

Micah

Chapter 7

Wait for the God of Salvation

Woe is me! For I have become as when the summer fruit has been gathered, as when the grapes have been gleaned: there is no cluster to eat, no first-ripe fig that my soul desires. 2 The godly has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among mankind; they all lie in wait for blood, and each hunts the other with a net. 3 Their hands are on what is evil, to do it well; the prince and the judge ask for a bribe, and the great man utters the evil desire of his soul; thus they weave it together. 4 The best of them is like a brier, the most upright of them a thorn hedge. The day of your watchmen, of your punishment, has come; now their confusion is at hand. 5 Put no trust in a neighbor; have no confidence in a friend; guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your arms; 6 for the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house. 7 But as for me, I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. 8 Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me. 9 I will bear the indignation of the LORD because I have sinned against him, until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon his vindication. 10 Then my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me, "Where is the LORD your God?" My eyes will look upon her; now she will be trampled down like the mire of the streets. 11 A day for the building of your walls! In that day the boundary shall be far extended. 12 In that day they will come to you, from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt to the River, from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain. 13 But the earth will be desolate because of its inhabitants, for the fruit of their deeds. 14 Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock of your inheritance, who dwell alone in a forest in the midst of a garden land; let them graze in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old. 15 As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them marvelous things. 16 The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; they shall lay their hands on their mouths; their ears shall be deaf; 17 they shall lick the dust like a serpent, like the crawling things of the earth; they shall come trembling out of their strongholds; they shall turn in dread to the LORD our God, and they shall be in fear of you.

7:1–20 The speakers in this chapter are Micah (vv. 1–7), Zion (vv. 8–10), Micah (vv. 11–13), perhaps Zion (v. 14), God (v. 15), Micah (vv. 16–20). The chapter begins on a note of gloom but ends with a statement of hope. (CSB)

7:1–2 Looking for the godly is like looking for summer fruit when the harvest has ended (see also Jer 8:20). (CSB)

7:1 *Woe is me!* Micah lamented the sad spiritual decay of the house of Jacob (2:7–10). (TLSB)

no cluster to eat. Just as one finds nothing to eat after the harvest is completed, so Micah searched in vain for any righteous person in the land. (TLSB)

7:2 *there is no one upright.* Micah's pessimistic assessment was shared by Paul (Rm 3:10–12, quoting Ps 14:3). Ambr: "Let us, then, mourn for a time, that we may rejoice for eternity. Let us fear the Lord, let us

anticipate Him with the confession of our sins, let us correct our backslidings and amend our faults” (NPNF 2 10:352). (TLSB)

lie in wait – People prey on one another, committing acts of violence for their own gain. (TLSB)

with a net – Hunting metaphor picturing how one person trapped another. (TLSB)

7:3 *evil, to do it well.* People excelled in the art of doing evil. (TLSB)

great man. The leader should be expected to set a good example. (TLSB)

utters the evil. What formerly was unspoken is now discussed and planned openly. (TLSB)

weave it together. Like spiders, the wicked weave webs to tangle the weak and unwitting. (TLSB)

7:4 *best of them* – Even the most upright of the leaders were like plants that not only fail to bear fruit but also snare and entangle anyone who comes close. (TLSB)

day of your watchmen. The day of judgment that the prophets warned about (see Jer 6:17; Eze 3:17–21). (CSB)

Prophets who warned of the coming day of the Lord (Jer 6:17; Hos 9:8). (TLSB)

7:5–6 A time of universal suspicion when no one could be trusted. Jesus used similar words to describe a consequence of His ministry (Mt 10:35–36). (TLSB)

7:6 The family unit was disintegrating.

7:7 *look to the Lord* – As bad as the sinful conditions were in the land, Micah continued to trust in the Lord’s salvation. (TLSB)

7:8 *me.* Zion. (CSB)

Speaker is no longer Micah, but the repentant house of Jacob (4:2; 5:7–8). (TLSB)

Penitent Israel could be certain that the Lord had brought about her afflictions. She could also be just as certain that God would deliver her. (PBC)

my enemy. Other nations. (CSB)

The devil and all the forces of evil. (TLSB)

when I fall. Micah foresees the destruction of Zion in 586 B.C. (CSB)

Israel certainly did fall, but a remnant would rise (Ezk 37:1–14). (TLSB)

7:9 *BEAR THE INDIGNATION* – Sincere repentance expresses willingness to bear punishment for sins. The Judge determines what is best for the sinner. (TLSB)

I have sinned. Confession is similar to those of King David and the prodigal son (Ps 51; Lk 15:21). (TLSB)

He pleads my cause. God had challenged His people to plead their case (6:1). Now they look to Him to plead their cause. (TLSB)

bring me out. God will lead His people out of sin's captivity. (TLSB)

7:10 *Where is the LORD your God?* Shame will cover the faces of those who had mocked Israel's hope in the Lord (Ps 42:3). (TLSB)

mire. Waste was commonly dumped in the streets, which were seen as public sewers (cf 1Sm 25:22, 34 KJV; 1Ki 14:10–11 KJV). (TLSB)

7:11 *boundary shall be far extended* – NT Israel – the Church – reaches to the end of the earth (Acts 1:6, 8; Gal 6:16). (TLSB)

7:12 *In that day.* Cf 2:4; 4:6; 5:10. (TLSB)

they. Remnant of God's people, dispersed in many lands, will be gathered into one flock (2:12; Jn 10:16). (TLSB)

River. The Euphrates. (TLSB)

7:13 *fruit of their deeds.* In contrast to the gathering of God's people, the earth's wicked inhabitants will suffer punishment for their sins. (TLSB)

7:14 *with your staff* – The staff was used to lead the sheep to refreshing waters and green pastures (Ps. 23), prod the lagging, bring back the straying, ward off the wolves and return the sheep to shelter. So Christ is asked to lead and defend His church "which lives by itself in a forest" of unbelievers. (PBC)

God's people called on Him to protect and guide them so that they might live in security, without fear of attack from their enemies (Ezk 34:11–16). (TLSB)

Bashan and Gilead – These are east of the Sea of Galilee and along the Jordan River, and were both were fine grazing lands. For that reason the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh had requested permission to settle there "in days long ago" when Israel entered Canaan (Numbers 32). Here they stand for the rich and wholesome food the soul finds in God's Word. (PBC)

Lands east of the Sea of Chinnereth and Jordan River, noted for fertile pastures. (TLSB)

inheritance. Israel. Common OT description of Israel to emphasize how special they were (Ps 79:1). (TLSB)

dwell alone. Such a lost person needs to be found by a good shepherd (Lk 15:1–7). (TLSB)

7:15–17 It is possible that these verses constitute a prayer that God will show his wonders again as in the exodus, that the nations will see and be ashamed, and that they will turn to the Lord in fear. (CSB)

7:15 *As in the days.* The Lord responded to His people's prayer by promising a new exodus, with deeds more wonderful than the first. (TLSB)

show them marvelous things – When He delivers His remnant out of exile, He will establish His NT church with far greater miracles, all of them centering in Christ. (PBC)

Foreshadows the birth of God's Son, His resurrection from the dead, and the spread of Gospel into all the world. (TLSB)

7:16 When the nations see God's power at the Messiah's coming, they will be amazed. (CSB)

ashamed. Nations will stand dumbstruck before God's saving power. (TLSB)

hands on their mouths. Sign of amazement. Luth: "So great will be the course of the Gospel and of this new kingdom, so broadly will it extend, that it will even reach the heathen, who will see the miracles of Christ and of the apostles. They will see so great a power of the Spirit in those miracles that they will become ashamed and quickly cease to trust further in the arm of the flesh. No longer will they glory in their own strength and in the righteousnesses of the flesh in which they used to trust. Rather, they will glory in this, 'that they have known Me,' Jeremiah 9:24" (AE 18:275). (TLSB)

7:17 *lick dust like a snake.* A picture of defeat. (CSB)

Picture of humiliation and defeat. (TLSB)

turn in dread. The once-haughty nations will fear divine judgment. (TLSB)

fear. Cypr: "The foundation and strength of hope and faith is fear [of the Lord]" (ANF 5:539). (TLSB)

7:1–17 At the time of Micah's ministry, there was corruption and dissolution in the public and private spheres of life. Yet the prophet spoke of a coming time when God would gather His dispersed people and vindicate them before the nations. Through Word and Sacrament, God continues to gather people into His kingdom, people who confess their sins and look to Him for salvation. What a privilege to be part of God's inheritance and a witness to His saving power! • Come, Holy Spirit, and give me the joy of salvation. Make me an eager witness of the Gospel. Amen. (TLSB)

God's Steadfast Love and Compassion

18 Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. 19 He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. 20 You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.

7:18–20 The conclusion to the whole book, not just to ch. 7. (CSB)

7:18 *Who is a God like you . . . ?* Perhaps a pun on Micah's name (Cf. Ex 15:11; Ps 89:6. (CSB)

There is no God like the Lord, who reveals His glory in forgiving sins. The meaning of Micah's name, "Who is like the Lord?" is reflected in this question. (TLSB)

steadfast love. God's love differs from human love in that it never ceases (Rm 8:31–39). (TLSB)

7:19 *tread our iniquities underfoot* – Military metaphor (cf v 10), picturing how totally God eliminates our enemy, sin. (TLSB)

depths of the sea. Sincere confession of believers expressing their confidence that God will remove their sins beyond retrieval, just as He removed the threat of Pharaoh's chariots. (TLSB)

7:20 *Jacob ... Abraham.* God had sworn to Abraham (Ge 22:17) and Jacob (Ge 28:14) that their descendants would be as numerous as the dust of the earth and the sand on the seashore, and he had promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations (Ge 17:5; cf. Lk 1:54–55). All believers are ultimately included in this promise (Ro 4; Gal 3:6–29; Heb 11:12). (CSB)

7:19 *tread our iniquities.* Military metaphor (cf v 10), picturing how totally God eliminates our enemy, sin. (TLSB)

You will cast all our sins. Sincere confession of believers expressing their confidence that God will remove their sins beyond retrieval, just as He removed the threat of Pharaoh's chariots. (TLSB)

7:20 Remnant of Israel was certain that God's faithfulness and steadfast love, sworn to their fathers, was effectual for them as well. Mary and Zechariah expressed this same faith in their songs (Lk 1:54–55; 72–73). (TLSB)

from the days of old. Because of what God has done in the past, believers are confident about the future (vv 14–15). (TLSB)

7:18–20 In this concluding hymn, the Lord's loving and forgiving nature is described, followed by a confident assertion of faith in Him. To know and trust such a God provokes in us a humble awe of our own unworthiness. With the tax collector in the temple, we are moved to pray, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (Lk 18:13). • I hope in You, O Lord. Never leave me or forsake me. Amen. (TLSB)