

Micah

Samaria and Israel to Be Punished

1 ¹During the time that Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah, the word of the LORD came to Micah. Micah was from Moresheth. He saw these visions about Samaria and Jerusalem.

- 2** Listen, all you people!
Earth and everyone on it,^a listen!
The Lord God will come from his holy temple.
The Lord will come as a witness* against you.
- 3** See, the LORD is coming out of his place.
He is coming down to walk on the high places^b of the earth.
- 4** The mountains will melt under him like wax before a fire.
The valleys will split open and flow like water down a steep hill.
- 5** This will happen because of Jacob's* sin, because of the sins of the nation^c of Israel.

Samaria, the Cause of Sin

What caused Jacob to sin?

It was Samaria.

Where is the high place in Judah?

It is Jerusalem.

- 6** So I will change Samaria into a pile of rocks in the field,
a place ready for planting grapes.
I will push Samaria's stones down into the valley,
leaving nothing but the foundations.
- 7** All her idols*
will be broken into pieces.
Her prostitute's wages (*idols*)
will be burned in fire.
I will destroy all her statues of false gods,
because Samaria got her riches by being unfaithful to me.^d
So those things will be taken by people
who are not faithful to me.^e

^a1:2 *everyone on it* Literally, "its fullness."

^b1:3 *high places* Here, this might mean simply "hills," or it might be the places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

^c1:5 *nation* Literally, "house." This might mean the royal family of that country.

^d1:7 *her riches ... me* Literally, "her wages were a prostitute's wages."

^e1:7 *will be ... to me* Literally, "will return to

Micah's Great Sadness

- 8** I will be very sad about what will happen.
I will go without sandals and clothes.
I will cry like a dog.^f
I will mourn* like a bird.^g
- 9** Samaria's^h wound cannot be healed.
Her disease has spread to Judah.
It has reached the city gate of my people;
it has spread all the way to Jerusalem.
- 10** Don't tell it in Gath.ⁱ
Don't cry in Acco.^j
Roll yourself in the dust at Beth Ophrah.^k
- 11** You people living in Shaphir,^l
pass on your way, naked and ashamed.
The people living in Zaanan^m will not come out.
The people in Beth Ezelⁿ will cry
and take their support from you.
- 12** The people living in Maroth^o
wait for something good to happen,
even though trouble has come down from
the LORD
and has reached the city gate of
Jerusalem.
- 13** You people living in Lachish,^p
get the horses ready for your chariots.*
You are guilty of the same sins Israel^q
committed,
and you brought those sins to
Jerusalem.^r
- 14** So you must give goodbye gifts
to Moresheth^s in Gath.

prostitute's wages."

^f1:8 *dog* Literally, "jackal," a kind of wild dog.

^g1:8 *bird* Literally, "ostrich," a large bird.

^h1:9 *Samaria* The capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel.

ⁱ1:10 *Gath* This is a wordplay. This name means "tell."

^j1:10 *Acco* This name means "cry."

^k1:10 *Beth Ophrah* This name means "house of dust."

^l1:11 *Shaphir* This name means "beautiful."

^m1:11 *Zaanan* This name means "come out."

ⁿ1:11 *Beth Ezel* This name means "house of support."

^o1:12 *Maroth* This name means "bitter," "angry," or "sad."

^p1:13 *Lachish* This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "horse."

^q1:13 *Israel* Here, probably the northern kingdom of Israel centered in Samaria.

^r1:13 *Jerusalem* Literally, "Daughter Zion." See "Zion" in the Word List.

^s1:14 *Moresheth* Micah's hometown.

The houses in Aczib^a will trick
the kings of Israel.

- 15 You people who live in Mareshah,^b
I will bring someone against you who
will take the things you own.

The Glory* of Israel
will come into Adullam.^c

- 16 So cut off your hair, make yourself bald,^d
because you will cry for the children
you love.

Make yourself bald like an eagle^e and
show your sadness,
because your children will be taken
away from you.

The Evil Plans of People

- 2 ¹Trouble will come to those who
make plans to sin.
They lie on their beds making their evil
plans.
Then when the morning light comes, they
do what they planned,
because they have the power to do what
they want.

- 2 They want fields,
so they take them.
They want houses,
so they take them.
They cheat a man
and take his house and his land.

The Lord's Plans to Punish the People

- 3 That is why the LORD says:
“Look, I am planning trouble against this
family.
You will not be able to save yourselves.^f
You will stop being proud,
because bad times are coming.”
4 Then people will sing songs about you.
They will sing this sad song:
“We are ruined!
The LORD took away our land and gave
it to other people.
Yes, he took my land away from me.
He has divided our fields [among our
enemies].”
5 So we will not be able to measure
the land
and divide it among the LORD’s people.”^g

Micah Is Asked Not to Prophesy

- 6 The people say, “Don’t prophesy” to us.
Don’t say those bad things about us.
Nothing bad will happen to us.”

^a1:14 *Aczib* This name means “lie” or “trick.”

^b1:15 *Mareshah* The name means “a person who
takes things.”

^c1:15 *Adullam* A cave that David hid in when he ran
away from Saul. See 1 Sam. 22:1.

^d1:16 *cut ... bald* This showed that a person made
a special agreement with God or that a person was
very sad.

^e1:16 *eagle* Or “vulture.” See “vulture” in the Word
List.

^f2:3 *save yourselves* Literally, “take your necks off it.”

- 7 But people of Jacob,*
I must say these things.
The LORD is losing his patience
because of the bad things you did.

If you lived right,
I could say nice words to you.

- 8 But you attack my people like enemies.
You steal the clothes off the backs of
people walking by.

They think they are safe,
but you are there to treat them like
prisoners of war.^g

- 9 You have taken nice houses
away from the women of my people.
You have taken my wealth
away from their small children forever.

- 10 Get up and leave!
This will not be your place of rest,
because you ruined it.
You made it unclean, so it will be
destroyed!
It will be a terrible destruction!

- 11 These people don’t want to listen to me.
But if a man comes telling lies,
they will accept him.
They would accept a false prophet* if he
comes and says,
“There will be good times in the future,
with plenty of wine and beer.”

The Lord Will Bring His People Together

- 12 Yes, people of Jacob,*
I will bring all of you together.
I will bring together all those in Israel*
who are still living.
I will put them together
like sheep in the sheep pen,
like a flock in its pasture.
Then the place will be filled
with the noise of many people.
13 The “One Who Breaks Through Walls”
will push through and walk to the front
of his people.
They will break through the gates and
leave that city.
They will leave with their king marching
before them—
with the LORD at the front of his people.

The Leaders of Israel Are Guilty of Evil

- 3 ¹Then I said, “Listen, leaders of Jacob*
and officers of the nation^h of Israel*!
You should know what justice is.
2 But you hate good and love evil.
You tear the skin off the people
and tear the flesh off their bones.
3 You are destroying my people.ⁱ

^g2:8 *They think ... war* Or “Returning from war, they
think they are safe.”

^h3:1 *nation* Literally, “house.” This might mean the
royal family of that country.

ⁱ3:3 *You are destroying my people* Literally, “You,
who eat the flesh of my people.”

You take their skin off them and break their bones.

You chop their bones up like meat to put in the pot!

- 4 Then you will pray to the LORD, but he will not answer you. No, he will hide his face from you, because what you do is evil.”

False Prophets

⁵Some false prophets* are telling lies to the LORD's people. This is what the LORD says about them:

“These prophets are led by their stomachs. They promise peace for those who give them food, but they promise war to those who do not give them food.

- 6“⁶This is why it is like night for you and you don't have visions.* You cannot see what will happen in the future, so it is like darkness to you. The sun has gone down on the prophets. They cannot see what will happen in the future, so it is like darkness to them.
- 7 The seers* are ashamed. The fortunetellers* are embarrassed. None of them will say anything, because God will not speak to them.”

Micah Is an Honest Prophet of God

- 8 But the LORD's Spirit has filled me with power, goodness, and strength. So I can tell Jacob* about his crimes, and so I can tell Israel* about his sins!

The Leaders of Israel Are to Blame

- 9 Leaders of Jacob* and rulers of Israel, listen to me! You hate the right way of living! If something is straight, then you make it crooked!
- 10 You build Zion* by murdering people.^a You build Jerusalem by cheating people!
- 11 The judges in Jerusalem accept bribes to help them decide who wins in court. The priests in Jerusalem must be paid before they will teach the people. People must pay the prophets before they will look into the future. Then those leaders expect the LORD to help them. They say, “The LORD lives here with us, so nothing bad will happen to us.”

- 12 Leaders, because of you, Zion will be destroyed. It will become a plowed field. Jerusalem will become a pile of rocks.

^a3:10 **murdering people** Literally, “bloodshed.”

Temple Mount will be an empty hill^b overgrown with bushes.

The Law Will Come From Jerusalem

- 4¹In the last days the mountain of the LORD's Temple* will be on the highest of all mountains. It will be raised higher than the hills. There will be a steady stream of people going there.
- 2 People from many nations will go there and say, “Come, let's go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the Temple of the God of Jacob.* Then God will teach us his way of living, and we will follow him.”

His teaching, the LORD's message, will begin in Jerusalem on Mount Zion* and will go out to all the world.

- 3 Then God will act as judge to end arguments between people in many places. He will decide what is right for great nations far and near. They will stop using their weapons for war. They will hammer their swords into plows and use their spears to make tools for harvesting. All fighting between nations will end. They will never again train for war.
- 4 They will sit under their own grapevine and fig tree. No one will make them afraid. That is because the LORD All-Powerful said it would happen like that.

- 5 All the people from other nations follow their own gods, but we will follow the LORD our God forever and ever!^c

The Kingdom to Be Brought Back

- 6 The LORD says, “Jerusalem was hurt and crippled. She was thrown away. She was hurt and punished, but I will bring her back to me.
- 7“⁷The people of that ‘crippled’ city will be the only ones left alive. They were forced to leave, but I will make them into a strong nation.”
- The LORD will be their king. He will rule from Mount Zion* forever.

^b3:12 **empty hill** Or “high place,” a term usually used for local shrines (places for worship) where people often worshiped idols.

^c4:5 Or “All the nations will walk in the name of their gods, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God, forever and ever!”

⁸ And you, Tower of Flocks,^a
your time will come.
Ophel, hill of Zion,
you will again be the seat of
government.
Yes, the kingdom will be in Jerusalem
like it was in the past.

Why Must the Israelites Go to Babylon?

⁹ Now, why are you crying so loudly?
Is your king gone?
Have you lost your wise leader?
Is that why you are suffering like a
woman in labor?
¹⁰ Cry out, you people of Jerusalem,^b and
feel the pain,
as if you were giving birth.
You must go out of the city
and live in the fields.
You will go away to Babylon,
but you will also be saved from that
place.
The LORD will come and rescue you there.
He will take you away from your
enemies.

The Lord Will Destroy the Other Nations

¹¹ Many nations have come to fight against
you.
They say, "Look, there is Zion*!
Let's attack her!"
¹² They have their plans,
but they don't know what the LORD is
planning.
He brought them here
for a special purpose.
They will be crushed
like grain on a threshing* floor.

Israel Will Defeat Its Enemies

¹³ "People of Jerusalem, get up and crush
them!
I will make you very strong.
It will be as if you have horns of iron
and hooves of bronze.
You will beat many people into small
pieces.
You will give their wealth to the LORD.
You will give their treasure to the Lord
of all the earth."

5 Now strong city,^c gather your soldiers!
They are surrounding us for the
attack!
They will hit the Judge of Israel
on the cheek with a stick.

^a4:8 *Tower of Flocks* Or "Migdal Eder." This probably means a part of Jerusalem. The leaders would be like shepherds in a tower watching their sheep.

^b4:10 *people of Jerusalem* Literally, "daughter Zion," a name for Jerusalem. Also in verse 13. See "Zion" in the Word List.

^c5:1 *strong city* Literally, "daughter of troops."

The Messiah to Be Born in Bethlehem

² But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
are the smallest town in Judah.
Your family is almost too small to count,
but the "Ruler of Israel" will come from
you to rule for me.
His beginnings^d are from ancient times,
from long, long ago.
³ The LORD^e will give up his people
until the woman gives birth to her
child, the promised king.
Then the rest of his brothers
will come back to the people of Israel.
⁴ Then the Ruler of Israel will stand
in the power of the LORD and
in the wonderful name of the LORD his
God
and care for his people.
They will live in peace
because at that time his greatness will
reach to the ends of the earth.^f
⁵ There will be peace.
Yes, the Assyrian army will come into our
country
and trample our large buildings.
But the Ruler of Israel^g will choose
seven shepherds and eight leaders.^h
⁶ They will use their swords
and rule the Assyrians.
They will rule the land of Nimrodⁱ
with their swords in hand.
They will use their swords
to rule those people.
But then the Ruler of Israel will save us
from the Assyrians
when they come into our land and walk
on our territory.
⁷ But those from Jacob* who are still living
and scattered among the nations
will be like dew from the LORD that
does not depend on anyone.
They will be like rain on the grass
that does not wait for anyone.
⁸ Those from Jacob who are still living
are scattered among the nations.
But they will be like a lion
among the animals in the forest.
They will be like a young lion
among flocks of sheep.
If the lion passes through,
he goes where he wants to go.
If he attacks an animal,
no one can save it.
The survivors will be like that.

^d5:2 *beginnings* Or "family origins."

^e5:3 *The LORD* Or "the Ruler of Israel."

^f5:4 *They ... the earth* Or "They will settle here because at that time his kingdom will extend to the ends of the earth."

^g5:5 *The Ruler of Israel* Or "we."

^h5:5 *seven shepherds and eight leaders* Or "seven shepherds, no eight leaders."

ⁱ5:6 *land of Nimrod* Another name for Assyria.

- 9 You will lift your hand against your enemies,
and you will destroy them.

People Will Depend on God

- 10 The LORD says,
“At that time I will take away your horses,
and I will destroy your chariots.*
11 I will destroy the cities in your country.
I will pull down all your fortresses.*
12 You will no longer try to do magic.
You will have no more fortunetellers.*
13 I will destroy your statues of false gods.
I will pull down your memorial stones.*
You will not worship what your hands
have made.
14 I will destroy the Asherah poles*
and your false gods.^a
15 Some nations will not listen to me,
but I will show my anger and get my
revenge.”

The Lord's Complaint

- 6** ¹Now hear what the LORD says:
“Present your argument to the
mountains.
Let the hills hear your story.^b
2 The LORD has a complaint against his
people.
Mountains,
listen to the LORD's complaint.
Foundations of the earth,
hear the Lord.
He will prove that Israel is wrong!”
3 He says, “My people, tell me what I did!
Did I do something wrong against you?
Did I make life too hard for you?
4 I will tell you what I did.
I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to you.
I brought you from the land of Egypt.
I freed you from slavery.
5 My people, remember the evil plans
of Balak king of Moab.
Remember what Balaam son of Beor said
to Balak.
Remember what happened from Acacia to
Gilgal,^c
and you will know the LORD is right!”

What Does God Want From Us?

- 6 What must I bring when I come to meet
with the LORD?
What must I do when I bow down to
God above?
Should I come to him with burnt
offerings* and a year-old calf?
7 Will the LORD be pleased with a thousand
rams
or with ten thousand rivers of oil?

^a5:14 *false gods* Or “cities.”

^b6:1 This is like a court case. The mountains and hills
are the judge and jury.

^c6:5 *Acacia to Gilgal* This story is found in Num.
22–25.

- Should I offer him my first child to pay for
my wrongs?
Should I sacrifice my very own child for
my sins?

- 8 Human, the LORD has told you what
goodness is.
This is what he wants from you:
Be fair to other people.
Love kindness and loyalty,
and humbly obey your God.

What Were the Israelites Doing?

- 9 The LORD shouts to the city:
“A wise person respects the Lord's name.^d
So pay attention to the punishing rod
and to the one who uses it!^e
10 Do the wicked still hide treasures
that they have stolen?
Do they still cheat people
with baskets that are too small?^f
Yes, all of this is still happening!
11 Some people carry special weights
that they use to cheat people when they
weigh their goods.
Should I pardon them?
12 The rich in that city are still cruel.
The people there still tell lies.
Yes, they tell their lies.
13 So I have begun to punish you.
I will destroy you because of your sins.
14 You will eat, but you will not become full.
You will still be hungry and empty.^g
You will try to bring people to safety,
but people with swords will kill the
people you rescued.
15 You will plant your seeds,
but you will not gather food.
You will try to squeeze oil from your
olives,
but you will not get any oil.
You will crush your grapes,
but you will not get enough juice to
have wine to drink.
16 This is because you obey the laws of
Omri.^h
You do all the evil things that Ahab's
family does.
You follow their teachings,
so I will let you be destroyed.
People will whistle in amazement
when they see your destroyed city.
Then you will bear the shame
that the other nations bring to you.”ⁱ

^d6:9 *the Lord's name* Literally, “your name.”

^e6:9 *So pay attention ... uses it* The Hebrew text
here is hard to understand.

^f6:10 *baskets ... too small* Literally, “short ephahs.”
An ephah is about 1/2 bushel.

^g6:14 *You ... empty* The Hebrew text here is unclear.

^h6:16 *Omri* A king of Israel who led his nation to
worship false gods. See 1 Kings 16:21–26.

ⁱ6:16 *Then ... you* Or “My people's shame will be
taken away.”

Micah Is Upset at the Evil People Do

- 7** I am upset because I am
like fruit that has been gathered,
like grapes that have already been
picked.
There are no grapes left to eat.
There are none of the early figs that I
love.
- 2** By this I mean that all the faithful people
are gone.
There are no good people left.
Everyone is planning to kill someone.
Everyone is trying to trap their brother.
- 3** People are good at doing bad things with
both hands.
Officials ask for bribes.
Judges take money to change their
decisions in court.
“Important leaders” do whatever they
want to do.
- 4** Even the best of them is as crooked
as a tangled thornbush.

The Day of Punishment Is Coming

Your prophets said this day would come,
and the day of your watchmen^a has
come.

Now you will be punished.

Now you will be confused!

- 5** Don't trust your neighbor
or trust a friend!
Don't even speak freely with your wife.
- 6** Your enemies will be the people in your
own house.
A son will not honor his father.
A daughter will turn against her mother.
A daughter-in-law will turn against her
mother-in-law.

The Lord Is the Savior

- 7** So I will look to the LORD for help.
I will wait for God to save me.
My God will hear me.
- 8** I have fallen, but enemy, don't laugh at
me!
I will get up again.
I sit in darkness now,
but the LORD will be a light for me.

The Lord Forgives

- 9** I sinned against the LORD,
so he was angry with me.
But he will argue my case for me in court.
He will do what is right for me.
Then he will bring me out into the light,
and I will see that he is right.
- 10** My enemy said to me,
“Where is the LORD your God?”
But my enemy will see this,
and she will be ashamed.

At that time I will laugh at her.^b
People will walk over her,^c like mud in
the streets.

The Jews to Return

- 11** The time will come when your walls will
be rebuilt.
At that time the country will grow.
- 12** Your people will come back to your land.
They will come back from Assyria and
from the cities of Egypt.
They will come from Egypt
and from the other side of the Euphrates
River.
They will come from the sea in the west
and from the mountains in the east.
- 13** The land was ruined by the people
who lived there and by what they did.
- 14** So rule your people with your rod.
Rule the flock of people who belong to
you.
That flock lives alone in the woods
and up on Mount Carmel.
That flock lives in Bashan and Gilead
as they did in the past.

Israel Will Defeat Its Enemies

- 15** I did many miracles when I took you out
of Egypt.
I will let you see more miracles like that.
- 16** The nations will see those miracles,
and they will be ashamed.
They will see that their “power”
is nothing compared to mine.
They will be amazed
and put their hands over their mouths.
They will cover their ears
and refuse to listen.
- 17** They will crawl in the dust like a snake.
They will shake with fear.
They will be like insects crawling
from their holes in the ground
and coming to the LORD our God.
God, they will fear and respect you!

Praise for the Lord

- 18** There is no God like you.
You take away people's guilt.
God will forgive his people who survive.
He will not stay angry with them forever,
because he enjoys being kind.
- 19** He will come back and comfort us again.
He will throw all our sins into the deep
sea.
- 20** God, please be true to Jacob.*
Be kind and loyal to Abraham,^d as you
promised our ancestors* long ago.

^b7:10 *laugh at her* Literally, “my eyes will stare at her.”

^c7:8–10 *enemy, don't laugh ... walk over her* This probably refers to an enemy city, such as the capital of Edom.

^d7:20 *Abraham* Here, Abraham is used to mean all the people of Israel. See “Abraham” in the Word List.

^a7:4 *watchmen* Another name for prophets. This shows that the prophets were like guards who stood on a city's wall and watched for trouble coming from far away.

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