

Notes & Outlines

MICAH

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MICAH

WRITER: Micah. His name means *Who is like Jehovah?* The word has the same derivation as Michael, which means *Who is like God?* There are many Micahs in Scripture, but this one is identified as a Morasthite (Micah 1:1) since he was an inhabitant of Moresheth-gath (Micah 1:14), a place about twenty miles southwest of Jerusalem, near Lachish. He is not to be confused with any other Micah of Scripture.

TIME: Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah and prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Micah 1:1). He was younger than Isaiah, and his prophecy might be called a miniature Isaiah or Isaiah in shorthand, since there are striking similarities. Ewald and Wellhausen attacked the unity of this book. It is the same attack that has been made against Isaiah.

The ministry of Micah was directed to both Jerusalem and Samaria (Micah 1:1), and he evidently saw the captivity of the Northern Kingdom.

THEME: The judgment and redemption of God, Micah 7:18.

Who is a God like unto thee, who pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy.

God hates sin, but He loves the souls of the sinners.

STYLE: For many this is the favorite of the Minor Prophets. The writing is pungent and personal. Micah was trenchant, touching, and tender. He was realistic and reportorial — he would have made a good war correspondent. There is an exquisite beauty about this brochure, which combines God's infinite tenderness with His judgments. There are several famous passages that are familiar to the average Christian. Through the gloom of impending judgment, Micah saw clearly the coming glory of the redemption of Israel.

STRIKING STATEMENTS:

1:6-16 — Assyria destroyed Samaria, a miniature of the great destruction of the last days (Micah 4:11-13).

2:12 — The future regathering of the remnant.

3:6, 7 — The end of prophecy.

3:12; 4:9, 10 — Coming destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon and not by Assyria. Jeremiah's life was preserved because of Micah 3:12 (cf. Jeremiah 26:18).

4:1-8 — The coming kingdom over the entire earth (one world).

5:2 — The birth of Christ (quoted in Matthew 2:5, 6).

5:7, 8 — The future ministry of the remnant.

6:6-8 — “One of the most sublime and impassioned declarations of spiritual religion that the Old Testament contains” (Dean Stanley).

7:18, 19 — Micah lived up to his name in exalting God. Dr. Pierson calls it, “A little poem of twelve lines in the Hebrew....One of the most exquisite things to be found in the entire Old Testament.”

COMMENTS: Micah pronounced judgment on the cities of Israel and on Jerusalem in Judah. These centers influenced the people of the nation. Micah condemns urban problems that sound very much like our present-day problems: violence, corruption, robbery, covetousness, gross materialism, and spiritual bankruptcy. He could well be labeled “the prophet of the city.”

OUTLINE: The more natural division of the prophecy is to note that Micah gave three messages, each beginning with the injunction, “Hear” (1:2, 3:1, 6:1).

The first was addressed to “all people”; the second was addressed specifically to the leaders of Israel; the third was a personal word of pleading to Israel to repent and return to God.

“WHO IS A GOD LIKE UNTO THEE” IN:

- I. Proclaiming future judgment for past sins, Chapters 1— 3**
 - A.** Prophet's first message, directed against Samaria, reaches to Jerusalem, Chapter 1
 - B.** Prophet's second message describes specific sins, Chapter 2
 - C.** Prophet's third message denounces leaders for sins, Chapter 3
- II. Prophesying future glory because of past promises, Chapters 4, 5**
 - A.** Prophecies of last days, Chapter 4
 - B.** Prophecy of first coming of Christ before second coming

and kingdom, Chapter 5

III. Pleading present repentance because of past redemption,
Chapter 6

IV. Pardoning all iniquity because of who God is and what He does, Chapter 7

COMMENT:

I. Proclaiming future judgment for past sins, Chapters 1 — 3

A. Prophet's first message, directed against Samaria, reaches to Jerusalem, Chapter 1

v. 1 — Samaria is the capital of the Northern Kingdom. One of the golden calves is there. Micah prophesies to both kingdoms, but primarily to the Northern Kingdom.

v. 2 — “All ye people” is a call to all the world to hear how God is going to judge Samaria.

v. 3 — The Assyrian is God's instrument of judgment.

v. 4 — This prophecy, as well as the remaining prophecies, look beyond the local fulfillment to the personal return of Christ to the earth in judgment.

v. 5 — Jerusalem, with its temple and service, is the appointed place of worship, but now it has become just another high place of heathen worship. Even today going to church can become an evil.

v. 6 — The remainder of the chapter describes prophetically the destruction of Samaria by Assyria, as recorded historically in 2 Kings 17:3-18.

vv. 8-16 — A lamentation of Micah. The meaning of names reveals a play upon words:

Gath (v. 10): weep-town (“Weep not in weep-town,” cf. 2 Sam. 1:20)

Aphrah: dust-town

Saphir (v. 11): beauty-town

Zaanan: march-town

Maroth (v. 12): bitterness

Lachish (v. 13): horse-town

Achzib (v. 14): lie-town

The Assyrian came to the gate of Jerusalem but did not enter (v. 12).

B. Prophet's second message describes specific sins, Chapter 2

v. 1 — They spend their time in bed plotting and planning to do evil the next day.

v. 2 — Covetousness, violence, and oppression are the sins of Samaria, also of Jerusalem.

vv. 3-6 — The Lord responds by stating that He, too, is plotting evil (i.e., what *they* would call evil, because it is judgment against them).

v. 7 — God's word will be received by His people who obey Him, and it will be rejected when they do not obey.

v. 8 — They oppress the poor.

v. 9 — They have problems of the slums. The landlords are heartless.

v. 11 — They want to hear false prophets approve and applaud drunkenness.

vv. 12, 13 — The Lord will ultimately regather the remnant.

C. Prophet's third message denounces leaders for sins, Chapter 3

vv. 1-4 — (a) Sins of princes: Injustice — they love evil and hate good.

vv. 5-8 — (b) Sins of prophets: They declare peace — cause people to err. Micah is declaring God's word by the power of the Spirit (v. 8).

vv. 9-12 — (c) Sins of leaders of Jerusalem: Injustice of rulers and love of money of prophets. Frightful judgment coming to Jerusalem (v. 12).

II. Prophesying future glory because of past promises, Chapters 4, 5

A. Prophecies of last days, Chapter 4

vv. 1-3 — This is a prediction of the millennial kingdom, with Jerusalem as the center of worship and government. At that time swords

will be beaten into plowshares (v. 3).

v. 4 — This is the millennial kingdom (see Zechariah 3:10) and pictures the security of Israel.

v. 5 — The American Standard Version gives a better understanding of this verse:

*For all the peoples walk every one in the name of his god;
and we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever
and ever.*

vv. 6-8 — Israel is to be regathered.

vv. 9, 10 — The Babylonian captivity was also in the future at the time of this writing and would intervene before the regathering of Israel.

v. 11 — This part of the prophecy looks beyond to the time of Armageddon, which ends the Great Tribulation in the coming of Christ to the earth.

B. Prophecy of first coming of Christ, before second coming and kingdom, Chapter 5

v. 1 — This verse probably belongs to the last chapter, as it is in the Hebrew text, and awaits future fulfillment. Or it could apply to King Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:7).

v. 2 — This was quoted by the scribes to Herod when the wise men came, looking for “he that is born King of the Jews” (Matthew 2:2; see also Matthew 2:5, 6).

*In His humanity Christ came from Bethlehem;
In His deity Christ came from eternity.*

vv. 3-15 — Christ is a shepherd to both Israel and the church. This bridges the gap between the first and second comings of Christ — and beyond the second coming. It covers both the period of the church and the kingdom.

III. Pleading present repentance because of past redemption, Chapter 6

vv. 1, 2 — This is the beginning of the third and final message of

Micah to the nations of the world and to Israel in particular. Jehovah has a contention with His people, Israel.

v. 3 — Jehovah pleads with His people to bring a charge against Him.

v. 4 — He recites their past history — how He redeemed them out of Egypt.

v. 5 — God did not permit Balaam to curse His people.

vv. 6, 7 — These were the things that Israel was doing that displeased (not pleased) God.

v. 8 — The condition of the heart and its relation to God are the primary considerations in the Old Testament religion. The externalities of religion were only of value in ratio to the condition of the heart (see Matthew 7:21-23; 23:25, 26; Romans 10:9, 10).

vv. 9-12 — God cannot overlook dishonesty, violence, crookedness, lying, and deceit.

vv. 13-15 — God would judge them then and now.

v. 16 — They follow in the way of Omri and Ahab. These two kings, father and son, were set aside and judged severely.

IV. Pardoning all iniquity because of who God is and what He does, Chapter 7

vv. 1-9 — The prophet confesses that God is accurate in His complaint against Israel.

vv. 10-17 — Judgment is coming in spite of past and future blessings. The land shall also be judged. It shall be desolate.

vv. 18, 19 — There is no one or no thing to which God can be compared. He has no equal. He is greatest when He pardons sins. He alone can forgive sin (Mark 2:7). He made the supreme sacrifice so He could forgive sin. John 3:16 belongs with this section.

He delights and yearns to forgive sins. Sinners must come His way (John 14:6).

v. 20 — God will perform His promises to Abraham and Jacob because He is the truth, and He can show mercy.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Feinberg, Charles L. *The Minor Prophets*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1976.
- Gaebelein, Arno C. *The Annotated Bible*. 1917. Reprint. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1971.
- Ironside, H. A. *The Minor Prophets*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.
- McGee, J. Vernon. *Jonah and Micah*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991.
- Tatford, Frederick A. *The Minor Prophets*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Klock & Klock, n.d.
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 2. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1982.

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