

MICAH

- 1) --Micah was a younger contemporary of Hosea and Isaiah, prophesied 740-693 BC. He was a country man from Moresheth-Gath, in Judah, 25 miles SW of Jerusalem. He wrote most of chapters 1-3, very little of 4-7. Except for 1:1, the entire book is in poetry. More a collection of materials than a carefully planned, coherent work. /// His name may be a shortened form of Michayahu, which means “who is like Yahweh.” Not the Micaiah of 1 Kings 22:8ff, but the same as in Jeremiah 22:18.
- 2) 1:5-7 – God shifts roles from prosecuting attorney to judge. /// Samaria’s sin was worshiping pagan idols and selling herself to other nations to gain favors from them.
- 3) 1:8 – Like Isaiah (chap 20) who walked naked and barefoot for three years as a visible sign of the shame and exile of Egypt and Ethiopia by Sargon of Assyria.
- 4) 1:10-15 – Several cities appear only here and are unknown to us – Shaphir, Maroth, Beth-ezel, Zaanani. Of the towns identified, all are in the Shephalah, southwest of Jerusalem. This fits with Sennacherib’s campaign against Judah (his annals claim 41 cities taken) in 701. Some commentators contend that Micah chose the names that can be made a pun with threatening meanings. E.g. Maroth and m_râ (bitter), L_kiš (Lachish) and lărakeš (like a team of horses), etc. /// V. 11 is the same as 2 Samuel 1:20, Saul’s and Jonathan’s death on Mt. Gilboa.
- 5) 1:16 – Not clear who these children are – perhaps the people of the towns destroyed, or those sent into exile in Babylon when Jerusalem fell.
- 6) 2:5 – Undoing what Joshua did in Joshua 18:10 – apportioned the newly conquered lands to the Israelites by lot.
- 7) 2:6-11 – Very difficult to translate – Micah is commanded not to preach (NIV: prophesy) negative words – a just God would not do the terrible things Micah is prophesying. Vv 8-10 describe the offenses of the people while the people want a prophet who will promise what they want to hear (false words). Innocent people will suffer with the guilty (v 9).
- 8) 2:12-131 – Why these words of hope in the middle of the oracles of doom? Probably added by a redactor much later, crying out with a word of hope in the midst of the tragedy.
- 9) 3:5 – The “prophets” were misusing their gifts, selling them to the highest bidder and ignoring those who could not “put food in the mouths,” i.e. could not pay them;.
- 10) 3:12 – Jeremiah says in 26:18-19 that God relented on this prophecy of Micah’s and Jerusalem has never been reduced to plowed fields and covered with forests.
- 11) 4:8 – Used only one other place – Genesis 35:21 – the burial of Rachel at Bethlehem. Some scholars think that Micah is addressing both Bethlehem and Jerusalem – predicting the restoration of Jerusalem and a new king from Bethlehem (Jesus).
- 12) 4:13 – Is God an avenger, or has the battered and humiliated people projected this image? Perhaps God’s anger is the other side of his love and concern?
- 13) 5:2 — Ephrathah was the Canaanite name for the territory around Bethlehem. /// This is clearly messianic: see Matt 2:6, John 7:42, Luke 2:4-5 /// NIV: “small among the clans of Judah.”
- 14) 5:3 – Many scholars believe that this is Mary delivering Jesus. Daniel Simondson (NIB) believes the verse ties in with 4:9-10, that the labor pains are the years in exile, which will end when the exiles return home. It may be that both are true. Micah was giving hope to the exiles, but his words can also be Messianic for present-day Christians.
- 15) 5:6-7 – A very confusing passage. Who are the shepherds and who is the enemy? And are

the shepherds subservient to the Messiah from Bethlehem just mentioned. Perhaps “Assyria” is a code name for any invading nation, as Nimrod in Genesis 10:8-11 is associated with Babylon, Assyria, and other Mesopotamian nations.

- 16) 5:8-10 – “remnant of Jacob” – what’s left of the people after the exile? What’s Israel’s role then? They will be like dew and rain, life-giving gifts in a semi-arid world. But also like a lion tearing unhindered through a flock of sheep eliminating all enemies.
- 17) 6:1-5 – Note that Joshua is not mentioned here. His part in this crossing of the Jordan was probably added by the deuteronomists no earlier than in the reign of Hezekiah. //Balak hired Balaam to speak a curse against Israel but it turned into a blessing (Numbers 22-24). // From Shittim to Gilgal – probably the crossing of the Jordan into the promised land.
- 18) 6:8 – “goodness” in the NAB, “mercy” in the NIV. The Hebrew word is hesed, which cannot be conveyed by any simple English word. It has to do with love, loyalty, faithfulness.
- 19) 6:10-12 – God enumerates the sins of the dishonest business men with false scales and weights, violence, lying.
- 20) 6:14b – Difficult to translate. Perhaps it will be difficult to conceive, and those few who are born will die by the sword Babylon or Assyria.
- 21) 6:16 – Omri was the first ruler of the third Israeli dynasty. He established Samaria as the capital of Israel in 880 BC (1 Kings 16:24). Ahab was the son of Omri, succeeded him in 875 BC, took Jezebel to wife, and allowed her god Baal to be worshiped (1 Kings 16:30-33).
- 22) 7:8-10 – Jerusalem speaking. The enemy is probably Edom, which aided the Babylonians in destroying Jerusalem and rounded up escapees and returned them to Jerusalem for transport to Babylonia.
- 23) 7:14-15 – Bashan and Gilead were known for their excellent pastures and were lost to Israel since the 8th century BCE. See Deut 3:12-17 for the original apportionment.
- 24) 7:18-20. Read in synagogues on Sabbath between new Year and Day of Atonement, also after reading of Jonah on the Day of Atonement.