



BOOK OF MICAHA

“Who is Like Jehovah”

“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)

Introduction to Book of Micah

Authorship

Micah was from Moresheth. He prophesied during the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Mic. 1:1). “As a prophet in the eighth century B.C., Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah and Hosea. Probably, he prophesied a little after Amos.” (Roper, 121)

Date of Composition

The date was around 735 to 700 B.C. “Micah began prophesying before the destruction of Samaria (1:5) and continued into the reign of Hezekiah (Jer. 26:18, 19).” (Hailey, 187)

The Audience

Micah preached in the southern kingdom; therefore, his primary audience was Judah. However, his message was also for those in Samaria (1:1).

Theme / Purpose

Micah’s purpose is two-fold. First, he pronounces judgment against both Israel and Judah with repentance being his desired outcome. Second, he gives them the vision of a brighter future.

Unique Characteristics

The primary qualities the Lord requires is summed up (6:6-8). The birthplace of the Messiah and His eternal nature is revealed (5:2).

Outline of Book of Micah

- I. **JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL AND JUDAH -1:1-2:13**
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 - B. LAMENT FOR ISRAEL AND JUDAH -1:8-16
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 - E. RESTORATION OF ISRAEL -2:12, 13

- II. **JUDGMENT AGAINST THE RULERS -3:1-5:15**
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 - B. PRONOUNCEMENT AGAINST THEM -3:8-12
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 - D. BRIGHT FUTURE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE -4:6-5:1
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 - B. JUDGMENT FOR INJUSTICE -6:9-16
 - C. LAMENT FOR ISRAEL -7:1-7
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 - E. GOD'S FORGIVENESS -7:14-20

I. JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL AND JUDAH -1:1-2:13

A. THE JUDGMENT COMING AGAINST ISRAEL - 1:1-7

1. The introductory verse -vs. 1
 - a. Micah is identified as the proclaimer of the Lord's message.
 - b. Like all the other prophets, the message is not their personal message, but is from God above.
 - c. Micah's ministry took place during the reign of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah the kings of Judah.
 - d. Although his message is primarily to Judah (Jerusalem), he speaks to Israel (Samaria) as well.
2. The imagery of God's judgment -vs. 2-4
 - a. The Lord is witnessing against them from His holy temple. This temple is in heaven itself; the real throne room of God.
 - b. God coming to cast judgment upon the earth is revealed by volcanic action and earthquakes -vs. 4 This is not to be taken literally, but as a poetic expression of God's horrific judgment coming against sinful man.
3. The sins of Jacob -vs. 5
 - a. Jacob here references all the house of Israel
 - b. They have practiced idol worship. The shrines to idols were found in the high places of Jerusalem.
4. The judgment against Samaria -vs. 6, 7
 - a. Samaria put their confidence in their fortified city -cf. Amos 6:1
 - b. God would cast away their confidence. (ie. Their stone walls and the foundation of their homes would all be rolled into the valley)

- c. All their works of wickedness would be destroyed

B. LAMENT FOR ISRAEL AND JUDAH -1:8-16

1. The signs of lamenting -vs. 8
 - a. Wail and howl -This was compared to jackals and ostriches. “These wilderness creatures are paired together several times in the Old Testament (Job 30:29; Is 34:13; 43:20; Jer. 50:39; Lam. 4:3). They were known for their howling and moaning sounds.” (Roper, 133)
 - b. Stripped and naked -This was used as a sign of mourning and as an indication of future captivity (cf. Isa 20:1-3). In our context, Micah was not necessarily nude. “...not nude as we would think of being naked but stripped of his ordinary clothes and dressed as a captive.” (Hailey, 195)
2. “Her wounds are incurable.” She had gone so far down the road of sin, that all hope for a redemptive return was lost.
3. The Assyrian invasion to come -vs. 10-16. This section has been called “the longest series of sustained puns in the Old Testament” (Lewis, 35)
 - a. “Tell it not in Gath” (Tell-town).
 - b. “In Beth Aphrah” (House of dust)
 - c. Shaphir (Pleasantness) -They would be faced with unpleasant circumstances of leaving in shameful nakedness.
 - d. Zaanan (March-town or going out) -They would be unable to depart the city to escape destruction.
 - e. “Beth Ezel” (House of removal) -Their place to stand has been taken away.
 - f. “Maroth” (Bitterness) -They would become bitter while waiting for good to come.

- g. “Jerusalem” (“City of Peace”) -yet disaster is coming against its gates.
- h. “Lachish” (Horse-town) -They were to harness their chariot to the swift steeds. Apparently, this is the city of origin for Judah’s idolatry. The exact details are unknown.
- i. Moresheth-Gath would receive “parting gifts”. They would soon be taken into captivity or destroyed.
- j. Achzib – “False-spring” The house of Achzib would deceive Israel and thus become a disappointment (a disappointing brook) unto them.
- k. Mareshah (Inheritance or possession) -Others would come trying to take possession of the city.
- 1. The glory of Israel would come to Adullam
 - 1) David used the expression “Tell it not in Gath” (2Sam 1:20) in lamenting for Saul’s death.
 - 2) The cave of Adullam was where David hid from King Saul (1Sa 22:1).
 - 3) Perhaps this was Micah’s way of expressing the gloom of destruction that was coming upon Israel and Judah by looking back at some of the dark times in the life of King David.

C. JUDGMENT AGAINST WORKERS OF INIQUITY -2:1-5

- 1. Even when they would lie down, their minds were devising evil.
- 2. When they would awaken, they would carry out their sinful plots:
 - a. Take fields by violence
 - b. Oppressing men’s houses and inheritance

3. Because of this, the Lord would bring disaster upon them.
 - a. Their conquerors would have power over them
 - b. They would lament and be destroyed.
 - c. Their lands would be unidentifiable by boundary

D. JUDGMENT AGAINST LYING PROPHETS -2:6-11

1. Some only want to hear good things from the prophets -vs. 6, 7
 - a. True prophets of God denounce idol worship, immorality, oppression, and wickedness. They preach a message of doom unless repentance is made.
 - b. Some believe that God would never inflict disaster upon His people. He is too loving and longsuffering for that. Consequently, they think Micah is giving a false image of God.
 - c. However, the word of the Lord does good to those who walk in His way.
2. God's people have become His enemy -vs. 8, 9
 - a. As they were treating their own people, they were doing so unto God -cf. Mt 25:40, 45
 - b. The women were taken from their houses and children lost their inheritance.
3. "Arise and depart" -vs. 10
 - a. Those who evicted women and children from their homes would be evicted themselves by God.
 - b. Sin would cause the land to "vomit out its inhabitants" -Le 18:25, 28
4. The false spirit -vs. 11
 - a. The people were unwilling to listen to Micah who was telling them the truth.
 - b. They would rather hear false words of "wine and drink".

The people preferred the false prophets' lies to Micah's truth! Their minds were warped; their judgment was impaired; and their priorities were upside down! (Roper, 150)

E. RESTORATION OF ISRAEL -2:12, 13

1. Micah gives the people a glimpse of hope.
2. They would go into captivity. However, a remnant would return.
3. The Lord would be their head leading them back.

II. JUDGMENT AGAINST THE RULERS -3:1-5:15

A. THE WICKEDNESS OF THE RULERS AND PROPHETS -3:1-7

1. The sins of the rulers:
 - a. The behavior of the rulers would naturally be expected among the heathen, but not so with the people of God. (ie. They “hate good and love evil”)
 - b. Micah here uses hyperbole to describe the indignation against the behavior of the rulers. They treated God's people as cannibals would.
 - c. When destruction would later come against them, God will not show mercy because of their evil treatment -vs. 4
 - d. The Israelites were warned by Moses not to pervert justice; they did not listen -cf. (De 16:19; 24:17)
2. The sins of the prophets:
 - a. They make the people of God stray by falsely prophesying peace when there is no peace.
 - 1) Those who prophecy peace concerning the Second Coming -1Th 5:3-ff
 - 2) Those who teach salvation before baptism.
 - b. The consequence: when they desire the vision, they will receive none from the Lord.

B. PRONOUNCEMENT AGAINST THEM -3:8-12

1. Unlike the false prophets, Micah comes in the power of the Spirit of the Lord!
 - a. The false prophets spoke flattering and pleasing words.
 - b. Micah told them the truth from God; exactly what they needed to hear.
 - c. There is nothing wrong with positive messages from God. However, one must never exclude the eradication of sin and the steps of righteousness from the message.
2. The climax of the message of destruction -vs. 9-12
 - a. Micah addresses three groups of leaders:
 - 1) Heads or leaders -they abhor justice; they take bribes -vs. 9, 11
 - 2) Priests -The teach for pay (ie. They love money more than truth)
 - 3) Prophets -They divine for money
 - b. Each group knows they are doing evil, yet they state that God is with them and that no harm will come -vs. 11b
 - c. The consequence, however, is that all that has been built up, God will plow over. Even the temple will be “Like the bare hills of the forest” -vs. 12

C. THE LORD’S HOUSE ESTABLISHED -4:1-5

1. The parallel passage is found in Isaiah 2:2-4
2. This is a Messianic prophecy foretelling the reign of Christ over His kingdom.
3. Many nations will come to the kingdom (ie. The gospel is for all -Ro 1:16; Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15; Co 1:23)
4. The word of the Lord goes forth from Jerusalem - vs. 2b; Lk 24:46-49; Ac 2:1-ff

5. They will no longer learn war.
 - a. The kingdom of God is not advanced through physical warfare -Jn 18:36
 - b. Our warfare is spiritual -Ep 6:10-ff; 2Co 10:1-6
6. There is peace and security in the kingdom of God
 - a. We have peace through the blood of Jesus -He 12:21-24
 - b. We are a part of the kingdom that cannot be shaken -He 12:28
 - c. No one can snatch us out of the Father's hand -Jn 10:28, 29

D. BRIGHT FUTURE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE -4:6-5:1

1. Micah shifts his attention from the future glory to the present distress.
2. All the outcast and afflicted, God will make a strong nation.
3. The tower of the flock was an advantage point in which to view and protect all the sheep. Likewise, Jerusalem is the advantage point for the people of God.
4. Judah would be taken into Babylonian captivity. This would last seventy years, and God would bring them back.
5. The enemies of God's people would be destroyed -vs. 11-13
 - a. Some desired to see Jerusalem be destroyed. This was not God's plan. Judah would be punished for their sins, but then they would return.
 - b. "Whether this prophecy had reference to the destruction of Sennacherib's army at the gates of Jerusalem (Isa 37:36-38) or to the ultimate destruction of Assyria and the triumph of God's remnant, is uncertain. The destruction of both was accomplished." (Hailey, 208)

6. Micah warns of a siege coming against them -vs. 5:1
 - a. The Hebrew bible puts this verse at the end of chapter 4. The Septuagint and the majority of our English bibles list the verse as an introduction to chapter 5.
 - b. There is some debate whether this refers to Sennacherib's siege or Nebuchadnezzar's attack against the city.

E. THE MESSIAH'S COMING FORETOLD -5:2-4

1. Whereas the judge of Israel would be struck and thus humiliated, the Messiah would come forth from Bethlehem and would be victorious!
 - a. Bethlehem means "House of Bread".
 - b. David came from Bethlehem -1Sam 16:1-ff
 - c. The priest and scribes knew this would be the birthplace of the Messiah -Mt 2:5, 6
 - d. His going forth was from everlasting. This shows that Jesus has the same eternal nature as God and therefore is God -cf. Jn 1:1; Co 2:9.
2. The woman giving birth -vs. 3
 - a. There is some debate between the meaning of the verse. Some believe this to reference Mary giving birth to Jesus while others contend this is the birth of the church or kingdom.
 - b. Homer Hailey, in his commentary, favors the birth of the kingdom.
3. Jesus would rule and care for His kingdom -vs. 4

F. JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL'S ENEMIES - 5:5-15

1. The Assyrian enemy can be taken literal, or it can indicate any enemy that comes against the kingdom of Christ.

2. The numerical values of “Seven shepherds and eight princely men” is most likely figurative.
3. Whatever Assyria represents, God is the One who grants victory to His people.
4. The blessedness of the dispersion -vs. 7, 8
 - a. The Jews would be a blessing to others, just like dew and rain from heaven.
 - b. They would be able to destroy their enemies like a lion.
5. The strength of their hand is from God -vs. 9
6. The reformation of Israel (vs. 10-15):
 - a. The horses, chariots, cities, and strongholds would be cut off from them. This way they would depend on God for victory and not of their own strength.
 - b. The sorceries and soothsayers would be eradicated. The Law of Moses forbade these practices -Ex 20:3-5; 23:24; 34:13; De 18:9-12
 - c. All the works of idolatry would be destroyed.
 - d. God would punish the Gentile nations that have not obeyed -vs. 15b

III. JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL -6:1-7:20

A. GOD MAKES HIS CASE AGAINST ISRAEL -6:1-8

1. The Lord’s introduction -vs. 1, 2
 - a. Israel on trial before the Lord (so to speak).
 - b. The mountains, hills, and foundations of the earth are the witnesses against Israel.
2. The Lord’s case against Israel -vs. 3-5
 - a. What crime has the Lord committed against Israel? (Rhetorical question with the answer of “nothing” as the Lord will point out in the following verses.)
 - b. The Lord brought them out of the land of Egypt.

- c. He gave them Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.
 - d. He changed the curse of Balaam into a blessing -Nu 22-24.
3. What is Israel to do? -vs. 6, 7
- a. Knowing the displeasure of the Lord, what should Israel bring unto Him?
 - b. Suggestions from the text include: burnt offerings, thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil, my firstborn.
 - 1) The offering of their firstborn would be an abomination unto God
 - 2) “But in all these questions they indicate a willingness to do anything except what Jehovah required.” (Hailey, 214)
 - 3) Sacrifices is not what God truly desires - 1Sa 15:22, 23; Ps 51:16, 17
4. The Lord’s answer -vs. 8
- a. To do justly -To be fair and do what is right with our neighbors.
 - b. To love mercy -To show kindness toward others in need.
 - c. To walk humbly with your God -To be submissive and holy before Him.
 - d. Micah was not denouncing sacrifices unto God. This was a vital part of the Law of Moses that provided them with the forgiveness of sins. However, sacrifice without ethical living was never pleasing unto God. -1Sa 15:22, 23; Ps 51:16, 17; Isa 1:12-20; Am 5:21-27; Hos 6:4-6
 - e. “This verse is considered by many to be one of the most comprehensive and all -embracing statement sin the Old Testament” (Hailey, 214)

B. JUDGMENT FOR INJUSTICE -6:9-16

1. The sins committed -vs. 9-12
 - a. The city mentioned is Jerusalem. The “rod” is believed to represent Assyria.
 - b. They were corrupt in their business practices. They used “deceitful weights”
 - c. They were full of lies and violence.
2. The judgment for the sins -vs. 13-16
 - a. God is going to strike them. Their land will be desolate. They will be carried into captivity.
 - b. All their agricultural ambitions would come to nothing. (ie. They would sow and not reap.) This came to fruition when Assyria attacked Israel and Babylon attacked Judah.
 - c. Two wicked kings are mentioned:
 - 1) Omri –“Omri did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all who were before him.” (1Ki 16:25)
 - 2) Ahab – “Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him.” (1Ki 16:30)
 - d. Micah point out that they are now walking in their counsels. Therefore, they are no greater than they were. Because of this, judgment from God is coming.

C. LAMENT FOR ISRAEL -7:1-7

1. “Woe is me!” -vs. 1, 2
 - a. Micah laments because the righteous have disappeared from the ranks.
 - b. All the men who remain do harm to one another.
2. The evil the men do -vs. 3, 4
 - a. Three classifications of people: the prince, the judge, and the great man.

- b. They all scheme together to accomplish their selfish ambitions.
 - c. The best of them is like a brier or a thorn hedge. That is, these men are of no earthly good.
 - d. Because of their wickedness, the day of their punishment is approaching.
3. Confidence not in man, but in the Lord -vs. 5-7
- a. The condition of man was so depraved, that no one could be trusted. This included those of a person's own household.
 - b. Therefore, Micah looks unto the Lord for his salvation.

D. ISRAEL CONFESSES -7:8-13

1. The enemies should not rejoice -vs. 8-10
- a. Israel fell, but could rise again. They were in darkness, but God would be their light.
 - b. When they would repent, God would restore them.
 - c. The only reason the enemies could have victory is by the will of God. God used them to punish His people. Therefore, to rejoice would result in them being "trampled down like mud in the streets" -vs. 10
2. The restoration -vs. 11-13
- a. Walls would be rebuilt, and the land would be extended.
 - b. Those from Assyria would come to them. This indicates that they could become proselytes if they would submit unto God.
 - c. The land would be desolate. This is the land of the enemies. It would become desolate because of their evil deeds.

E. GOD'S FORGIVENESS -7:14-20

1. God is the Shepherd of His people -vs. 14, 15
 - a. His staff provides protection for His people
 - b. His people dwell in solitary. Two possible meanings:
 - 1) No one will harm them
 - 2) They are called to be separate from the world -Nu 23:9; Ex 19:6
 - 3) Today, Christians are called to be separate -Ro 1:7; 12:1, 2; Ja 1:27; 1Pe 1:9, 10
 - c. Micah reminds them of the miracles God used against Egypt during the days of Moses. He is still, and always will be, mighty to save.
2. The nations will fear the Almighty God -vs. 16, 17
 - a. The enemies of God would be so overwhelmed by the power of God, they would be ashamed. They would have nothing to say. They would be incapable of taking any action against the people of God.
 - b. In their own eyes, they would be like snakes. They would fear God and His people.
3. God is rich in mercy and forgiveness to His people -vs. 18-20
 - a. Micah ends with a hymn of hope concerning the grace and mercy of God.
 - b. There is no one like God!
 - 1) Man will hold grudges against another.
 - 2) God is abundant in mercy and ready to forgive those who repent.
 - c. God cast their sins into the sea -cf. Ps 103:12
 - d. God greatly desires to have mercy upon His people. This is evident even from the days of old with Abraham and Jacob.

Conclusion:

1. God always gives fair warning of impending doom. This is not only in the prophets concerning political disaster, but even today concerning eternal destruction from the presence of God.
2. God seeks repentance from His people.
3. Salvation is found in the prophesied Messiah (Ch. 5)
4. God is abundant in mercy towards His people!

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