

MICAH 6

WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE?

After the precious promises in the two foregoing chapters relating to the Messiah's Kingdom, the prophet is here directed to set the sins of Israel before their face, for their conviction and humiliation – which was necessary to make way for the comfort of Gospel-grace. Christ's forerunner was a reprover, and preached repentance; and thus he prepared His way.

The prefaces to the prophet's message are very solemn, and they engage our most serious attention. The people are commanded to give audience and hear what the Lord says. What the prophet speaks, he speaks from God, and in His name; therefore, they are bound to hear it – not as the word of a sinful, dying man; but as the Word of the holy, living God. And in order to add an emphasis upon what he said, the prophet even called upon the mountains and hills to hear his voice. This was intended to expose the stupidity of the people, for even the senseless mountains and hills could bear witness that Israel had fair warning and good counsel given them.

In the first few verses of this discourse, the covenant-relationship between the Lord and His people is kept in remembrance. Do not forget this, for it is most gracious and most blessed! Of all the parts of Scripture, these are certainly what come home most powerfully to the heart – the Lord's appeal to His people concerning His unalterable goodness, despite their continued rebellion. In these few verses (3-5), the Lord sums up the outlines of the whole eventful history of His grace over Israel, in bringing them out of Egypt and bringing them through the wilderness. And then He briefly sums up the blessings which He had manifested to them when bringing them into the Promised Land. He mentions these things so that they might see how ungrateful they had been toward Him, in spite of all the favors and mercies that He had so graciously poured out upon them.

In verses 6 and 7, we find a proposal for reconciliation between God and Israel – the two parties that were at variance in the beginning of the chapter (verse 2). The trial resulted in judgment being given against Israel; the crimes which they were convicted of were injustice and ingratitude toward Jehovah. Their guilt is too plain to be denied, and too great to be excused. Therefore, they express their desires to be at peace with Him upon any terms: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" And these words correspond to the anxious enquiry of every sinner, when he is first brought under the awakening distress of heart concerning sin, before the Holy Spirit has made him savingly acquainted with

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ The Lord's controversy with Israel – verses 1-5
- ❖ He shows them the duties that He requires of His people – verses 6-8
- ❖ He speaks of the great wickednesses that were found among them, which were bringing judgments and ruin upon them – verses 9-16

the Lord Jesus. But listen to the answer given by the Lord: "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?" But what does that mean? If we explain the verse under the terms of the Gospel, the sense of it will be as plain and obvious as can be. We shall indeed "do justly" with our God if we confess that our sins cause us to be justly deserving of His wrath and indignation, for we have broken all His righteous laws. We shall indeed "love mercy" if the Lord Jesus is the mercy we love, for He Himself is the mercy that is promised (Luke 1:72); and in His own Person, blood, and righteousness, He comprehends the entirety of mercy and salvation. And we shall indeed "walk humbly with our God" when – from a daily sense of sin, and from feeling the workings of corruption within our hearts – we walk as those who seek mercy, and yet constantly acknowledge our total unworthiness of it. When we acknowledge ourselves to be virtually nothing except sin, and humble our souls, then we do the first act of justice to the Highest of Beings. Then, in the consciousness of this most unquestionable truth, we love mercy so much as to believe on Jesus Christ for all our salvation. And after that, blessed effects will surely follow; and these will be seen in our walking humbly with God, and in our showing love and justice toward our fellow human beings.



Having shown His people how necessary it was that they should do justly, the Lord next shows them how plain it was that they had done *unjustly*. And since they had not submitted to His controversy, nor taken the right way to be reconciled with Him, He proceeds in it (verse 9). In the remainder of the chapter, we are shown the things which were laid to the charge of the people of God. They were guilty of injustice; for in the midst of them, there was found the marks and means of fraudulent dealing with their neighbors. They were also charged with idolatry (verse 16). Being found guilty of these crimes, the sentence is that very same one which God had given them warning of: "Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of thy sins" (verse 13). They had smitten the poor with the rod of their oppressions; and so the Lord, in a similar manner, would smite them and make them sick. He would cause them to grow sick of the gains which they had unjustly gotten, so that although they had swallowed down riches, they would vomit them up again. The Lord tells them that the things which they possessed would not give them any comfortable enjoyment (verses 14-15). They grasped at more than enough; but when they had it, it was not enough to make them happy. What is gotten by fraud and oppression cannot be kept or enjoyed with any satisfaction.

Thank You, Lord Jesus, for Your infinite love and infinite grace, which has mercifully provided a full ransom for our sin in Your own blood – without which, we are lost forever! Amen.