

MICAH

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BACKGROUND

About 10-20 years before the northern kingdom of Israel fell to Assyria in 722 B.C., Micah was called to prophesy to both the northern and southern kingdoms. Judah itself would barely escape destruction by Assyria in 701.

AUTHOR

Micah was from Moresheth in Judah, about 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem. His identity is verified by Jeremiah, who quoted him and named his hometown (compare [Micah 1:1](#); [Micah 3:12](#); [Jeremiah 26:18](#)).

DATE

Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah ([Micah 1:1](#)), c. 740-690, the same time span as Isaiah's ministry (see [Introduction to the Prophets](#)).

RECIPIENTS

Micah prophesied concerning both the northern and southern kingdoms ([Micah 1:1](#)), but since he was from the south and mentioned only southern kings ([Micah 1:1](#)), it is generally assumed that his ministry was primarily to Judah.

PURPOSE

- To pronounce judgment for continual apostasy and insincere religious observance ([Micah 3:8](#); [Micah 6:6-7](#)).
- To show that true faith has practical manifestations, such as social justice and honesty in business ([Micah 6:8](#)).
- To proclaim God's ultimate plans for his people ([Micah 2:12-13](#); [Micah 7:11-20](#)).

UNIQUE FEATURES

- Micah is unique for the number and precision of his prophecies:
 - the fall of the northern kingdom ([Micah 1:6-7](#))
 - the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib in 701 B.C. ([Micah 1:9](#), [12](#))

- the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple ([Micah 3:12](#))
- Judah's Babylonian captivity ([Micah 4:10](#))
- Judah's return from captivity ([Micah 4:10](#))
- the exact name of Christ's birthplace ([Micah 5:2](#))
- He was one of the few writing prophets referred to by name by another prophet (see [Jeremiah: Unique Features](#)).

COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS

Isaiah:

- Micah and Isaiah share one significant parallel passage ([Micah 4:1-3](#); [Isaiah 2:2-4](#)). These two contemporaries may have borrowed from Joel, an earlier prophet (see [Joel 3:10](#), the opposite of Micah and Isaiah's message).
- Both prophets used nakedness to emphasize their message ([Micah 1:8](#); [Isaiah 20:2](#)).
- Both spoke of people coming to Israel from Assyria and Egypt (the two extremes of the ancient Near East) in the messianic age ([Micah 7:12](#); [Isaiah 19:23-25](#)).

Jeremiah:

- Jeremiah, writing more than a century later, quoted [Micah 3:12](#) ([Jeremiah 26:18](#)).
- Both spoke of greedy prophets and priests ([Micah 3:11](#); [Jeremiah 6:13](#)), as well as of prophets who falsely promise peace ([Micah 3:5](#); [Jeremiah 6:14](#)).
- Both spoke of a remnant of Israelites upon whom God will show mercy ([Micah 7:18-20](#); [Jeremiah 23:3](#); [Jeremiah 44:28](#)).

OUTLINE

- I. DENUNCIATION OF ISRAEL ([Micah 1-3](#))
 1. Judgment of Samaria ([Micah 1](#))
 2. Why Israel is being judged ([Micah 2](#))
 - C. Judgment of Jerusalem ([Micah 3](#))
- II. CONSOLATION FOR ISRAEL ([Micah 4-7](#))
 - A. Prophesying Israel's restoration ([Micah 4-5](#))
 - A. The eternal kingdom ([Micah 4](#))
 - B. The eternal king ([Micah 5:1-6](#))
 3. A kingdom triumphant and holy ([Micah 5:7-15](#))
 - B. Pleading for Israel's repentance ([Micah 6](#))
 - C. Israel's darkness ([Micah 7:1-10](#))

D. Israel's dawn ([Micah 7:11-20](#))

TIMELINE

c. 740 B.C.:	Micah, Isaiah begin ministries
722 B.C.:	Fall of Israel
701 B.C.:	Death angel strikes Assyrians
c. 690 B.C.:	Micah, Isaiah end ministries
586 B.C.:	Fall of Judah
538 B.C.:	1st exiles return

[Micah 1:1-7](#) *The divine indictment.* After noting that his prophecies concerned both Samaria and Jerusalem (capitals of the northern and southern kingdoms), Micah summoned all the earth to hear God's case against his people. His judgment would be catastrophic, as indicated by the figures of earthquakes, volcanoes, and flash floods ([Micah 1:4](#)). God would judge his people because of their idolatry. Their capital cities, rather than leading them in righteousness, had led them into sin ([Micah 1:5](#)).

Israel would be judged first ([Micah 1:6-7](#); see [2 Kings 17](#)); Judah's judgment would come 130 years later (see [2 Kings 25](#)). Both nations had violated the first commandment (see [Exodus 20:3-6](#)), but God would purge the land of all traces of idolatry.

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[Micah 1:8-16](#) *Mourning like a wild animal.* Micah would strip himself naked and mourn loudly over his nation's coming destruction. Israel's idolatry had spread south to Judah ([Micah 1:13](#)), therefore Samaria's devastation would spill over into Judah ([Micah 1:9](#)). This was fulfilled when Sennacherib swept through the northern kingdom and on through northern Judah, right up to the very gates of Jerusalem before being miraculously stopped by the death angel ([Micah 1:9, 12](#); see [2 Kings 18-19](#)).

Even Micah's hometown would be affected ([Micah 1:14](#); see [Micah 1:1](#)). The people would express their sorrow by the extreme measure of shaving their heads ([Micah 1:16](#); see exposition on [Isaiah 7:17-25](#)).

[Micah 2:1-5](#) *Plotting at night, sinning at sunrise.* God's judgment was justified by Israel's sin. The nation's leaders spent their nights scheming ways to deprive the poor of their property ([Micah 2:1-2](#)). God would give their ill-gotten land to foreigners ([Micah 2:3-5](#)). The nocturnal scheming ([Micah 2:1](#)) recalls Ahab's night of sullen plotting against Naboth (see [1 Kings 21:1-7](#)).

[Micah 2:6-11](#) *"We don't like that kind of talk!"* Many opposed Micah's message of doom ([Micah 2:6](#)). If they had been living righteously, they would have had nothing to fear from God ([Micah 2:7](#)). But they were violating the poor, the innocent, the widows and orphans—all special objects of God's care—and therefore they would be judged ([Micah 2:8-10](#)). The only prophets Israel would listen to were those who shared in their sin and therefore would not condemn them ([Micah 2:11](#); see [2 Tim. 4:3-4](#)).

[Micah 2:12-13](#) *But then, the Lord will lead them back.* Micah's dark picture of judgment gave way to a bright picture of restoration—a restoration to be realized when Jesus returns to the earth and leads his "sheep" into his millennial kingdom (see [Isaiah: Background](#)).

[Micah 3:1-4](#) *"They're eating my people alive!"* Because Israel's rulers had brutally oppressed the people ([Micah 3:1-3](#)), God would abandon them when the foreign armies invaded ([Micah 3:4](#)). Because they had hid their eyes from injustice, God would hide his face from them, refusing to even look at them.

This would happen "in times of trouble" ([Micah 3:4](#); see exposition on [§][Isaiah 2:5-4:1](#)), which in this case refers to the judgments of 722 and 586 B.C. (compare [Micah 3:4](#) with [Jeremiah 11:11](#)).

[Micah 3:5-8](#) *Prophets for sale.* Prophets, like rulers, had violated the trust of their office. Instead of seeking to please God and deliver his message of judgment, they had given the more desirable promises of peace to those who fed them. They would seal their own doom when their false promises failed to materialize. They would show their shame and mourning openly by the traditional gesture of covering their face up to the nose ([Micah 3:7](#); compare [Leviticus 13:45](#); [Ezekiel 24:17](#)). Micah, by contrast, could authoritatively proclaim the bitter truth because he was strengthened by God's Spirit ([Micah 3:8](#)).

[Micah 3:9-12](#) *"Jerusalem will fall, and it's all your fault!"* Emboldened by God's Spirit ([Micah 3:8](#)), Micah warned of the coming judgment. Judah's leaders had made the nation great but in the process had made its citizens miserable. Therefore, their glorious city of Jerusalem would be plowed up like fields and its buildings reduced to rock piles—a fate similar to that of Samaria (see [Micah 1:6-7](#)). Jeremiah's book of Lamentations records in painful detail the literal fulfillment of [Micah 3:12](#).

[Micah 4:1-8](#) *His righteous reign in Zion.* Looking ahead again to the "last days" (see exposition on [§][Ezekiel 38:1-23](#)), Micah saw a time when God's millennial kingdom will be supreme and all nations of the earth will be spontaneously and irresistibly drawn to it. It will be a time of unprecedented peace and prosperity ([Micah 4:1-3](#); compare [Isaiah 2:2-4](#)). People will dwell in safety and security, and Israel will be at peace with its God ([Micah 4:4-5](#)).

God will regather his people from around the globe and, in the person of God the Son, Jesus Christ, will reign over them ([Micah 4:6-7](#)). Jerusalem will be restored to its former greatness.

[Micah 4:9-13](#) *Present pain, future prize.* For the present, Judah would suffer exile ([Micah 4:9-10](#)), but its suffering would be like birth pangs ([Micah 4:9](#)) leading to a return from exile ([Micah 4:10](#)) and—looking further ahead—the glorious messianic kingdom ([Micah 4:11-13](#)).

The nations that will come against Israel at the end of time will not realize that they have been brought together by God so that he can destroy them in one final massive confrontation, which elsewhere in Scripture is called Armageddon ([Micah 4:11-13](#); see [Isaiah: Background](#)). Micah's naming of Babylon as Judah's captor is remarkable: In his day it was not a dominant world power.

[Micah 5:1-6](#) *From the house of bread, the bread of life!* Though Judah's last human king would be defeated ([Micah 5:1](#); see [2 Kings 25](#)), out of the lowly town of Bethlehem would come Jesus the Messiah, Israel's true king. He had already existed "from the distant past" ([Micah 5:2](#)), but in God's time he would come to earth, defeat the forces of evil, and establish his millennial kingdom ([Micah 5:2-6](#)).

Bethlehem means "house of bread." Jesus would call himself the "bread of life" ([John 6:48](#)). Assyria ([Micah 5:6](#); see [Micah 7:12](#)) and Babylon (see [Micah 4:10](#)) represent all of Israel's enemies.

[Micah 5:7-15](#) *Like the dew, like a lion.* During the Millennium, Israel will be a source of blessing to all righteous Gentiles ([Micah 5:7](#)). To those who persist in unbelief, however, it will be like a lion enforcing Messiah's rule ([Micah 5:8](#)). Every enemy will be defeated ([Micah 5:9](#)). Israel's triumph will come, however, only after God has stripped it of all human military resources ([Micah 5:10-11](#)) and all false religion ([Micah 5:12-15](#)).

[Micah 6:1-5](#) *His case against them.* Calling inanimate creation as an impartial witness, God invited Israel to present its case against him ([Micah 6:1](#)), then prepared to present his own case against them ([Micah 6:2](#); compare [Micah 1:2](#)). With cutting irony, he asked his people whether he had exhausted their patience with all his goodness to them ([Micah 6:3-5](#)). Against this background of God's faithfulness, Israel's sin was all the more serious.

[Micah 6:6-8](#) *One simple requirement.* Speaking for his people, Micah asked rhetorically whether he could secure God's favor by various kinds of sacrifice ([Micah 6:6-7](#)). But God had already answered that question: He wanted to see humility, justice, and mercy, demonstrating hearts inclined toward him ([Micah 6:8](#); see [Deut. 6:5](#); [Deut. 10:12](#); [Deut. 30:15-16](#)).

[Micah 6:9-12](#) *But they lack that requirement.* Micah then called on the wise to heed God's warning of judgment ([Micah 6:9](#)). Unfortunately, there was ample evidence that few Israelites were among the wise. Treasures gained by dishonest means filled their houses ([Micah 6:10](#)). Their deeds of injustice showed that their hearts were not right with God, therefore his wrath must fall.

[Micah 6:13-16](#) *Let the judgment begin!* Because Israel had sinned, God must judge them. Their judgment would be a time of great suffering and frustration ([Micah 6:13-15](#)). All attempts to escape would be futile ([Micah 6:14](#)). Israel had walked in the ways of Omri and his son Ahab, the most wicked of their kings.

[Micah 7:1-7](#) *A good man is hard to find!* Micah bemoaned Israel's sad moral condition. He found "not one fair-minded person" among them ([Micah 7:2](#); compare [Isaiah 57:1](#); [Psalm 14:3](#); [Romans 3:10-12](#)). So deep was Israel's sin that it had disrupted all interpersonal relationships ([Micah 7:5-6](#)). It was just like the days of the judges (see [Judges 21:25](#)). Amid this turmoil, Micah had complete confidence in God ([Micah 7:7](#)).

[Micah 7:8-10](#) *Israel: Down but not out!* Speaking for his nation, Micah accepted full responsibility for the sin that had brought judgment ([Micah 7:9](#)) and declared that Israel would rise again from the depths of that judgment ([Micah 7:8](#)). Israel's enemies would witness this restoration and would no longer be able to taunt them, for they themselves would experience a judgment from which they would not recover ([Micah 7:10](#)).

[Micah 7:11-13](#) *Bigger and better than ever!* When Israel is restored, its borders will be greater than ever ([Micah 7:11-12](#)). This was partially realized in the return from Babylon but will be ultimately fulfilled in the Millennium, when Israel's borders will stretch from Assyria to "the towns of Egypt" ([Micah 7:12](#)). In the meantime, however, Israel must be purged of its sin ([Micah 7:13](#)).

[Micah 7:14-20](#) *And for his people: Total forgiveness!* Micah asked God to meet the needs of his people and protect them from danger ([Micah 7:14](#)). In response, God promised to do miracles for his people just as he did when delivering them from Egypt ([Micah 7:15](#)). Israel's enemies will be defeated, not because of the greatness of the nation, but because of the greatness of their God ([Micah 7:16-17](#)). Israel's God is unique, for he will forgive them of their sins, once and for all. Their sins will not deter him from his plans to regenerate them ([Micah 7:18-19](#)). He will keep his unconditional covenants with Abraham (see [Genesis 12:1-3](#)), David (see [2 Samuel 7](#)), and Jeremiah (see [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)).

MICAH

(PEOPLE TO REMEMBER FROM MICAH)

Key Facts: Prophet, predicted Christ's birthplace ([Micah 5:2](#); [Matthew 2:6](#))

Total Bible References: 2

Key References: [Micah 1-7](#); [Jeremiah 26:18](#)

Micah Speaks

Am I the only true prophet left? Are all the rest godless liars? I sometimes feel as Elijah must have felt! Both our leaders and those they lead seem to have forsaken God. It's harder to find honest people than to glean grapes or figs after all the fruit pickers have been there! ([Micah 3:1](#), [5-8](#); [Micah 7:1-2](#); [1 Kings 19:10](#))

Who would have thought the time would come when your worst enemies would be in your own household! But thank God this will not be so forever. God has told me of a day when "the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem will become the most important place on earth," when people even from among our present enemies will say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD." It will be a time of peace, when they will "beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks." ([Micah 4:1-3](#); [Micah 7:5-6](#))

I received this amazing message from God here in Moresheth, a two-day journey from Jerusalem, about the time Isaiah heard the same words in the Holy City itself. But it's even more thrilling to compare what he has revealed to each of us concerning the future Messiah. Isaiah predicted *how* he will be born, and I have had the privilege of revealing *where* he'll be born! Indeed, "Where is another God like you?" ([Micah 1:1](#); [Micah 5:2](#); [Micah 7:18](#); [Isaiah 2:2-4](#); [Isaiah 7:14](#)).

Spiritual Lessons from Micah

- When we, as Christians, seek to help people or to share God's Word with them, it is comforting to know we can be empowered by God's Holy Spirit. Micah had this assurance ([Micah 3:8](#)), as did Paul ([1 Cor. 2:1-4](#); see [John 14:15-17](#)).
- Adversity is often God's way of both disciplining us and bringing greater purity into our lives ([Micah 7:9](#); see [Psalm 119:67, 71](#); [Hebrews 12:5-11](#)).

Key Verse

"O people, the LORD has already told you what is good, and this is what he requires: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" ([Micah 6:8](#)).