

Micah – An Old Testament Minor Prophet

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All references in red are from: Engelbrecht, E. A. (2009). *The Lutheran Study Bible*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

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Writer: Micah “came from the village of Moresheth in the Judean foothills southwest of Jerusalem. His name means ‘Who is like the Lord?’”

Date of Writing: 750-686

- The northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians in 721.
- The southern kingdom of Judah *should* have taken notice and been repentant.

Purposes: “To indict the shepherds of Israel and Judah for exploiting and misleading the people and to prophesy the Lord’s work as a shepherd for the remnant.”

Luther on Micah: “The prophet Micah lived at the time of Isaiah. ...these prophets who lived at the same time preached almost the very same word concerning Christ... Micah is one of the fine prophets who rebukes the people severely for their idolatry and constantly refers to the coming Christ and to his kingdom. ...even though Israel and Judah have to go to pieces, Christ will yet come and make all things good.”

Blessings for Readers: “Micah shows the important role that leaders play in families, congregations, and society in distributing God’s blessings for us. As you study Micah, reflect on how your life and future depends on others and how God has placed people under your care or in your sphere of influence. See, ultimately, that all you have and all you are flows from His merciful goodness.”

Outline:

- I. Prophecies of Doom against Various Cities (chs 1–3)
 - A. Superscription (1:1)
 - B. Invocation and Warning (1:2–4)
 - C. Verdict against Samaria and Jerusalem (1:5–7)
 - D. Lament (1:8–9)

- E. Assyrian Advance (1:10–16)
 - F. Oracle of Woe (2:1–11)
 - G. Interlude: Mercy for the Remnant (2:12–13)
 - H. Conflict with False Prophets (ch 3)
- II. Prophecies of Hope and Restoration (chs 4–5)
 - A. Mount Zion (4:1–5)
 - B. Kingdom Restored to Zion (4:6–13)
 - C. Shepherd Prophecy (5:1–5a)
 - D. Shepherds and the Remnant of Jacob (5:5b–15)
 - III. Renewed Prophecies of Doom, Ending with Restoration (chs 6–7)
 - A. Reproaches against God’s People (6:1–8)
 - B. Guilty Verdict (6:9–16)
 - C. Micah’s Lament (7:1–6)
 - D. Confidence in the Lord’s Deliverance (7:7–17)
 - E. Doxology of God’s Mercy (7:18–20)

Introduction:

1. ^{ESV} **Micah 1:1** The word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham [750-735], Ahaz [735-715], and Hezekiah [715-686], kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

The Coming Destruction (1:2-16):

2. Read v. 2a – Who should have been listening? e _____
3. Why did the LORD come for judgment?
 - a. Read v. 5.
 - b. “The sense, then, is this... Israel sins in Samaria, Judah in Jerusalem.” Therefore, the LORD brought destruction upon those places!
4. What did the LORD promise to do?

- a. Read v. 6.
 - b. *uncover*. "Destruction would be so complete that only city foundations remain."
5. Notice how far Micah went to express his sadness over the many unrepentant sins:
- a. Read v. 8.
 - b. *stripped and naked*. "Public expression of profound grief and mourning."
6. Read v. 9 – Israel was beyond the point of repentance, while Judah was close behind.
7. How bad did things become in Judah? Read v. 16.
8. Chapter 1 summary: "The Lord acts as the witness for the prosecution in the case against His sinful people represented by their capital cities, Samaria and Jerusalem. His coming is marked by dramatic signs in the creation, reminding us of what will happen on the Last Day. All the earth needs to take note of what happened to Israel and Judah. Our sinful actions are also witnessed by God and deserve wrathful punishment. God has shown the depth of His justice in Christ Jesus, who in love took on Himself God's just wrath so that we may stand holy and righteous before Him."

Woe to the Oppressors (2:1-13):

- 9. The oppressors were the rich and powerful in Israel and Judah. Read vv. 1-2.
- 10. So the LORD planned disaster for them (vv. 3-5).
- 11. The oppressors did not want Micah to preach about the LORD's coming disaster; they said it would NOT come to pass (v. 6).

- 12. The remnant of believers were encouraged to persevere and look forward to future blessings.
 - a. Read v. 12.
 - b. Luther: "He now passes from the kingdom of Israel to the eternal, spiritual kingdom of Christ. You see, it was the custom of all the prophets...to prophesy first about the destruction of the people and about the external kingdom and then to pass over to the spiritual and eternal kingdom of Christ. This kingdom, they had prophesied, would come after the external kingdom was destroyed" (AE 18:227).
- 13. Chapter 2 summary: "Micah condemns the wickedness of the rich and powerful oppressors and proclaims the Lord's judgment against their covetous behavior. In mercy, God promises to gather a remnant out of Israel and shepherd them. Today, the Lord calls us to help our neighbors protect their house and possessions in fear and love. Jesus is our Good Shepherd, who gave His life to redeem us from sin and everlasting death. He has satisfied our most pressing needs and will free us from covetous desires."

Rulers and Prophets Denounced (3:1-12):

- 14. Notice how sharply Micah spoke against the leaders and how he graphically described their abuse of the people.
 - a. Read vv. 1-3.
 - b. "Violent and gruesome imagery is a vivid metaphor for the way judges abused their authority. In their greed, they were consuming their own people..."
- 15. When the LORD's judgment came on the corrupt leaders and they cried for

help, the LORD did not answer them (vv. 4-7), but Micah had the LORD's blessing upon him. **Read v. 8.**

16. The sins of the leaders are listed (vv. 9-12) and the outcome of Jerusalem is stated (v. 12).
17. **Chapter 3 summary:** "The very people charged by God to administer justice, to give sound teaching, and to preach His Word are abusing their authority for personal gain. Micah proclaims that God will refuse to hear their cry for deliverance when judgment comes. If we abuse our authority as parents, employers, pastors, or teachers, we kindle God's wrath and displeasure. When we serve our own interests at the expense of others, especially those who are powerless and needy, may we confess our sin and ask forgiveness. And as we have received God's mercy in Christ, may we show mercy by looking after the interests of others (Philippians 2:1-7)."

The Mountain of the LORD (4:1-5): Even though destruction was coming for Jerusalem – as noted in chapter 3, this section tells of a most blessed time which is still yet to come! "...a time when all nations will cherish the Word of the Lord, a time of universal peace. This perfect future will be realized only in heaven."

The LORD Shall Rescue Zion (4:6-13):

18. When the ultimate time of rescue comes, the LORD will gather His people and reign over them (vv. 6-8).
- Once the LORD begins to reign, how long will it last?
f _____
 - How does that reconcile with Jesus reigning on earth for 1,000 years? _____
19. But Micah's time was a time of great sadness, rather than great joy. **Read vv. 9-10a.**

20. However, a time would come when the LORD would rescue His people. **Read v. 10b.**

21. At that time the enemies of Zion sensed victory: "But they [did] not know the thoughts of the LORD..." (v. 12) – that they, themselves, would eventually be defeated.
22. **4:6-13 Summary:** "Micah proclaims the time when the Lord will gather His faithful people and reign over them as King. Though the nations assemble against Jerusalem, the Lord promises that in the end they will all be threshed out like grain. The forces of evil continue to rage against God's Church, but we have His assurance that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Mt. 16:18; Rev. 6:15-16). When we face difficult times, when the forces of the devil are lined up against us, we may be tempted to give up trusting that God is with us to guide and protect us. We can be certain of His gracious presence whenever we hear His Word and receive the body and blood of Christ. He will not leave us or forsake us."

A Summary of Chapters 1-4: Micah was a prophet of the LORD who lived in the southern kingdom of Judah. He served during the years when the northern kingdom of Israel fell to Assyria and when the southern kingdom of Judah was beginning to move away from its trust in the LORD. Therefore, the LORD spoke through Micah to tell of His eventual destruction upon Israel and Judah as well as His eventual deliverance of the faithful remnant – *for all who were waiting in faith for the Messiah.*

The Ruler to Be Born in Bethlehem (5:1-6):

23. **ESV Micah 5:1** "Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek."

- a. *strike ... on the cheek*. “Insult emphasizing the king’s helplessness...”
 - b. “...the Messianic period was preceded by Judah’s deepest humiliation, when all the former glory was taken away from the nation. But at this time of the deepest humiliation of the Lord’s people the greatest glory of all would come upon it” (Kretzmann).
24. ² “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.”
- a. “The Lord addressed this wonderful promise of a future ruler to a people and king whose situation seemed hopeless.”
 - b. *Bethlehem*. “Birthplace of David and Jesus, 18 mi NE of Moresheth, Micah’s hometown (1:1). When the Wise Men came to Jerusalem seeking the king of the Jews, they were directed to Bethlehem based on [Micah 5:2].”
 - c. *too little*. As Bethlehem of old seemed to be of no significance in comparison to nearby Jerusalem, so our congregation seems to be of no significance in comparison to the very large LCMS congregation in North Royalton, yet the LORD can use the lowly for His powerful purposes.
 - d. *ruler in Israel*. King of the Jews, even King of kings.
 - e. *from ancient days*. As we learned last Wednesday in our **God With Us** series, God the

Son existed with God the Father before the creation of the world.

25. ^{ESV} **Micah 5:3** Therefore he shall give them up [so the people of God were oppressed from the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC through the birth of the Savior] until the time when she [Mary] who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers [all believers] shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴ And he [Jesus] shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they [His flock, the believers] shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. ⁵ And he shall be their peace [as the Prince of Peace He made peace between us and God by sacrificing Himself for our sins]....
26. 5:1-6 Summary: “The Lord did not guarantee that the city of Jerusalem would escape capture, but He did promise a ruler from the house of David who would bring lasting peace and security. The Lord has not promised us victory over all our earthly enemies, but He has given us victory over sin, death, and the power of the devil through Jesus, the Son of David, born at Bethlehem in “the fullness of time” (Gal 4:4). He is our mighty fortress (LSB 656). • ‘Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ’ (1Co 15:57). Alleluia!”

A Remnant Shall Be Delivered (5:7-15):

27. This section seems to look ahead to a time when the LORD will have believers dispersed throughout the world – as we have today, possibly to be salt and light as Jesus said in Matthew 5, but to eventually win the victory over their enemies when Jesus returns. Vv. 10-15 describe what the LORD will do to put away sin and execute judgment when He comes.

28. **5:7-15 Summary:** “The Lord is with His holy remnant... We need not depend on human strength or seek help and direction from some other ‘divine’ being. If we do, we are sure to falter and fail. When we take the Lord at His Word and depend on His might, we will be secure and at peace. God remains present with us even when we feel utterly abandoned to forces beyond our control, such as sickness and death. He uses such times to cleanse us from unbelief and lead us to a deeper trust in Christ Jesus.”

The Indictment [accusation] of the LORD (6:1-5): Now the emphasis shifts from the future back to the present:

29. Here the LORD calls the foundations of the world, as well as the hills and the mountains, to be the jury in this courtroom setting (vv. 1-2).

30. **ESV Micah 6:3** “O my people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me! ⁴ For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. ⁵ O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD.”

- a. Do the words of v. 3 remind you of the reproaches we use on Good Friday? Y N
- b. “The Lord reminded His people of four specific examples of His saving acts: He (1) redeemed them from Egypt; (2) provided excellent leaders; (3) guarded from harm; (4) led them into the Promised Land.”
 - i. **ESV Joshua 3:1** Then Joshua rose early in the

morning and they set out from Shittim. And they came to the Jordan, he and all the people of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.

ii. **ESV Joshua 4:19** The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho.

c. So the LORD was so very good to His people, yet they abandoned their trust in Him for false gods.

i. Do we also trust in some false gods? Y N

ii. What are they?

iii. What should we do?

What Does the LORD Require? (6:6-8):

31. Okay, the LORD has done much for His people, so: **ESV Micah 6:6** “With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷ Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, 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?” No!

32. ⁸ He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but...

a. **to do justice** – to do what is r_____ in God’s sight, in agreement with His Word!

b. **to love kindness** – to love showing m_____, rather than taking r_____!

- c. to walk humbly with your God – to trust Him for everything and follow all His ways!

Destruction of the Wicked (6:9-16): 6:9-16

Summary: “God would punish the wickedness of powerful city people. They would be cursed, not blessed, and be derided and condemned. Whoever breaks God’s laws, especially by using positions of power to exploit the weak, will ultimately face God’s judgment. Our sins may not match all that the Lord here condemns, but none of us is innocent in His sight. To walk humbly with our God means to repent daily of our sins and cling to His grace and mercy in Christ.”

Wait for the God of Salvation (7:1-17):

- 33. ^{ESV} **Micah 7:1** 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.
 - a. “Micah lamented the sad spiritual decay of the house of Jacob (2:7–10). Just as one finds nothing to eat after the harvest is completed, so Micah searched in vain for any righteous person in the land.”
 - b. Micah continued to lament the sins of his people in vv. 2-6. We could do the same today, as most seem to live in sin without repentance.
- 34. But Micah was determined to be the opposite of the unrepentant: ^{ESV} **Micah 7:7** 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.

- 35. ^{ESV} **Micah 7:10** Then my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me, “Where is the LORD your God?” Now believers are put down, but a day will come when those who mocked will be put to shame and the believers will be blessed; vv. 11-17 are similar.
- 36. 7:1-17 Summary: “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!”

God’s Steadfast Love and Compassion (7:18-20):

- 37. ^{ESV} **Micah 7:18** 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 [*read and practiced by some on the Feast of Trumpets*]. ²⁰ You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.
- 38. “Because of what God has done in the past, believers are confident about the future.”