. It was a problem for Jews, for they were covetous (Ezek 45:9-12; Hos 12:7; Amos 8:5-6).
- C. Remember, Jehovah, the only true God, is concerned with business and financial dealings.
1. Do you keep the rules of Bible economics? How about giving and saving? Generously?
 2. Are you scrupulously honest and open in financial dealings with all men (Rom 12:17)?
 3. Do you pay your brethren or neighbors for any out of the ordinary services (Je 22:13-14)?

11 Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?

- A. God reasoned by the prophet, Should I overlook their false balances and consider them good, just because they may assemble before me and offer required or voluntary sacrifices?
- B. He also reasoned, Should I consider them righteous, though they use false and lying weights?
1. The Law of Moses had condemned false measurements (Lev 19:35-36; Deut 25:13-16).
 2. The Proverbs of Solomon had condemned them as well (Prov 11:1; 16:11; 20:10,23).
 3. It was a problem for Jews, for they were covetous (Ezek 45:9-12; Hos 12:7; Amos 8:5-6).
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12 For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

- A. God found the rich men of Samaria or Jerusalem full of violence against the poor and needy.
1. When the rich are accused of violence, it is because they have taken advantage of others.
 2. Micah and others warned of this wickedness to be rich (2:1-2; 3:1-11; 7:1-6; Pr 22:16).
- B. God found the citizens of these cities to have used lying and deceit to further their ends (7:2).

13 Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of thy sins.

- A. The LORD is not so easy as to merely smite and desolate them, for He also made them sick.
- B. God had warned Israel that He would consume them from inside out (Lev 26:16; Deu 32:25).
- C. God warned Israel through Moses that He would send diseases upon them (Deut 28:21-22).
- D. Recall, Pharaoh got to think about drowning (his chariot wheels came off) before drowning!

14 Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee; and thou shalt take hold, but shalt not deliver; and that which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword.

- A. During the straitness of sieges, food is always rationed, so citizens are never fully satisfied.
- B. A like judgment against productivity occurred after being in Babylon (Hag 1:1-11; 2:15-17).
 - 1. For those who coveted riches and oppressed others, God hindered all economic activity.
 - 2. Though they ate, there was never enough to be satisfied, as God had warned (Lev 26:26).
 - 3. The God of heaven will blow against those who have chosen to neglect or reject Him.
- C. The war was not fought far off, but in their streets, for they were cast down in their midst.
 - 1. No matter the efforts or precautions to save anyone or anything, God delivered them up.
 - 2. This is a righteous reward for their wickedness in financial dealings (2:3; 6:10-12; etc.).

15 Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.

- A. There is an ellipsis in the last clause, which is to be understood, “and thou shalt tread the sweet grapes for sweet wine, but thou shalt not drink wine.”
- B. The Assyrians and Babylonians would eat their harvests, use their oil, and drink their wine.
 - 1. Farming is laborious and requires much capital and time, which enemies would consume.
 - 2. One of the pains of war was having hard-earned assets consumed and wasted by enemies.
 - 3. This is a righteous reward for the wickedness of Israel in financial dealings (6:10-12).
- C. A related judgment against productivity occurred after their captivity (Hag 1:1-11; 2:15-17).
 - 1. For those who coveted riches and oppressed others, God hindered all economic activity.
 - 2. Though they ate, there was never enough to be satisfied, as God had warned (Lev 26:26).
 - 3. God will blow against those who have chosen to neglect or reject Him (Deut 28:38-40).
 - 4. Those who think they can get ahead by robbing God are very wrong (Malachi 3:7-12).

16 For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people.

- A. God’s controversy with Israel included hating their following of pagan religion by tradition.
 - 1. Omri was a very wicked king that begat a very wicked line of kings (I Kings 16:16-30).
 - 2. Omri’s statutes were the perpetuation of Jeroboam’s calf worship in Samaria, which was the entry of Israel into idolatry (I Kings 12:28-34; II Kgs 10:29; 13:2,11; II Chr 13:8).
 - 3. Ahab his son was a wicked man stirred up by a wicked wife (I Kgs 16:30-33; 21:25-26).
 - 4. Ahab’s works and counsels continued Jeroboam’s calves, introduced Baal worship, killed the Lord’s prophets, and murdered to steal (I Kings 16:31-33; 18:4; 19:10,14; 21:8-9).
 - 5. Their violence and deceit to obtain riches was simply following their example (6:10-12).
 - 6. When this line married Judah’s Jehoram, God cut out three kings (II Chr 22:1-4; Mat 1:8).

7. We have good reason to despise and reject all manner of pagan customs, no matter how popular (Deut 12:1-4,29-32; Jer 10:1-4; Ezek 8:15-18; II Cor 6:14-17; Jas 4:4; Rev 18:4).
- B. The consequences of following pagan religious traditions would bring their total desolation.
1. Repentance could have saved them both, but Israel and Judah would not fully repent.
 2. Desolation is to destroy, devastate, lay waste; make bare, barren, or unfit for habitation.
 3. God used Assyria to desolate Israel and Babylon Judah (II Kings 17:1-23; Jer 25:8-38).
 4. A hiss was to show contempt, derision, disapproval, or scorn against a person or thing.
 5. God promised ridicule of Israel, if they rejected His words (Deut 28:37; Ps 44:13-14).
 6. The reproach of God's people is to bear the chastening shame of His judgments on them.
 7. As God's people, they are held to a higher standard, and bear the reproach of His name.
 8. These sinners were mocked when taken captive to foreign nations (Eze 36:20; Lam 2:15).
- C. It is God's hatred of pagan traditions that causes us to reject the pagan holy days of Halloween, Christmas, Easter, and Valentine's Day, no matter how popular by others.
1. The true God despises any worship connection to pagan religion (Deut 12:1-4,29-32).
 2. It does not matter at all, if you dedicate the pagan practices to Jehovah (De 12:1-4,29-32).
 3. This principle did not die with the Old Testament (II Cor 6:14-17; I John 5:21; Rev 18:4).

Conclusion:

3. The blessed God our Father can desolate, hiss, and reproach you, your family, or anything you do, if you cheat, neglect, or reject His religion as defined in the Bible.
4. God has done much more for us in the New Testament than any saint in the Old Testament, so we have an even greater obligation to love, serve, and worship Him, Who gave His own Son for us.
5. What doth He require? Not assemblies without right, but righteousness and love with assemblies!

For Further Study:

1. For further and similar warnings from God's word, consider the cousin chapters of Isaiah 5; 58; and Ezekiel 16.
2. The sermon outline, "Vain Religion: Isaiah 58," ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/vain-religion.pdf>.
3. The document, "What of Ahaziah's Age?" ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/scripture/ahaziah-contradiction.pdf>.