

# STUDIES IN THE MINOR PROPHETS

The Book of *Micah*

Prepared by:  
Joel D. Hestand, D.Min.

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MICAH  
THE PROPHET OF THE PEOPLE

MICAH: "Who Is Like Jehovah?" "God's Man" - He had integrity, courage and truthfulness. He is described as fearless, merciless and severe. Micah was contemporary with Isaiah and Hosea, and probably knew Amos. In contrast to Isaiah, he was an "unsophisticated rustic." Mainly a prophet to Judah, but his message did involve Israel. He is the only prophet to direct his message to both kingdoms. (Van Dooren). Consider Micah 3:8.

DATE: 735 - 715 BC. During the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah.

CONTENTS: Arranged logically to carry forward its message. Judah and Israel are denounced because of their wickedness. The captivity is prophesied, and the remnant is promised. The Messianic pictures are beautiful. Micah is quoted three times in the Bible: Micah 3:12 in Jeremiah 26:18; Micah 5:2 in Matthew 2:5,6; Micah 7:6 in Matthew 10:35,36. There six prophecies found in the book:

Samaria, capital of Israel to fall (1:6,7)  
Jerusalem and the temple to be destroyed (3:12; 7:13)  
The Babylonian captivity (4:10)  
The return from captivity (4:1-8; 7:11,14-17)  
The Messiah to be born in Bethlehem (4:8; 5:2-4)  
Universal peace to come when men learn of Christ (4:1-5)

Micah specifically condemns these sins of the people:

Idolatry (1:7; 5:13)  
Evil plans and devices (2:1)  
Covetousness (2:2)  
Evil of princes, prophets and priests (3:2-11)  
Witchcraft (5:12)  
Dishonesty (6:10-12)  
Corruption (7:2-4)  
Treachery (7:5,6)

CHARACTERISTICS:

Vigorous, vivid, fresh, straight-forward, uses repetitions to enforce the message; uses long and complicated sentences; flashes of indignation; beautiful promises; historical references; good, terse, classic Hebrew; contains a timeless message; has a beautiful concept of God and right religion. He is the first of the prophets to threaten Jerusalem with destruction. His message is peculiarly to the cities. He uses figures, similes, and questions. The contrasts are prominent.

OUTLINE: Judgment (1-3); Comfort (4,5); Salvation (6,7)

MICAH  
THE PROPHET OF THE PEOPLE

LESSONS: Religion and ethics are inseparable

The folly of untrue and unworthy leaders

The certainty of God's purpose and undertakings

How different our lives would be if only God were the Center and Circumference of all things, as He was to Micah, to whom God was Everything

The sin and emptiness of hypocrisy

The reasonableness of God's basic requirements, and the unchangeableness of His demands

MICAH  
THE PROPHET OF THE PEOPLE

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*Moresheh - Gath (1:1,14) - a small town on the border between Judah & Philistia, SW of Jerusalem*

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Dishonesty (6:10-12)  
Corruption (7:2-4)  
Treachery (7:5,6)

CHARACTERISTICS: "I am full of the Spirit of Jehovah and judgment!" - 3<sup>8</sup>  
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## MICAH - BACKGROUND

Social conditions - rulers sold the rights of men

The wealthy:

- Coveted the lands (2:1,2)

- Robbed the poor (2:8)

- Cast women out (2:9)

- Had corrupt business practices (6:11)

False prophets:

- exercised power control (2:11)

- Prophesied for reward (3:6,11)

- Priests taught for hire (3:11)

Rulers in their greed were as cannibals (3:1-3,9)

Judges judged for a bribe (7:3)

People had a false concept of God (3:11b)

- kept the statutes of Omri and walked in the  
counsels of Omri and Ahab (6:16)

Religion:

- had become a matter of form

- ceremonial observances were thought to meet all  
religious requirements

- superficial

## MICAHA: A Teaching Outline

<b>I. The Prediction of Judgment</b>	<b>1:1—3:12</b>
<b>A. Introduction to the Book of Micah</b>	<b>1:1</b>
<b>B. The Judgment on the People</b>	<b>1:2—2:13</b>
1. Judgment on Samaria	1:2-7
2. Judgment on Judah	1:8-16
3. Cause of the Judgment	2:1-11
4. Promise of Future Restoration	2:12-13
<b>C. The Judgment on the Leadership</b>	<b>3</b>
1. Judgment on Princes	3:1-4
2. Judgment on Prophets	3:5-8
3. Promise of Future Judgment	3:9-12
<b>II. The Prediction of Restoration</b>	<b>4:1—5:15</b>
<b>A. The Promise of the Coming Kingdom</b>	<b>4:1-5</b>
<b>B. The Promise of the Coming Captivities</b>	<b>4:6—5:1</b>
<b>C. The Promise of the Coming King</b>	<b>5:2-15</b>
1. Birth of the Messiah	5:2
2. Rejection of the Messiah	5:3
3. Work of the Messiah	5:4-15
<b>III. The Plea for Repentance</b>	<b>6:1—7:20</b>
<b>A. The First Plea of God</b>	<b>6:1-8</b>
1. God Pleads	6:1-5
2. Micah Replies	6:6-8
<b>B. The Second Plea of God</b>	<b>6:9—7:6</b>
1. God Pleads	6:9-16
2. Micah Replies	7:1-6
<b>C. The Promise of Final Salvation</b>	<b>7:7-20</b>

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## MICAH, BOOK OF

A brief prophetic book of the Old Testament, known for its condemnation of the rich because of their exploitation of the poor. Micah also contains a clear prediction of the Messiah's birth in Bethlehem, centuries before Jesus was actually born in this humble little village. The book takes its title from its author, the prophet Micah, whose name means, "Who is like Jehovah?"

**For an outline of the book see Micah**

***Structure of the Book.*** Micah is a short book of only seven chapters, but it stands as a classic example of the work to which the Old Testament prophets were called. Over and over again, Micah sounds the theme of God's judgment against his homeland, Judah, as well as her sister nation, Israel, because of their moral decline. Micah watched as the Assyrians grew in strength and marched their armies throughout the ancient world. It was clear to him that this pagan nation would serve as the instrument of God's judgment unless Judah and Israel turned back to God.

Micah also is known as the champion of the oppressed. He condemns wealthy landowners for taking the land of the poor (2:2). He also attacks dishonest merchants for using false weights, bribing judges, and charging excessive interest rates. Even the priests and prophets seemed to be caught up in this tidal wave of greed and dishonesty that swept his country. To a people more concerned about observing rituals than living a life of righteousness, Micah thundered, "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?" (6:8). This is one of the greatest passages in the Old Testament. It expresses the timeless truth that authentic worship consists of following God's will and dealing justly with other people.

In addition to the theme of judgment, Micah also emphasizes the reality of God's love. Practically every passage about God's wrath is balanced with a promise of God's blessing. The greatest promise in the book is a prophecy of the birth of the Messiah: "But you Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel" (5:2). This messianic verse is stunning in its accuracy because it names the specific town where the Messiah was born—the village of Bethlehem in the territory of the tribe of Judah. This prophecy was fulfilled about 700 years after Micah's time with the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

The final two chapters of Micah's book are presented in the form of a debate between God and His people. God invites the nations of Israel and Judah to reason with Him on the subject of their conduct. He convinces them that their sin is deep and grievous, but He assures them of His presence in spite of their unworthiness.

***Authorship and Date.*** This book was written by the prophet Micah, a native of the village of Moresheth (1:1) in southern Judah near the Philistine city of Gath. Since Micah championed the rights of the poor, he was probably a humble farmer or herdsman himself, although he shows a remarkable knowledge of Jerusalem and Samaria, the capital cities of the nations of Judah and Israel. Micah also tells us that he prophesied "in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (1:1). The reigns of these three kings stretched from about 750 BC to 687 BC; so his book was probably written sometime during this period.

***Historical Setting.*** The Book of Micah belongs to that turbulent period during which the Assyrians launched their drive for supremacy throughout the ancient world. Micah probably saw his prophecy of judgment against Israel fulfilled, since the Assyrians defeated this nation in 722 BC. The fall of Israel to the north must have stunned the citizens of Judah. Would they be the next to fall before the conquering armies of this pagan nation? Still, the religious leaders retreated into a false confidence that no evil would befall them because the Temple was situated in their capital city of Jerusalem (3:11). Micah warned there was no magical saving power in their Temple or their rituals (3:12). They needed to turn back to God as their source of strength and power.



***Theological Contribution.*** The mixture of judgment and promise in the Book of Micah is a striking characteristic of the Old Testament prophets. These contrasting passages give real insight into the character of God. In His wrath He remembers mercy; He cannot maintain His anger forever. Judgment with love is the ironic, but essential, work of the Lord. In the darkest days of impending judgment on Israel and Judah, there always was the possibility that a remnant would be spared. God was determined to maintain His holiness, and so He acted in judgment on those who had broken His covenant. But He was just as determined to fulfill the promises He had made to Abraham centuries earlier. This compelled Him to point to the fulfillment of the covenant in the kingdom to come.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the Book of Micah is its clear prediction of a coming Savior. The future Messiah is referred to indirectly in some of the prophetic books of the Old Testament. But He is mentioned directly in the Book of Micah.

This prophecy of the Messiah's birth is remarkable when we think of the circumstances that were necessary to bring it to fulfillment. Although they were residents of Nazareth, Mary and Joseph happened to be in Bethlehem at the right time when the Messiah was born about 700 years after Micah's prediction. This is a valuable lesson on the providence of God. He always manages to work His will through a unique combination of forces and events.

***Special Considerations.*** Micah begins his words of judgment with calls for the people to come to court. God is portrayed as the prosecuting attorney, the witness for the prosecution, and the sentencing judge. God is a witness against His people (1:2); He demands justice (3:1); He even calls upon the elements of creation to be His witnesses, since He has a legal dispute against His people (6:1-2). This type of language is also found in the Book of Isaiah (Isa 1:2). It is likely that Isaiah and Micah drew this terminology from the Book of Deuteronomy (Deut 31:28). The clear implication is that God has the right to hold His people accountable for their behavior.

God insists that His people keep their part of the covenant agreement. But even while making His demands, He holds out the possibility of grace and forgiveness. This leads his Covenant People to declare: "You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob and mercy to Abraham, which You have sworn to our fathers from days of old" (7:19-20).

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

Micah 1:1

"The word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah--the vision he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem."

BOTH KINGDOMS

Micah 1:2

"Hear, O peoples, all of you, listen, O earth and all who are in it, that the Sovereign LORD may witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple." (HEAVEN)

Micah 1:3

"Look! The LORD is coming from his dwelling place; he comes down and treads the high places of the earth."

Micah 1:4

"The mountains melt beneath him and the valleys split apart, like wax before the fire, like water rushing down a slope."

{ THE TERRIBLENESS  
OF JUDGMENT

Micah 1:5

BOTH ISRAEL AND JUDAH

"All this is because of Jacob's transgression, because of the sins of the house of Israel. What is Jacob's transgression? Is it not Samaria? What is Judah's high place? Is it not Jerusalem?"

TEN TRIBES

Micah 1:6

"Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of rubble, a place for planting vineyards. I will pour her stones into the valley and lay bare her foundations."

Micah 1:7

"All her idols will be broken to pieces; all her temple gifts will be burned with fire; I will destroy all her images. Since she gathered her gifts from the wages of prostitutes, as the wages of prostitutes they will again be used."

THE POWERLESSNESS AND  
INABILITY TO SAVE

GOD LOOKS UPON IDOLATRY  
AS SPIRITUAL ADULTERY

Micah 1:8

"Because of this I will weep and wail; I will go about barefoot and naked. I will howl like a jackal and moan like an owl."

CHARACTERISTIC OF DEEP GRIEF

NOT NUDE BUT STRIPPED OF  
ORDINARY CLOTHES AND DRESSED  
AS A CAPTIVE

Micah 1:9

"For her wound is incurable; it has come to Judah. It has reached the very gate of my people, even to Jerusalem itself."

IT HAS BECOME BEYOND HOPE

Micah 1:10

TELL-TOWN

WEEP TOWN

DUST TOWN

"Tell it not in Gath; weep not at all. In Beth Ophrah roll in the dust."

INDICATION OF SORROW AND SHAME

Micah 1:11

BEAUTY-TOWN

"Pass on in nakedness and shame, you who live in Shaphir. Those who live in Zaanan will not come out. Beth Ezel is in mourning; its protection is taken from you."

CF 1 PETER 3:12  
ISAIAH 10:28-32

NEIGHBOR-TOWN

Micah 1:12

BITTERNESS

"Those who live in Maroth writhe in pain, waiting for relief, because disaster has come from the LORD, even to the gate of Jerusalem."

THE EFFECTS OF SIN -

1. ADVERSITY
2. HARDSHIP
3. TRIALS
4. RUIN
5. UTTER DESTRUCTION

Micah 1:13 <sup>HORSE-TOWN</sup>

"You who live in Lachish, harness the team to the chariot. You were the beginning of sin to the Daughter of Zion, for the transgressions of Israel were found in you." <sup>NOT KNOWN</sup>

MAKE PREPARATION TO FLEE  
BEFORE THE ENEMY

Micah 1:14 <sup>FAREWELL PRESENTS</sup> <sup>POSSESSION OF GATH</sup>

"Therefore you will give parting gifts to Moreseth Gath. The town of Accib will prove deceptive to the kings of Israel."

<sup>FALSE SPRINGS</sup>

Micah 1:15 <sup>SARGON, KING OF ASSYRIA</sup> <sup>HEIR-TOWN</sup>

"I will bring a conqueror against you who live in Mareshah. He who is the glory of Israel will come to Adullam." <sup>WILD BEASTS CAVE</sup>

GONE INTO CAPTIVITY

Micah 1:16

"Shave your heads in mourning for the children in whom you delight; make yourselves as bald as the vulture, for they will go from you into exile."

<sup>HEAD AND NECK ARE BARE</sup>

#### MICAH'S CHAPTER 1 TEACHING:

1. God's holiness and righteousness of His Government is stressed by Micah
2. The clear presentation of the Messianic Hope is most outstanding
3. Cf. Micah 6:8

MICAH 1 - General Judgment

MICAH 2 - Special Sins Described (Injustice/Oppression)

Judgment is made necessary by  
the arrogance and corruption  
of the rulers

ALL KINDS OF PAIN & MISERY CONCEIVED  
Micah 2:1 MATURED INTO SPECIFICS  
"Woe to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds! At morning's light they carry it out because it is in their power to do it." ACTION

PROGRESSIVE  
nature of SIN

They add to their sin  
by forbidding the true  
prophecy to prophecy.

Micah 2:2  
"They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them. They defraud a man of his home, a fellowman of his inheritance."

Micah 2:3  
"Therefore, the LORD says: "I am planning disaster against this people, from which you cannot save yourselves. You will no longer walk proudly, for it will be a time of calamity."

JUDAH

NO ESCAPE FROM  
THE DISASTER

Micah 2:4  
"In that day men will ridicule you; they will taunt you with this mournful song: 'We are utterly ruined; my people's possession is divided up. He takes it from me! He assigns our fields to traitors.'"

Micah 2:5  
"Therefore you will have no one in the assembly of the LORD to divide the land by lot."

APPROPRIATE  
PUNISHMENT ADMINISTERED

Micah 2:6  
""Do not prophesy," their prophets say. "Do not prophesy about these things; disgrace will not overtake us.""

ISAIAH 30:10

Micah 2:7  
"Should it be said, O house of Jacob: "Is the Spirit of the LORD angry? Does he do such things?" "Do not my words do good to him whose ways are upright?"

Micah 2:8  
"Lately my people have risen up like an enemy. You strip off the rich robe from those who pass by without a care, like men returning from battle."

Micah 2:9  
"You drive the women of my people from their pleasant homes. You take away my blessing from their children forever."

Micah 2:10  
"Get up, go away! For this is not your resting place, because it is defiled, it is ruined, beyond all remedy."

Micah 2:11  
"If a liar and deceiver comes and says, 'I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer,' he would be just the prophet for this people!"

Micah 2:12  
""I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel. I will bring them together like sheep in a pen, like a flock in its pasture; the place will throng with people."

JUDGMENT INTERRUPTED  
BY WORDS OF HOPE AND  
ENCOURAGEMENT

Micah 2:13  
"One who breaks open the way will go up before them; they will break through the gate and go out. Their king will pass through before them, the LORD at their head."

"ONE WHO REBUILDS"  
1. MESSIAH LIBERATOR  
2. KING - JEHOVAH WORKING  
THROUGH THE MESSIAH  
(THE WHOLE WORK IS OF JEHOVAH)

MICAH COULD NOT BE ACCUSED FALSELY  
OF PREACHING ONLY ADVERSITY

# INTRODUCES A FRESH PROPHECY

Micah 3:1

"Then I said, "Listen, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel. Should you not know justice,"

SERVES AS A BACKGROUND  
AND INTRODUCTION OF THE

GREAT MESSIANIC MESSAGES OF  
MICAH 4, 5.

Micah 3:2

DESCRIPTION BECOMES MORE FORCEFUL

"you who hate good and love evil; who tear the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones;"

Micah 3:3

"who eat my people's flesh, strip off their skin and break their bones in pieces; who chop them up like meat for the pan, like flesh for the pot?"

NO STRONGER SIMILE FOUND IN THE SCRIPTURES;  
(LIKE CANNIBALS!) NONE MORE EXPRESSIVE

"THE WHITE-HEAT OF INDIGNATION!"

Micah 3:4

"Then they will cry out to the LORD, but he will not answer them. At that time he will hide his face from them because of the evil they have done."

CF. GALATIAN 6:8,9

Micah 3:5

"This is what the LORD says: "As for the prophets who lead my people astray, if one feeds them, they proclaim 'peace'; if he does not, they prepare to wage war against him."

→ INFLICT SUFFERING AND HARM AS THE BITING OF A  
SNAKE

THEY PROPHECY FOR MATERIAL BENEFITS. WHEN NOT  
PROVIDED, THEY DECLARE WAR ON ALL WHO REFUSE  
TO REWARD, OR SUPPORT, THEM

Micah 3:6

"Therefore night will come over you, without visions, and darkness, without divination. The sun will set for the prophets, and the day will go dark for them."

NEVER USED OF LEGITIMATE PROPHETIC ACTIVITY  
(MAGIC, SOOTH SAYING, NECROMANCY)

Micah 3:7

"The seers will be ashamed and the diviners disgraced. They will all cover their faces because there is no answer from God."

USED OF LEPROS TO INDICATE UNCLEAN - ALSO  
INDICATES MOURNING (TROUBLE / SHAME)

Micah 3:8

"But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin."

Micah 3:9 AGAIN!

"Hear this, you leaders of the house of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel, who despise justice and distort all that is right;"

ACTING OPPOSITE OF HOW THEY SHOULD ACT!

Micah 3:10

"who build Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with wickedness."

Micah 3:11

"Her leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet they lean upon the LORD and say, "Is not the LORD among us? No disaster will come upon us.""

PERVERTED RELIGION

Micah 3:12

"Therefore because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets."

TOTAL DESTRUCTION

Isaiah 30:10

"Who say to the seers, "Do not see," And to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits."

CIVIL RULERS - JUDGE FOR REWARD  
SPIRITUAL RULERS - TEACH FOR HIRE  
MORAL RULERS - DIVINE FOR MONEY

the difference between the true and the false teacher. It is not enough to preach platitudes, even when true; for unless one declares the things a people need to know, and unless he condemns the sins of which they are guilty, he is as much a false prophet as one who declares untruths or that which contradicts truth

MICAH 3, 4 - THE CLEAREST  
MESSIANIC PROPHECIES  
FOUND

THE TIME OF THE  
MESSIAH

Micah 4:1

"In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it." cf. DANIEL 2:44; 7<sup>13,14</sup>

Micah 4:2

"Many nations will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.' The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." LUKE 24:47

WHAT WILL COME IN THE LAST  
DAYS -

NEW ZION  
NEW LAW  
NEW SPIRIT  
NEW RESTORATION

Micah 4:3

"He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore."

THE NATURE AND  
CHARACTER OF THE  
KINGDOM (Jo 18:36)

FULFILLED - HB 12<sup>21-24</sup>  
PI 3<sup>20</sup>

↓  
I.E., NOT ESTABLISHED,  
DEFENDED, OR EXTENDED  
BY CARNAL WEAPONS  
AND MEANS

DEVOTE ENERGIES OF WAR TO  
PEACE AND USEFUL PURSUITS

Micah 4:4

"Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken." SYMBOL OF PEACE, SECURITY AND SAFETY

Micah 4:5

"All the nations may walk in the name of their gods; we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever."

THEIR STRENGTH AND STRONGHOLD

Micah 4:6 SAME PERIOD OF TIME

"In that day," declares the LORD, "I will gather the lame; I will assemble the exiles and those I have brought to grief."

Micah 4:7

"I will make the lame a remnant, those driven away a strong nation. The LORD will rule over them in Mount Zion from that day and forever."

Micah 4:8 A TOWER BUILT TO WATCH  
OVER THE FLOCK

"As for you, O watchtower of the flock, O stronghold of the Daughter of Zion, the former dominion will be restored to you; kingship will come to the Daughter of Jerusalem.""

RULE OF THE HOUSE  
OF DAVID TO BE RESTORED

Micah 4:9

"Why do you now cry aloud-- have you no king? Has your counselor perished, that pain seizes you like that of a woman in labor?"

FROM THE "LATER DAYS" TO  
LOOK AT THE "NOW."

BEFORE THE FUTURE  
GLORY WOULD COME,  
THERE MUST BE  
HUMILIATION, CAPTIVITY  
AND RETURN

Micah 4:10

"Write in agony, O Daughter of Zion, like a woman in labor, for now you must leave the city to camp in the open field. You will go to Babylon; there you will be rescued. There the LORD will redeem you out of the hand of your enemies."

AWAY FROM THE PROTECTION  
OF THE CITY

THE JOEEST, MOST PAINFUL OF  
MOURNING

BABYLON IS TO LEAD JUDAH AWAY

Micah 4:11

"But now many nations are gathered against you. They say, 'Let her be defiled, let our eyes gloat over Zion!'"

Micah 4:12

"But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD; they do not understand his plan, he who gathers them like sheaves to the threshing floor."

Micah 4:13

"Rise and thresh, O Daughter of Zion, for I will give you horns of iron; I will give you hoofs of bronze and you will break to pieces many nations." You will devote their ill-gotten gains to the LORD, their wealth to the Lord of all the earth."

Returns to the Messianic hope to take up  
the coming of the "former dominion."  
(4:8)

Micah 5:1

"Marshal your troops, O city of troops, for a siege is laid against us. They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod."

Micah 5:2 "HOUSE OF BREAD" "FERTILITY"

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

Relates To God, The ETERNAL ONE

Micah 5:3

"Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor gives birth and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites."

1. VIRGIN - IS 7:14 - MARY - UNLIKELY  
2. REMNANT of Israel's faithful - 4:10

Micah 5:4

"He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth."

Micah 5:5 15 9<sup>6</sup> Ep 2:14 THEIR DEADLIEST FOE

"And he will be their peace. When the Assyrian invades our land and marches through our fortresses, we will raise against him seven shepherds, even eight leaders of men." A NUMBER BEYOND THAT WHICH IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY

→ PERFECT NUMBER - TO MEET THE EMERGENCY

Micah 5:6

"They will rule the land of Assyria with the sword, the land of Nimrod with drawn sword. He will deliver us from the Assyrian when he invades our land and marches into our borders."

Micah 5:7

"The remnant of Jacob will be in the midst of many peoples like dew from the LORD, like showers on the grass, which do not wait for man or linger for mankind."

TWO QUALITIES -

1. LIKE DEW FROM THE LORD - 7
2. KINGLY STRENGTH AND POWER

Micah 5:8

"The remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among flocks of sheep, which mauls and mangles as it goes, and no one can rescue."

In these promises God gives to His people a tremendous hope and promise of victory as they face the threats of immediate destruction and future captivity.

Micah 5:9

"Your hand will be lifted up in triumph over your enemies, and all your foes will be destroyed."

Micah 5:10 CONTINUATION OF MESSIANIC PROPHECY

"In that day," declares the LORD, "I will destroy your horses from among you and demolish your chariots."

VERSES 10-15

The instruments of carnal warfare, all classes of wizards and idols in the land will be cut off.

Micah 5:11

"I will destroy the cities of your land and tear down all your strongholds." THEY WILL HAVE NO PLACE IN THE KINGDOM

Micah 5:12 ALL SORTS OF MAGICAL RITES

"I will destroy your witchcraft and you will no longer cast spells." - "CLOUD INTERPRETERS" OR "CLOUD" - "STORM MAKERS"

Micah 5:13

"I will destroy your carved images and your sacred stones from among you; you will no longer bow down to the work of your hands."

WAR WILL BE WAGED THROUGH THE POWER OF THE TRUTH

FORBIDDEN BY THE LAW - DT 16 21,22

Micah 5:14

"I will uproot from among you your Asherah poles and demolish your cities."

*In the Messianic Kingdom there will be no place for the relics of paganism*

Micah 5:15

"I will take vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations that have not obeyed me."

*no nation can, with impunity, reject the Christ and His truth, and survive.  
all who do reject, come under the wrath of God*



# ANCIENT WORDS

Words and Music by  
LYNN DESHAZO  
Arranged by The ZOE Group

♩. 76)

Ho - ly words long pre - served for our hand - ed  
of our faith

walk down In this world; They re - sound with God's own heart, O, let the  
came to us through sac - ri - fice; O, heed the

an - cient words im - part; Words of life, words of hope, give us  
faith - ful words of Christ: Ho - ly words long pre - served for our

strength, help us cope; In this world where - er we roam, an - cient  
walk in this world; They re - sound with God's own heart; O, let the

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C.C.L. 882454

words will guide us home. Ancient words, e - ver true, changing  
an - cient words im - part.

me, and changing you; We have come with o - pen hearts, O, let the

an - cient words im - part. Ho - ly an - cient words im - part. An - cient.

an - cient words im - part. We have come with o - pen hearts, O, let the

an - cient words im - part.

## CHAPTER 6 - RETURN TO THE PRESENT

VERSES 1-5 GOD CALLS UPON THE  
PEOPLE TO PRESENT THEIR CASE  
AGAINST HIM IN THE COURT  
HE HAS CALLED.

Micah 6:1

"Listen to what the LORD says: "Stand up, plead your case before the mountains; let the hills hear what you have to say."

THEY HAVE WITNESSED BOTH THE  
NATION'S INGRATITUDE - AND GOD'S GOODNESS

Micah 6:2

"Hear, O mountains, the Lord's accusation; listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth. For the LORD has a case against his people; he is lodging a charge against Israel."

Micah 6:3

"My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me."

IMPASSIONED PLEA!  
"WHERE HAVE I FAILED?"

Micah 6:4

"I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam."

GOD HAS DONE ONLY GOOD!

Micah 6:5 "FIND ONE EVIL THING I HAVE DONE TO YOU!"

"My people, remember what Balak king of Moab counseled and what Balaam son of Beor answered. Remember your journey from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD."

1<sup>ST</sup> CAMP AFTER CROSSING THE  
RIVER (JOS 4:19)

LAST RESTING PLACE BEFORE  
CROSSING THE JORDAN (JOS 3)

Micah 6:6

"With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?"

PEOPLE CONVICTED  
AND RECOGNIZED  
GUILT

HAVE FORGOTTEN THE LAW IN THAT THEY WERE IGNORANT  
OF HOW TO APPROACH GOD

Micah 6:7

"Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

WILLINGNESS TO DO ANYTHING EXCEPT WHAT

GOD REQUIRED

MOST PRECIOUS POSSESSION WOULD  
BE AN ABOMINATION

QUANTITY?

VERSES 6-8 THE PEOPLE'S RESPONSE  
WHAT MUST THEY OFFER FOR  
THEIR SINS?

Micah 6:8

"He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

DOING GOD'S WORK

ACT TOWARD GOD

AND MAN ACCORDINGLY

↳ COMPASSIONATE;

WARM HEARTEDNESS TOWARD MAN

RECOGNIZE ABSOLUTE HOLINESS  
AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.  
WALK HUMBLY IN OBEDIENCE

Micah 6:9

"Listen! The LORD is calling to the city-- and to fear your name is wisdom-- "Heed the rod and the One who appointed it."

JERUSALEM

SOLEMNITY OF THE OCCASION

JUDGMENT / CHASTISEMENT

ONLY THE WISE WILL GIVE HEED TO GOD

Micah 6:10

"Am I still to forget, O wicked house, your ill-gotten treasures and the short ephah, which is accursed?"

GOTTEN BY CORRUPTION

SHORT WEIGHTS AND MEASUREMENTS

SERIES OF QUESTIONS  
USED

VERSES 9-16 THEY COULD  
FIND NO CHARGE AGAINST  
GOD. NOW, GOD PRESENTS  
HIS CASE AGAINST THE  
PEOPLE

Micah 6:11

"Shall I acquit a man with dishonest scales, with a bag of false weights?"

BASIC INTEGRITY WAS  
MISSING

Micah 6:12 ALSO GUILTY OF -

"Her rich men are violent; her people are liars and their tongues speak deceitfully."

OPPRESSION, INJUSTICE, LIES, DECEITS,  
CAN'T BE TRUSTED

VERSE 8 - CONSIDERED BY MANY  
TO BE ONE OF THE MOST  
COMPREHENSIVE AND ALL  
EMBRACING STATEMENTS IN  
THE BIBLE

Micah 6:13

"Therefore, I have begun to destroy you, to ruin you because of your sins."

GREIVIOUS WOUNDS

THEY CANNOT GO ON WITHOUT BEING  
PUNISHED

Micah 6:14

"You will eat but not be satisfied; your stomach will still be empty. You will store up but save nothing, because what you save I will give to the sword."

ALL BECAUSE THE PEOPLE EXCHANGED THE  
WORSHIP OF GOD FOR SOMETHING ELSE.

Micah 6:15

"You will plant but not harvest; you will press olives but not use the oil on yourselves, you will crush grapes but not drink the wine."

Micah 6:16

"You have observed the statutes of Omri and all the practices of Ahab's house, and you have followed their traditions. Therefore I will give you over to ruin and your people to derision; you will bear the scorn of the nations.""

THE VIOLATION OF PRINCIPLES FOLLOWS  
THE ACCEPTANCE OF FALSE STANDARDS

Micah 7:1

"What misery is mine! I am like one who gathers summer fruit at the gleaning of the vineyard; there is no cluster of grapes to eat, none of the early figs that I crave."

VERSES 1-6  
PROPHET SPEAKS FOR  
JERUSALEM, CONFESSING THE  
SINS OF THE PEOPLE AND  
LAMANTING THE LACK OF  
RIGHTEOUSNESS

Micah 7:2

"The godly have been swept from the land; not one upright man remains. All men lie in wait to shed blood; each hunts his brother with a net."

NO ONE TO SHOW KINDNESS

Micah 7:3

"Both hands are skilled in doing evil; the ruler demands gifts, the judge accepts bribes, the powerful dictate what they desire-- they all conspire together."

LIKE TWISTED CORDS OF A ROPE, ALL WORK TOGETHER

THEIR GREED KNOWS NO LIMIT

Micah 7:4

HURTS AND INJURIES

"The best of them is like a brier, the most upright worse than a thorn hedge. The day of your watchmen has come, the day God visits you. Now is the time of their confusion."

IMPOSSIBLE TO UNRAVEL  
THE ENTANGLEMENT

Micah 7:5

"Do not trust a neighbor; put no confidence in a friend. Even with her who lies in your embrace be careful of your words."

NO ONE IN WHOM TO  
PLACE THEIR TRUST

Micah 7:6

"For a son dishonors his father, a daughter rises up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-- a man's enemies are the members of his own household."

TRULY AN EVIL DAY!  
EVIL IN THE HOUSE!

→ COMPLETE SOCIAL REBELLION  
AGAINST CONSTITUTED AND  
NATURAL RELATIONS

Micah 7:7

"But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me."

"TO PUT ONE'S TRUST IN  
DELIVERANCE CAN COME FROM NO  
OTHER SOURCE

VERSES 7-17 THE PROPHET  
NOW SPEAKS FOR THE  
RIGHTEOUS (SPIRITUAL)  
REMNANT. HE CONFESSES  
THEIR SINS, AND CALLS  
UPON GOD TO RECEIVE  
THEM.

Micah 7:8

"Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light."

Micah 7:9

"Because I have sinned against him, I will bear the Lord's wrath, until he pleads my case and establishes my right. He will bring me out into the light; I will see his righteousness."

THE REMNANT RECOGNIZE  
AND CONFESS THEY HAVE SINNED

Micah 7:10

NOW PUT TO SHAME

"Then my enemy will see it and will be covered with shame, she who said to me, "Where is the LORD your God?" My eyes will see her downfall; even now she will be trampled underfoot like mire in the streets."

VINDICATION

Micah 7:11

"The day for building your walls will come, the day for extending your boundaries."

Micah 7:12

THE RETURN OF ZION'S GLORY

"In that day people will come to you from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, even from Egypt to the Euphrates and from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain."

Micah 7:13

"The earth will become desolate because of its inhabitants, as the result of their deeds."

Micah 7:14

"Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock of your inheritance, which lives by itself in a forest, in fertile pasturelands. Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in days long ago."

A PRAYER

SOLITARILY

Micah 7:15

"As in the days when you came out of Egypt, I will show them my wonders."

TYPE OF REDEMPTION  
UNDER THE MESSIAH

Micah 7:16

"Nations will see and be ashamed, deprived of all their power. They will lay their hands on their mouths and their ears will become deaf."

SPEECHLESS

DEAFNESS

THEIR POWER IS INSIGNIFICANT  
IN COMPARISON TO THE LORD'S

Micah 7:17

PROSTRATE THEMSELVES

"They will lick dust like a snake, like creatures that crawl on the ground.

They will come trembling out of their dens; they will turn in fear to the

LORD our God and will be afraid of you."

FEAR AND TREMBLING

Micah 7:18

"Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy."

HOW GLORIOUS ARE HIS PROMISES!

IN SPITE OF INGRATITUDE AND WICKEDNESS

Micah 7:19

"You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea."

VERSES 18-20

Micah 7:20

"You will be true to Jacob, and show mercy to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our fathers in days long ago."

↓  
SHOWS HIS FAITHFULNESS BY FULFILLING  
THE PROMISES AND OATHS MADE TO  
JACOB AND ABRAHAM.

DOXOLOGY OF PRAISE TO A  
WONDERFUL GOD. THE  
PROPHET BRINGS THE MESSAGE  
TO A CLOSE!

THESE PROMISES FIND THEIR FULFILLMENT IN THE CHRIST.

THUS, THE PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT AND PROMISE - OF TRAVAIL

AND BIRTH - OF GLOOM AND HOPE -

"ENDS WITH THE GLOW OF FAITH AND  
HAPPY HOPE."

## MICAHA

## The Prophet of the Poor

Micah, the sixth of the twelve, bore a name which in itself was a creed, the fuller and probably older form, Mikayahu, signifying "who is like unto Jehovah?" (Mic. 1:1; 7:18 Jer. 26:18). Like Michael, meaning "who is like unto God?" The name contains a challenge.

He is called "the Morashtite" (Mic. 1:1), having been born in Moresheth--gath (1:14), about 20 miles distant southwest of Jerusalem. Like Amos, he was a native of the country. He apparently had no love for the cities (1:5; 5:11, 6:9).

Micah must have been a very striking personality. Possessed of strong convictions, he showed corresponding courage. The secret of his power is told in 3:8, "But as for me, I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." As a true patriot and like every true preacher, he fearlessly uncovered sin and pointed to Christ. He was preeminently a prophet of the poor and a friend of the oppressed. His whole soul went out in loyal sympathy to the downtrodden. His unfeigned sincerity stands out in sharp contrast to the flattering teachings of his contemporaries, who, as false prophets, regulated their messages by their income (3:5).<sup>1</sup>

He was raised up to prophesy both to Samaria and Jerusalem, but mainly to Judah; and as in all genuine prophecy, through present judgment future blessing appears. Dr. A. T. Pierson says

that the key word of the book is "Controversy," (6:2), and speaks of one portion as, "a little poem of twelve lines in Hebrew... one of the most exquisite things to be found in the entire Old Testament, and would alone be sufficient to prove that this Bible is the Word of God, for there is nothing like it in all the literature of men" (7:18, 19). How different our lives would be if only God was the Center and Circumference of all things, as He was to Micah to whom God was everything!<sup>2</sup>

Micah prophesied in the days of Jothan, Ahaz and early part of the reign of king Hezekiah. He was contemporary with Isaiah. He began his ministry after Uzziah's death, and it must have closed in the early part of Hezekiah's reign, for the idolatries which he rebuked were done away at Hezekiah's reformation. His message was peculiarly to the cities, as centers affecting the national thought and action. This he distinctly affirmed in his opening words. The prophecy is a declaration of a Divine program, and consists of three addresses, each beginning with a call to hear. Micah declared to those in authority in the cities, which were centers of authority, the messages of the One whose authority is supreme.<sup>3</sup>

#### His Times

According to the title of his book, Micah prophesied "in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (1:1), a date amply confirmed by internal evidence, and also by Jeremiah 26:18, which quotes Micah 3:12. Under Jotham, splendid luxury reigned. His ambition to build fortresses and palaces in Jerusalem cost

many a peasant's life. Under Ahaz, Judah was forced to pay tribute to Assyria, which, together with the cost of the Syro-Ephraimitic war of 734 B. C., fell as a heavy burden upon all classes. Both rich and poor suffered. The grasping, avaricious landlords used their power to oppress, confiscating the property of the poor and even evicting widows from their houses. Under Hezekiah, who attempted to reform the state, conditions became even more hopeless. Men ceased to trust one another, Jerusalem became a hotbed of factions and intrigue. The custodians of the law abused their powers; nobles fleecing the poor, judges accepting of bribes, prophets flattering the rich, and priests teaching for hire (ch. 2). Commercialism and materialism were supplanting almost the last vestige of everything ethical and spiritual. At such a crisis Micah appeared and attempted to call the nation back to God and to duty.<sup>4</sup>

#### His Message

Micah championed the cause of the poor against the oppressions of the rich. He loved his country, but was especially devoted to his own poor and oppressed people. He preached righteousness and justice with flaming words. His words were effective because the reasons for his passionate proclamations were so evident. He denounced corruption, injustice and false standards of religion.<sup>5</sup>

Moulton says of the three compositions that make up this book the first attacks social corruption and the delusive promises of the false prophets, insisting upon the purging judgment that must precede the glorious restoration. The last presents the eve of



this judgment: the corrupt in their despair, and the faithful--  
 "the man of wisdom"--to whom the judgment comes as deliverance.  
 Between these stands one of the most exquisite morsels of prophetic literature: a dramatic scene hardly a page long embodying a single thought. A court of Judgment is before us: God is the plaintiff, Israel, the defendant: even a witness can be found in the Balaam who, coming to curse Israel, was forced to cry blessings on the object of Jehovah's care. In such a court who may preside as judge? It is the Mountains, the "enduring fountains of the earth," who listen to the plea; when the defendant Israel has with trembling refused to put in an appearance, it is the Mountains who pronounce judgment:

He hath shewed thee. . . 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?

Justice, mercy and a sense of the presence of God--these are the enduring foundations of the spiritual world.<sup>6</sup>

Most all agree that Micah's message falls into three natural divisions. Hester designates these three divisions as (1) The doom of Jerusalem and Samaria (chap. 1, 2), (2) The transgressions of religious leaders (chap. 3-5), and (3) Jehovah's controversy with his people (chap. 6, 7).<sup>7</sup> Morgan divides this book into three messages: A Message to the Nations concerning the Chosen (1, 2), A Message to the Rulers concerning the Coming One (3-5), and a Message to the Chosen concerning the Controversy (6, 7).<sup>8</sup>

Micah begins with a grand description of the coming of the Lord to judge Israel and Judah for their sins and idolatry, when

Samaria, as first in wickedness, shall be first to fall before the avenging enemy; and then a similar fate shall happen to Jerusalem and Judea with the deportation of their inhabitants. The sins of the grandees have brought this judgment upon them. There are found in them oppressions, injustice and violence. The false prophets only pander to their evil lusts, and lull them into false security; and the penalty of all this guilt shall be removal from their present home. But God will not cast them off altogether, for they shall yet one day be restored in triumph.

In the second part the prophet, showing the necessity of the judgment, rebukes the cruelty and rapacity of the great men; the false prophets who led people astray; the priests who taught for hire; the judges who sold to the highest bidder. As punishment for these sins, Zion the royal seat, Jerusalem the holy city, and the temple, the house of God, should be brought to desolation. But for this triple overthrow there shall be a triple restoration. The people shall return from captivity, and the Lord's house shall be raised on high, and the nations shall flock unto it to learn true religion; Jerusalem shall be inhabited again, increased and beautified. The Redeemer shall be born in Bethlehem; his kingdom shall extend to the ends of the earth; but all idolatry, all trust in the arm of flesh, must be removed before the great consummation shall occur.

In the last part, Jehovah is represented as holding a controversy or lawsuit with his people, justifying his conduct, and listening to their rejoinder, which is so far from being satis-

factory that judgment is pronounced upon them. Then Micah, identifying himself with the people, acknowledges the justice of the sentence, while he bewails its infliction; he repents of the sins which have occasioned this punishment, looks patiently to God, and puts his sole trust in him, and, in answer to his prayers, is rewarded by the promise of deliverance.<sup>9</sup>

### His Lasting Principles

The particular sins which Micah condemned are:<sup>10</sup>

1. Idolatry, ch. 1:7; 5:13.
2. Evil plans and devices, ch. 2:1.
3. Covetousness, ch. 2:2.
4. Rapacity of princes, prophets and priests, ch. 3:2-11.
5. Witchcraft, ch. 5:12.
6. Dishonesty, ch. 6:10-12.
7. Universal corruption, ch. 7:2-4.
8. Treachery, ch. 7:5, 6.

All the prophets went to the heart of the matter in condemning the empty formality, the useless perfunctory performance of rites and ceremonies, but none of them stated it more clearly and forcibly than did Micah. cf. 6:7,8.

Some writers have very mistakenly gone to the extreme of saying that the priestly sacrificial system has no place with the prophets and by them was abandoned. Nothing could be more mistaken than such an interpretation of the prophets. The sacrificial system was divinely appointed to be continued and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. One of the last acts of our Lord was to celebrate the performance of these ordinances. They relied upon the mere doing of the thing in meeting their religious obligations, and ignored the fact that what invested the performance of these rites with

a true significance was the sincere spiritual attitude of the offerer. Micah would take the same position regarding religious acts of today that are devoid of true character because the heart is unrenewed and away from God.

Micah emphasized the fact that the Messiah is the hope of the world. That is true today, it will be true of the future. There is no other hope of the world. Education, culture, legislation, politics, cannot save the world. In the shifting of foundations, the breaking up of the moral, religious and social orders, with growing disintegration, the hope of the world is the Christ of every heart whose kingdom of grace and redeeming power shall extend from pole to pole.<sup>11</sup>

# A Study of Micah 3 (1)

RANDY HALL

(Micah 3 is one of the most powerful presentations in the prophetic material. In this two-part discussion we hope to see a glimpse of a prophet of God at work.)

The prophet Micah was from the little Judean town of Moresheth. He was a contemporary of Isaiah, working at the end of the eighth century B.C. Micah 1:1 places his work in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah—a rather long span of time possibly extending from 742 to 687 B.C. It is likely that Micah's work as reflected in the book of Micah extends from just before the fall of Samaria (ca. 725) to near 700 B.C. Assyria was the dominant political and military power in Micah's day. In 721 Samaria fell to Assyria and left Judea as a small buffer state between Assyria and Egypt. There could be no doubt that Judah's existence was endangered and Micah saw in this situation the fact God would allow Assyria to overthrow Judah as punishment for her sins. Micah's task was to warn the nation and call her back to the precepts of God in order that he might spare Judah.

The exact nature of Micah's message was no doubt affected by his close proximity to Amos and Isaiah. Like these two great prophets, Micah championed the cause of the poor and the oppressed in Israel. In chapter 3 Micah engages in wholesale condemnation of the secular and religious leaders of his day. His message is so effective that it has been referred to as the "language of revolution" (H. A. Bosley, "Micah," *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 6, 1956, p. 916). Micah is indeed preaching in hope of a revolution, but the revolution he seeks is a spiritual rather than a political one. The setting for the oracle is likely a gathering of the leaders of the Jerusalem community—a meeting due, perhaps, to the Assyrian crisis. The chapter falls neatly into three strophes of four verses each: vv. 1-4, the secular leaders are condemned; vv. 5-8, the religious leaders are condemned; vv. 9-12, both the secular and religious leaders are condemned and the destruction of Jerusalem is predicted.

The oracle opens with the introductory formula "As I said," which need not imply that this chapter is to be connected to the previous one. Micah specifically addresses himself to the secular rulers of Judah. Although the terms "Jacob" and "Israel" are more often applied to the northern kingdom, it is clear that this oracle is intended for the leaders of the South (cf. vv. 9-12). Although it is possible that the phrase "heads of Jacob" refers to the civic leaders, while the phrase "rulers of the house of Israel" refers to the governmental leaders, the two phrases most likely should be viewed as synonymous parallelism by which Micah means all the secular leaders.

The chief task of such leaders is to "know justice." Here, as is often the case in Hebrew, "know" means more than merely intellectual cognition, but rather to consider something of value and to act upon that consideration. "Justice" refers to the idea of just relationships or to right relations between men (in this context, particularly the relations between the rich and poor). Micah holds that in knowing justice the leaders would have "a practical understanding of its obligations and a sympathy with its aims which will lead to a righteous administration of law" (J. M. P. Smith, W. H. Ward and J. A. Bewer, *A*

*Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah, and Joel*, 1911, p. 72). The task of the leaders is "the application of the principles of righteousness to concrete situations, as administrative decision are made or judgments are rendered in the lawcourts" (G. L. Archer, "Micah," *New Bible Commentary: Revised*, 1970, p. 755). But instead of loving justice and the good and hating evil (as Amos had preached, cf. Amos 5:14), the leaders hate good and love evil.

Micah gives a vivid description of the oppression by the secular leaders who knew justice intellectually but acted to the contrary. There are three possible images that Micah draws upon to paint his picture. One picture is that of a shepherd (or a watchdog) whose job is to watch over and protect the sheep, but instead he turns and attacks the sheep to devour them. Like sheep, the poor are not only fleeced but also eaten up. Or, perhaps Micah had in mind a Jerusalem butcher shop and so he describes the destruction taking place in those terms. The leaders "tear the skin" "from off their bones" and "break their bones in pieces" and "chop them up like meat." The pieces are then tossed into the kettle for cooking. It is also possible, given the fact that the objects of the oppression are human, that Micah is thinking more in terms of cannibalism! The first line of verse 3 calls to mind Psalm 14:4, "Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon the Lord?" (The only difference in Micah's situation is that these leaders do call upon the Lord—in an outward fashion.) The leaders who were supposed to have concern for the people and protect them (i.e., see that justice was done) were acting like butchers who slaughter animals and have no feelings for the victims.

The leaders who are engaged in this evil activity are religious men. While oppressing the poor, they no doubt praised the Lord for their prosperity—a prosperity achieved by injustice. As good religious men they will automatically call upon the Lord in a crisis. When the day of the Assyrian invasion comes and the homes and lands of the leaders are threatened (just as they have destroyed the homes and lands of the poor), they will turn to the Lord for protection. But just as they have rejected the cry of the poor so the Lord will reject their cry. He will not answer. God's rejection of them is described as his turning his face away so as not to recognize or be moved to compassion by their plight. In the Old Testament the Lord is said to lift up his countenance upon a people when favorably inclined (Num. 6:26) and to hide his face when he withdraws his favor (Deut. 31:17; Isa. 8:17). This terminology is in connection with the royal language where to see the face of the king was a privilege that might be granted or refused a subject.

The first paragraph of Micah 3 indicates the seriousness of the situation in Judah in Micah's day. The secular rulers are corrupt and have forsaken their duty to establish justice in the land. But the story does not stop here. Next week we shall notice the last two paragraphs of the chapter where Micah condemns the religious leaders and predicts the fall of Jerusalem.

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# A Study of Micah 3 (2)

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Last week we noticed Micah's condemnation of the secular rulers of Judah for their injustice and Micah's warning that God would not heed their cry for help when punishment came (most likely from the Assyrian army). We turn now to the last two paragraphs from Micah 3. With the familiar prophetic introductory formula "Thus says the Lord," Micah turns his attention to the prophets of the land. Those who bear the brunt of his attack are no doubt the professional or guild prophets who reside in the courts of the governmental leaders and are paid by them. Instead of joining Micah in condemning the unjust and evil practices of the leaders and warning them of punishment, the professional prophets support the wicked rulers by assuring them of peace and continued prosperity. They ally themselves with the rich in order to secure their own material position. Without such "official religious" sanction, the leaders would have to be more circumspect in their wickedness.

At best, these professional prophets were guilty of too narrow patriotism and too low a view of God, but their motives were more selfish. They prophesy "peace" for those who pay them without realizing that peace is a gift of God to those who remain in covenant relationship with him. These prophets do not just passively encourage the degraded situation in Judah by prophesying good for their masters. They also use their position to force others to pay them well or they threaten their clients with war. To "declare" a war may refer to the religious ceremonies associated with the commencement of war and may have been a prophetic function. But in this context "war" seems to be used in a broader sense to mean a campaign of slander and intrigue by which to destroy a client rather than actual military fighting. But whatever the nature of such activity, one thing was certain: it paid to have the prophets on your side. And that was accomplished by paying money.

The professional prophets are false prophets in that they prophesy falsely, but that does not necessarily mean that they do not know the word of God. Micah uses the figure of an eclipse, a symbol for terror and destruction, to show that the time is coming when these prophets will receive no word from God due to their abuse of the prophetic office. Micah may be echoing verse 4 and mean that in the day of the Assyrian invasion the prophets will not only be proved false, but they will have no answer from God as to the meaning of the situation or for the way out of the situation. The prophets will be disgraced and put to shame.

Micah uses the term "diviners" in ridicule of the false prophets, and it is possible that they did actually engage in the forbidden act of divination. If so, this would add to the charges against them.

When the day of shame comes and the prophets have no prophecies they will cover their lips (literally, "moustaches"). Such an act was a sign of humiliation and shame (Lev. 13:45 of a leper) or of mourning (Ezek. 24:17). It may be that in this context the act symbolizes the fact that the prophets have nothing to say.

It may be that this middle paragraph is a reply to the question, "Micah, why are you the only one prophesying thus? What about all the other prophets?" Micah first shows that the other prophets are false prophets, whose message depends on the size of their salary. In the future they will cease to prophesy. Micah, on the other hand, claims that his message is the work of the power of the Lord's Spirit and is not tied to financial gain. Indeed, Micah's message was not an easy one to proclaim nor one that he wanted to proclaim. But he was able to proclaim it, and, in fact, had to, because he was filled with the Spirit. He summarizes for the listener the true job and calling of a prophet: "to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin."

The beginning of the third section closely parallels the opening verses of the chapter. Micah again calls the leaders to hear his word. Again he describes the leaders as "abhorring justice" and "perverting all equity" (literally, "twist all that is straight"). There was no doubt that the land, especially Jerusalem, was prosperous, but it had been accomplished by bloodshed.

The prophet denounces a material prosperity which is based upon the spoilage of the poor and the confiscation of the property of those condemned to death (Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 79).

The leaders had probably forced the poor to work without pay (cf. Jer. 22:13ff) and had gained property and homes by legally (?) having the poor condemned by bribery. The traditional defenders against crime had become criminals themselves and had built the "new Jerusalem" on violence (J. Marsh, *Amos and Micah*, 1959), p. 103).

The poor had three avenues by which they might seek help and justice: the rulers, the priests, and the prophets. Micah accuses all three groups of taking bribes or of only performing their jobs for those who could handsomely pay. In such a system the poor man did not stand a chance. The leader who sat at the gate and judged cases awarded such cases to the rich man who could pay him. The poor man always lost. The priests (here mentioned for the first time) were to teach the Law and thus provide guidance for the people. This service was now available only to the rich since the priests charged a fee for their work. The poor man went without religious education.

As Micah has already shown, the prophets work for money and their message is determined by their pay. Micah here again uses the word "divine" to describe the activity of the false prophets. Thus, all the leaders of the nation, both secular and religious, are guilty of taking bribes and doing their jobs only for those with the ability to pay.

Yet, as seen in verse 4, these men were all religious. "Whatever may be said of morality, religion is booming" (H. McKeating, *The Books of Amos, Hosea, and Micah*, 1971, p. 168). The people felt that since Israel was God's chosen nation and Jerusalem was his home, especially the temple, no evil could befall them. They were sure that as long as they kept the rituals of the cult they were safe. Such a view of religion borders on magic.

Underlying the moral decline of his day he (Micah) saw a perverse religiosity—the belief that Yahweh would in all circumstances protect Judah, the home of his people and the seat of his worship (D. W. Thomas, "Micah," *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, 1962, p. 630).

What they failed (or refused) to realize was that the covenant relationship upon which they based their trust was a relationship conditional upon their obedience to God's ethical laws. They thought the essence of religion was the performance of the ceremonial rituals. Their problem was a false trust not unlike the Pharisees of Jesus' day, who trusted in their physical descent from Abraham.

Jerusalem was the center of their false trust and it had to be destroyed, both as a punishment for their evil deeds and to teach them that their view of religion was faulty. So Micah declares in the last verse of the chapter that what the leaders had built up with bloodshed and injustice would be destroyed by God. They were resting securely in peace, but God would allow the Assyrians to overthrow Jerusalem and utterly destroy it. It would be plowed up like a field and the city which they had striven so hard to build up would become a heap of ruins. The hill upon which the temple stood would be totally desolate and overgrown with trees and brush. Micah saw Jerusalem as the seat of sin (1:5) instead of the seat of religion.

Jeremiah 26 gives some indication of the impact of Micah's prediction and warning of the fall of Jerusalem. The fact that his prediction was remembered a hundred years later shows its powerful impact. But Jeremiah 26 also informs us that due to Micah's preaching and prediction a reform took place. Hezekiah, as king of the nation, led the people in repentance and supplication to the Lord that the destruction might not take place. Jeremiah 26 shows that due to the repentance of the people Micah's prophecy

(Continued on page 10)

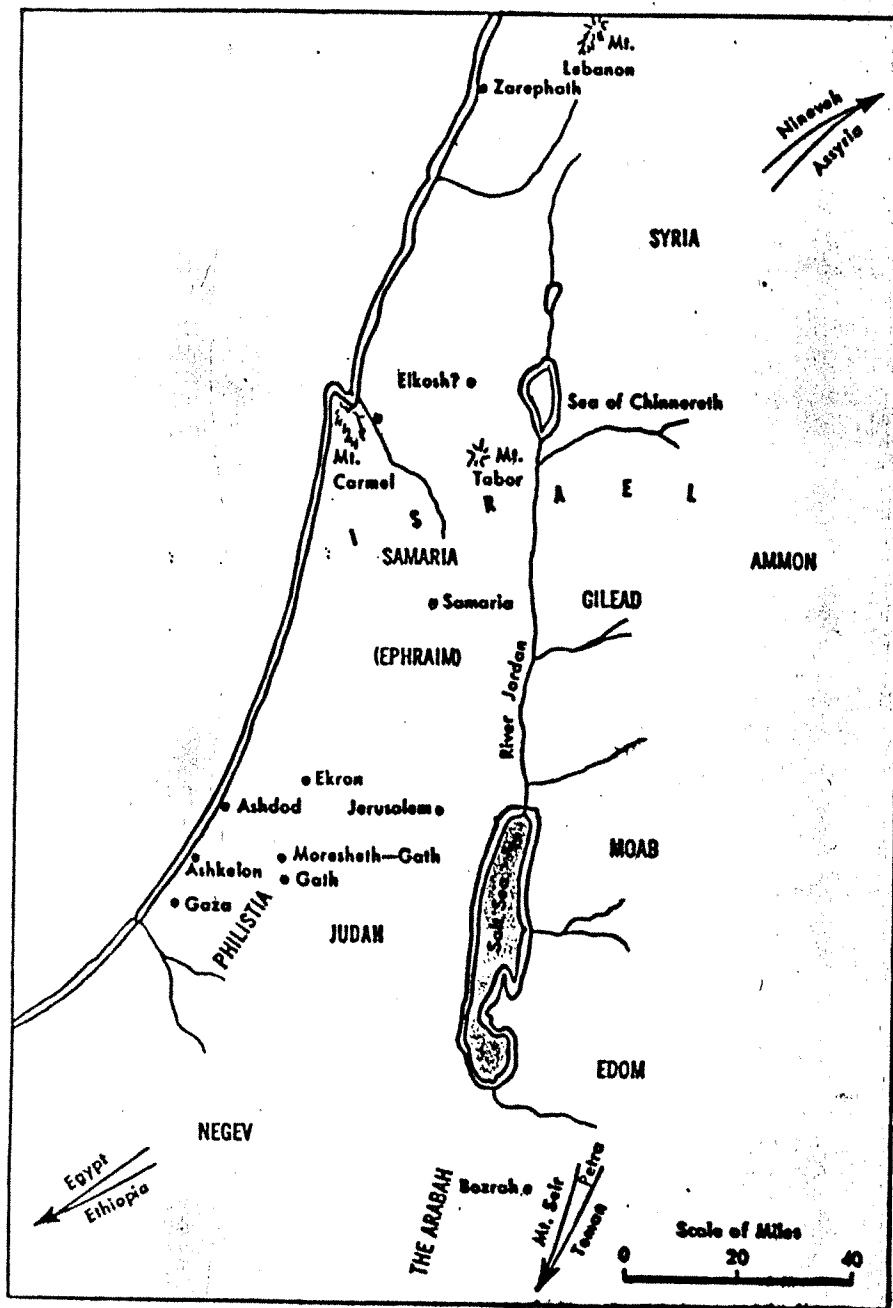
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(Continued from page 7)

in 3:12 was never fulfilled. (This is in keeping with the principle laid down in Jeremiah 18:7-10.) Micah's powerful, Spirit-filled message accomplished its intended purpose.

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OUTLINE: Micah 1:1-3:15

(Note: There are two lessons on Micah in this quarter. Here is a brief, easy to remember outline that will fit in the margin of your bible:

- I. Judgment (1:1-3:12).
- II. Comfort (4:1-5:15).
- III. The Way of Salvation (6:1-7:20).

Lesson twenty-one covers the first of these three sections; twenty-two covers the remaining two sections.).

- I. JUDGMENT (AGAINST JUDAH AND ISRAEL; 1:1-3:15).
  - A. The prophet and his days (1:1).
  - B. Threats against the North and South (1:2-16).
    - 1. Israel (Samaria) has Jehovah as a witness against her (1:2-8).
    - 2. Judah is guilty of the same sins (1:9-16).
  - C. Jehovah has good reason to be displeased (2:1-13).
    - 1. The sinful ways of the people are described (2:1-11).
    - 2. A ray of hope: a remnant is to be gathered (after the captivity; 2:12,13).
  - D. The leaders of the people are corrupt -- and largely responsible for this sad condition (3:1-12).
    - 1. The princes of the land (3:1-4).
    - 2. The prophets who preach "Peace" (3:5-7).
    - 3. The powerful Spirit in Micah pronounces punishment (3:8-12).
      - a. Micah knows their true condition (3:8-11).
      - b. Jerusalem shall be destroyed as a result (3:12).

QUESTIONS:

1. Compare the list of kings in Micah 1:1 with Isaiah 1:1 and Hosea 1:1.
2. What was the "transgression of Jacob"?
3. What were the "high places of Judah"?
4. What kinds of things could the inhabitants of 1:10-16 "look forward to"?
5. List some of the sinful ways of the people in 2:1-11. Do any of them compare with sinful ways of our day?
6. What great emperor gave the people the opportunity to "assemble" after the captivity (see 2:12,13; Ezra 1)?
7. Describe the princes of 3:1-4.
8. Describe the prophets of 3:5-7.
9. What is Micah saying about the source of his message in 3:8?
10. What does 3:9-12 show about the kind of a prophet Micah was?

## MICAH--MASTERFUL MESSENGER

TEXT: **ROMANS 15:4**

Introduction

There are numerous passages of scripture that teach us that we are no longer subject to the Old Testament as law. Accordingly, there are several passages, like our introductory text, that point out, however, many valid reasons for studying the Old Testament. Such a study would include a study of the prophets.

Studying  
Prophets

A study of the prophets will strengthen our faith, and our understanding of the prophets will aid in understanding the New Testament. This is the reason for our present study.

Why Study  
Them?

It may be asked, "Just who were the prophets?" They were preachers who had color, courage, and dynamic qualities....The prophet lays the chief emphasis on life, on conduct, on moral excellence. He irritates, prods, denounces, stands alone in his demands, and insists on applying God's eternal principles to life. To him conduct is more important than ceremony. He is an ethical teacher, a moral reformer, and often a dangerous disturber of men's minds. He constantly strikes at sins, vices, and lapses and seeks to stir men to holier lives.<sup>1</sup>

Who Are  
They?

One such prophet was Micah, and today we are going to study the Old Testament book which bears his name.

Micah  
the  
man

The original and fullest form of his name is MIKAYAHU, which means "who is like Yahweh." A prophet's name is important. Names coupled with that of God or Yahweh signified the prophet's attitude and allegiance and, in the case of Micah, was a challenge to false prophets and sinners.<sup>2</sup>

Name

Micah was a native of Moresheth-Gath, and of his life we know nothing but what may be gathered from his book.<sup>3</sup> Moresheth-Gath, to which Micah

Home

Identifies himself (1:1, 14), is a small town on the border between Judah and Philistia, twenty-two miles southwest of Jerusalem. It was sufficiently detached from Jerusalem to produce men of courage and independence of thought. From his book one can surmise that Micah lived close to both the people and the soil, possessing a keen sympathy for both.

*Character*

*Champion  
of the  
Underdog*

Micah was the prophet of the poor and downtrodden. We detect in him the courageous and fearless spirit of one who is indignant over the corruption and heartlessness of inhuman rulers and time-serving religionists. In clear and forceful tones, he denounces the wrongs of his day. J.M.P. Smith has well summarized his relation to two contemporary prophets when he said, "He had Amos' passion for justice and Hosea's heart for love." Micah saw clearly the conditions and needs of the hour, and he met these fearlessly by attacking and condemning the sins of the people and by pointing them back to God.<sup>4</sup>

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

*Compared  
to other  
Prophets*

Micah was a younger and less illustrious contemporary of Isaiah. Like Amos, he lived in the country--a humble, quiet, and soul-searching prophet who, in the solitude of the fields, saw the same vision of God that Isaiah had seen in the turmoil of the city. And, like Isaiah, he tried to warn his people against the dangers of social injustice and to inspire them with a divine hunger for peace.

*Definition  
of  
Religion*

Micah is remembered especially for his definition of religion that embraces all men, in all places, and at all times. This exalted definition may be reduced to three words: justice, mercy, and humility.<sup>5</sup> To quote the passage, "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).

*Locations  
of  
Concern*

Micah lingers in his prophecy among the towns of the maritime plain (the Shephelah), where his birthplace lay, but the chief scene of his ministry

was Jerusalem. He names it in the beginning of his prophecy as the place where the idolatries and, with the idolatries, all the other sins of Judah were concentrated. The two capitals, Samaria and Jerusalem, were the chief objects of the word of God to him because the corruption of each kingdom streamed forth from them.<sup>6</sup>

*Time Frame*  
Micah began his work at the time of King Jotham (739-735 B.C.) and served through the entire reign of Abaz (735-715 B.C.) and perhaps through all that of Hezekiah (715-687 B.C.).<sup>7</sup> *Time Line - Visual*

*Background*  
These were trying days, constantly overshadowed by the threat of invasion and foreign rule. Had it not been for the rule of the good King Hezekiah and the diligent and fearless preaching of Isaiah and Micah, it is probable that Judah would have been lost like Israel. However, by the providence of God, enough spiritual "salt" was found to save the land and the people from the ruthless destruction by Assyria.

*Social Conditions*  
Socially and morally, Judah presented a dark picture during the latter part of the eighth century. Rulers sold the rights of men, and vested interests gained control of the lands taking away the privileges of the people. The wealthy coveted the lands (2:1-2) and robbed the poor (2:8), casting women out of their possessions (2:9). Corrupt business ethics were practiced (6:11). The people were under powerful control of false prophets (2:11) who prophesied for reward (3:6, 11) and priests who taught for hire (3:11). Rulers in their greed were as cannibals (3:1-3, 9), and judges judged for a bribe (7:3).

*Religious Reforms*  
Although great religious reforms were initiated by Hezekiah (II Chronicles 29-31), Micah seems not to have been very deeply impressed with them. Religion had become a matter of form with the people; ceremonial observances were thought to meet all religious requirements. The reform was not from the deep recesses of the heart. It's true that things were not as bad as in Israel, for Judah endured another 135 years after the fall of Samaria, but the religious fervor was too superficial to bring permanent results.<sup>8</sup>

*Analistic  
Religion  
condemned*

What Micah condemned was the meaningless, empty performance of these ordinances. They relied upon the mere doing of the thing in meeting their religious obligations and ignored the fact that what invested the performance of these rites with a true significance was the sincere spiritual attitude of the offerer. Micah would take the same position regarding the religious acts of today that are devoid of true character because the heart is unrenewed and away from God.<sup>9</sup>

The holiness of Jehovah and the righteousness of His government are stressed by Micah. His teaching at this point, as at others, is forceful and simple. As long as Jehovah's people do right, they will enjoy His favor; when they turn away from Him and His standard, they must suffer punishment. The good will of Jehovah cannot be obtained by carefully observing ritual but by observing His divine principles of right in manner of life.

*Messianic  
Hope*

Micah's clear presentation of the Messianic hope is among the most outstanding to be found in all the prophets. He sees the mountain of Jehovah's house as above all other powers and kingdoms; he beholds Jehovah, in His righteousness, ruling and judging among the nations. This would be accomplished through a ruler born in Bethlehem who would be co-eternal with Jehovah.<sup>10</sup> "But thou Beth-lehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

When the wise men from the east came seeking the Christ child asking, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?", the answer given, as this event is recorded in Matthew 2:1-6, was the well-known truth of God in the words of Micah.<sup>11</sup>

*Outline of  
the Book*

Let's now look at an overview of the book of Micah in order to come to a better understanding of the conditions of his day and to enable us to make proper application to conditions in the day and age in which we now live.

READ FROM BIBLE MICAH 1:1-2

"The word of <sup>Lord</sup> ~~Jehovah~~ that came to Micah" introduces the entire prophecy

as having come from Jehovah. It was God's word through the prophet. The inclusion of both Israel and Judah clearly indicates, regardless of what has happened, that God considered them as one people, His people. No matter how many times they had forsaken Him, if they would only repent, He would accept them back again. The same holds true for wayward Christians this morning.

The prophet begins by calling the nations of earth to behold the judgment of the Lord against the people of His wrath and to learn a lesson from this.

READ FROM BIBLE MICAH 1:3-7

All nature is thrown into convulsion at His presence. The figures of volcano and earthquake are used by the prophet as he pictures melting hills with lava flowing like water down into the valleys. This figure of speech is not to be taken literally, but as a figurative illustration of the terribleness of the judgment.

The capitals, Samaria and Jerusalem, and the rulers of the two nations are held responsible for leading the two peoples into apostasy and ruin.

Samaria, proud and corrupt and formerly at ease in her mountain fortress (Amos 6:1), is to be cast down, becoming an utter waste. The stones of her magnificent buildings and supposedly impregnable walls would be rolled down into the surrounding valley.

Because of the terrible judgment to come on Samaria, the prophet would lament and wail in a dirge-like utterance, characteristic of oriental peoples in time of great grief.

In verses 10-15, the prophet pictures the desolation that is to sweep the country. Making a play on the names of villages and towns, he expresses his grief. In Shaphir, "beauty-town" or "fair-town," nakedness and shame would be substituted for beauty or fairness. They are not marching from Zaanen, "march-town," for apparently they shut themselves up behind the

Judgment  
on Judah

God's  
Word

MICAH'S  
MESSAGE

Descriptive  
Judgment

1. Capitals  
Responsible

Judgment Upon  
Them

Dirge  
over  
Cities

2. Play on  
Names

walls of the city. Beth-ezel, "neighbor-town," will no longer stand by as  
a neighbor. Maroth, "bitterness," waits anxiously for good, but only bitterness  
and evil from Jehovah come down to it, even to the gates of Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup>

*Like Isaiah* This passage of Micah can be compared with that of Isaiah 10:28-32 where  
the prophet describes the panic which spreads from one town to another near  
Jerusalem, when the Assyrian army under Sennacherib invaded Judah and took  
all its fenced cities.

*Affect on Hezekiah* We know from Jeremiah 26:18 that the prophetic warnings and reproofs  
of Micah wrought powerfully on the mind of good King Hezekiah, and that,  
for a time, the judgments impending over Jerusalem were averted by his  
repentance.

*New statement application* I believe the words of 1 Peter 3:12 are particularly illustrated here.  
The verse reads: "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his  
ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them  
that do evil." Hoshea, and the people of Israel, because they continued in  
disobedience to the Lord's will, suffered captivity at the hands of the  
Assyrians. Hezekiah, and the people of Judah, a much smaller nation than  
Israel, were able to triumph over the same powerful nation because they  
were faithful to Jehovah, and He fought for them a while longer. As men  
serve with devotion and fidelity and keep the commandments of God, they  
prosper and all is well with them. When they turn away from Him and "do  
that which is evil in his sight," adversity, hardship, and trials are often  
their lot.

*Hoshea*  
*U.S.*  
*Hezekiah* Here, as often elsewhere in the sacred writings, the effects of sin  
are clearly shown, and the lesson is plainly taught that sin leads to ruin  
and utter destruction.<sup>13</sup>

READ FROM BIBLE MICAH 1:16

*Sin Leads Destruction* Micah says "they are gone into captivity," speaking as if the people  
are already gone into bondage, for he sees little to encourage him otherwise.

As a mother deprived or bereaved of her children, let Zion make herself as bald as a vulture, whose neck and head are almost completely bare. Let the people mourn, for they and their children are destined to be led away into captivity.<sup>14</sup> If those who have left their first love and returned into the ways of the world don't soon repent, they will be exiled eternally.

*Cond. trans responsible* Micah combats in his discourses, as does Isaiah, the heathenish abuses which had found their way into the culture, not only in Samaria, but also in Judah and Jerusalem, which the reformation of Hezekiah could counteract only in part and not at all permanently. Further, he rebukes the people for the social injustices, of which the powerful and the great in the land were particularly guilty, and the dishonesty and unfaithfulness in business and in conduct, in general. At all times Micah, in doing this, was compelled to defend himself against false prophets who slighted these charges as of little importance, threatened, and antagonized the prophet in his announcements of impending evil.<sup>15</sup>

*TL. 1005 subject* Judgment, in general, was pronounced in Chapter One. Now special sins are described. The injustice and oppression of the rich are denounced and threatened with punishment.

READ FROM BIBLE MICAH 2:1-2

*progress of sin* Here we see the progressive nature of sin. Iniquity is first conceived, purposed, or planned. Secondly, it is matured into specific desires. In the rest and stillness of night when they should commune with their own hearts and their God, they turn the chamber of sleep into a place for plotting and abuse their retirement by wicked designs. Then, finally, they carry these thoughts and plans into action--even violent action if necessary. The passage says, "Woe to them!" "Woe" In Hebrew means all kinds of pain and misery. *Woe no table* According to 1 Timothy 6:9-10, covetousness is the root of all evil to ourselves *covetousness* and others. "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some



coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." A covetous man is cursed in this life and in that to come. No passion so deeply agitates and degrades, so effectively enslaves and destroys the soul, as covetousness. To the toil of getting is added the trouble of keeping.

Appropriate  
Punishment

In verses 5-6, we see how appropriate punishment will be administered. They devised evil against others, and evil is devised against them. They took the lands of others, and their own land shall be taken from them. Riches, honor, and pleasure--He can turn into captivity, and unjust gain will pass into the hands of others. God can humble the proud, subdue the self-willed, and throw the mightiest into captivity and sorrow. If we fit into any of these categories, we need to flee now from our sin that we may be saved from judgment at last. The covetous may think their creature comforts will last forever, but, as the teaching of Luke 16 reveals, punishment is inevitable. "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented" (Luke 16:25).

Verse seven is a rather curious statement. Let's consider it in some detail.

READ FROM BIBLE MICAH 2:7

Preaching  
offends  
-phes y Not

Men are often offended with the faithful preaching of the word. The truth is unwelcome to those who live in sin. They want the preacher to please them, withhold the truth, and speak peace when there is no peace. As we learn from Isaiah 30:10, that prophet had the same problem. "Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits." When the wicked said, "Propesy not," the Lord answered, "They shall prophesy." The word must be published. Men must be warned whether they hear or forbear. In silencing the prophets, they did what they could to silence and limit the Spirit. Human sinfulness cannot frustrate Divine purposes. God's word does good and not harm; therefore, it is folly to oppose it. The benevolent nature of God's words are "Do good." The power of God's words are "Do good." The

God's Word  
Does Good

persons who enjoy the benefits, "the upright," are those who return to the way of righteousness and do not forsake it.<sup>16</sup>

Those who are unrighteous continue in their iniquity despite the warnings. Verses 9-11 detail how far these covetous officials were willing to go to fill their gluttonous appetites--even to the point of robbing widows' houses and putting orphans on the street. From this gain will come loss, as all that they have will be taken from them.

The prophet interrupts his message of judgment with a word of hope and encouragement. Let's listen to this message from verses 12-13.

READ FROM BIBLE MICAH 2:12-13

Although this people will be cast out of their land, there to perish for their sins, yet will Jehovah bring back the faithful remnant. "The breaker is <sup>come up</sup> gone up" is thought to be the Messiah who breaks down the wall of sin. Most commentators feel that these two verses present a Messianic picture. The "breaker" is the liberator who breaks through the gates of their bondage. This glorious hope in the midst of a prophecy of judgment and doom is the prophet's answer to his critics who would accuse him of preaching only adversity.<sup>17</sup>

In Chapter Three, Micah utters three oracles against the leaders of the nation: (1) against the rulers, (2) against the false prophets, and (3) against the rulers, priests, and prophets as a group.

A few years ago, Brother Charles Williams wrote, "Respect for law and order is at a low ebb; the integrity of many public officials is questioned, and moral degeneracy is widespread."<sup>18</sup>

Ever since the "Watergate affair," most Americans have become quite skeptical and very suspicious of our political leaders. The situation in Micah's day was surely far worse. The utter corruption of these leaders is indicated by the charge, "Ye who hate the good, and love the evil." Instead of ministering justice, he charges them with being cannibalistic. There are no stronger similes found anywhere else in Scripture. Micah expresses

the white heat of his indignation at the treatment dealt the common people by their rulers. As they have sown, so they shall reap. They have destroyed the people without mercy; so without mercy, their destruction shall come.

*B False Prophets*

*U.S.  
True Prophets*

The prophet then proceeds in verse 5 from the rulers to the false prophets, who likewise have made their contribution to the miserable condition of the nation. These false religious guides made the people err; they led them astray.<sup>19</sup>

False teaching has been a problem since the creation of man. Every Old Testament prophet found it necessary, one time or another, to face false teaching. Edward J. Young said, "Two kinds of prophets existed side by side in Israel--the true and the false. The true came forth with a message from Jehovah, a message for the benefit of the nation. The false uttered a message of human origination, and consequently, one which could not meet the deep needs of the people and which could not be for its ultimate good." Micah spoke forcefully against the false teachers of his day. He said, "But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might to declare unto Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin" (Micah 3:8). He was unrelenting in his denunciation of idolatry and of priests who taught for hire and prophets who divined for money. He refused to compromise truth or fellowship those who did. We must speak today with the courage and conviction that characterized God's Old Testament prophets<sup>20</sup>

*Priests  
For Hire*

At verse 9, Micah reaches the climax of his prophecies of doom. He now brings the three classes of rulers together and lays the blame for the coming judgment at their feet. The prophet lays down a thunderbolt from heaven: "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field." This is a figure of total destruction. The entire city, the pride of the nation, would fall. The fulfillment of the prophecy was averted until the time of the Chaldeans, but it did come.

The following two chapters present one of the clearest Messianic prophecies to be found in God's word.

*"Plowed  
as  
a  
field"*

In verses 1-8 of Chapter Four, we are told what will come in the latter days: the new Zion, the new law, the new spirit of the divine subjects, and the restoration of the Davidic dominion.

The announcement of Jerusalem's destruction is followed by a glorious Messianic promise. "In the latter days" is an expression, when used by the prophets, which always refers to the time of the Messiah. It points to the end of the Jewish age and the introduction of the new era under the spiritual ruler. The temple-mountain is that on which Jehovah's spiritual temple would rest in the latter days; it would be at the head or above all other powers and would be permanently established--never to be destroyed.

It is from this spiritual center that the word of the Lord would proceed and would be the center of all learning unto salvation. No word of instruction would proceed from any other source. Jesus was referring to this fact when He declared that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).

The kingdom of the "latter days" would not be established, defended, or extended by carnal weapons and means. Force can have no place in a spiritual kingdom. Jesus made this clear when he said, "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).

The fact that this promise is now fulfilled in Christ and is not to be fulfilled in some future time is abundantly clear from the New Testament. The Hebrew saints had come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God. They had come to God, the judge of all, to a new covenant that had the beginning of its announcement from Jerusalem, and to the blood that could speak peace to their souls, according to Hebrews 12:21-24. The saints of the Hebrew letter were receiving a kingdom that could not be shaken. Through the Spirit, Micah saw clearly what would come in latter days.<sup>21</sup>

READ FROM BIBLE MICAH 4:10

*B. Distances  
Before  
Restoration  
Babylon*

In this passage we have the surprising revelation that it is Babylon--not Assyria--that will lead Judah away captive. However, Micah reveals deliverance from Babylon and the re-establishment of Israel in Jerusalem. He furthermore declares that this is to take place through a King who shall come forth from the deepest humiliation of the house of David and shall be born in Bethlehem and who, like David originally a simple shepherd boy, shall make His people happy in peace and prosperity. Against this King, the last great onslaught of the Gentiles shall avail nothing.<sup>22</sup>

*T. Messiah  
Birthplace  
Announced*

In the midst of the judgments and desolations portrayed by Micah, the Messiah prophetically appears. How often that occurs with the other prophets. A new great Messianic fact is given us by the prophet--the birthplace of the Messiah. The other prophets have given us the great things of His person and work, but we now know for the first time where He will be born. Later, during the Exile, Daniel will give the time of His coming as during the "reign of these kings" (the Romans).

*A. Exile  
Only  
Interruption*

What is of special importance in this Messianic notice in Micah is the work of the Redeemer and Deliverer in restoring the world. Judah will be reduced to a state of desolation and go into exile, but she will be restored to bring forth the Messiah--the great mission of the Hebrew race. The Exile will be but an interruption and designed to effect those purer spiritual conditions by which Judah will be able to achieve these divine ends.

*Messiah  
Hope of the  
World*

Micah emphasizes the fact that the Messiah is the hope of the world. That is true today. It will be true of the future. There is no other hope of the world. Education, culture, legislation, politics cannot save the world. In the shifting of foundations, the breaking up of the moral and social orders, the hope of the world is the Christ of every heart whose kingdom of grace and redeeming power shall extend from pole to pole.<sup>23</sup>

*The Case  
Against  
Israel*

From the glory of the future, the prophet returns in Chapter Six to the present and immediate future. Farrar has well said, "In the earlier

*Ingratitude*  
*J.S.*  
*Blessings*  
chapters 4-5, we have the springtide of hope; we have in chapters 6-7 the paler autumn of disappointment." The case against the people has been presented.

Like Hosea, Micah calls the nation to come before Jehovah in a court of law.

As the mountains and hills have witnessed the whole of Israel's history, now Jehovah will call upon them to present their cause before these as before a jury. They have witnessed both the nation's ingratitude and Jehovah's goodness; let them now hear the case.

*Sacrifice*  
*Not*  
*Service*  
In verses 6-8, we learn of the people being convicted before the Lord as they recognize their guilt. Micah personifies the nation as an individual and addresses Jehovah in search for a solution to their sinful condition.

What God desires is the penitent heart of the individual--toward Him and one's neighbor. The "good" that He requires is the doing of His will. To "do justly" is to act toward God and man according to the divine standard of righteousness revealed in His law. To "love kindness" or "mercy" is to show a compassionate warmheartedness toward man. And "to walk humbly with thy God" is to recognize the absolute holiness and righteousness of God and to walk in humble and submissive obedience to His desired will. Micah 6:8 is one of the most comprehensive and all-embracing statements in the Old Testament.

*Threat*  
*of*  
*Indignity*  
The rest of the chapter deals with the fact that they could find no charge to make against Jehovah for their present condition. In rebuttal, therefore, Jehovah presents His case against the people. Desolation would come to Judah as the ultimate fruit of this corruption found among the leading class who had followed in this evil and wicked way.

*AT Absence*  
*Righteousness*  
In Chapter Seven, the prophet presents Jerusalem bemoaning the absence of any righteous ones within her ranks, for which cause the judgment has come. The state of affairs is such that one knows not in whom he can place his trust; as a matter of fact, there is no one. One's enemies may be found among those of his own house. That sounds a lot like Nazi Germany or present-day Soviet Union. A condition of this sort is utterly contrary to the law of God and

*No One*  
*in Trust*

the natural relationship that should exist. From reading verse 7, we learn that for the penitent remnant, there is great hope.

READ FROM BIBLE MICAH 7:7

Deliverance can come from no other source than from Jehovah. In the midst of an otherwise hopeless despair, the spiritual remnant turns to the Lord.

In verses 12 and 13, the prophet looks beyond the desolation of his day and the return from captivity to the Messianic age when men of all races and nationalities will come together and build up the kingdom of God's dear Son.

In response to the wonderful promises of God that there would be a glorious return to a new Zion, a prayer goes up to God from the heart of this penitent remnant.

Verse 15 tells us that as He had redeemed their fathers out of Egypt by unrivalled demonstration of His power, so would He redeem the remnant by showing "unto them marvelous things." These marvelous things were demonstrated in the Christ and His works for the salvation of the new Israel.

Micah closes his book by standing in awe at the presence of such infinite love and greatness. In this awe he closed his message with an ode of praise to the Lord. "Who is a God like unto thee?" (verse 18).

Sin is the great enemy and destroyer of mankind, but by God's power, it will be triumphed over and trampled underfoot. The casting of sins into the depth of the sea indicates that they will be put completely out of His sight, according to Psalm 103:12 "as far as east is from west." "Remembered no more," Jeremiah states and "blotted out" as Peter preached in Acts 3:19. Thus this prophecy of judgment and promise, of travail and birth, of gloom and hope, ends with the glow of faith and happy hope!"<sup>24</sup>

*B. Prayer  
of  
Penitent*

*Demonstration  
of  
Deliverance*

*Praise  
to  
Jehovah*

*SUMMARY*

