

Micah Chapter 1

Micah was a prophet of the southern tribes.

Isaiah was a prophet in Judah and Hosea in Israel at the same time.

Micah was the penman of this book.

He prophesied under king Jotham's, Ahaz's, and Hezekiah's reigns.

The name "Micah" means "who is like Jehovah".

He lived in the territory of Judah, but spoke to the ten tribes of Israel, as well as to the two tribes of Judah.

The definition of true religion is found in:

Micah 6:8 "He hath showed thee, O man, 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?"

He foretold the fall of Samaria and Jerusalem.

He prophesied the birth of Jesus (in Micah 5:2): "But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, [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 1:1 "The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, [and] Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem."

"Morasthite":

Was located southwest of Jerusalem, near the Philistine city of Gath (1:14).

"Samaria and Jerusalem:"

The two seats of government of the northern and southern kingdoms, respectively, are addressed.

The capitals are the seats of corruption which filtered down to and infected the entire kingdoms.

We see the authority that Micah prophesies with in this first verse, "the Word of the LORD".

Morasthite or Morasheth-Gath is a village in the lowlands of Judea.

It was located about 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem.

The names of the kings of Judah are listed here, because his primary message was to them.

Samaria was the capital of Israel, and Jerusalem was the capital of Judah.

Verses 2-7

The prophet summons all the nations (verse 2), of the world into court to hear charges against Samaria and Judah (verses 5-7; Isa. 3:13-14).

Their destruction was to be a warning example to the nations, prefiguring God's judgment on all who sin against Him.

As an omnipotent Conqueror, the Sovereign over all creation is assured of victory (verses 3-4).

Micah 1:2 "Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is: and let the Lord GOD be witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple."

"His holy temple":

Context points to God's heavenly throne (Psalm 11:4; Isa. 6:1, 4).

This message is actually for sinners everywhere, and for all time, as well as to Judah and Israel. This is saying that they should pay careful attention, because whatever happens to the ten tribes of Israel has a bearing on all of humanity.

This should set an example to warn everyone to repent and turn away from sin.

No one is exempt from punishment, when the sin is the worship of false gods.

Verses 3-4

"High places ... mountains":

These could refer to key military positions, so crucial to Israel's defense, or to the pagan places of worship in the land (verse 5).

When fortifications disappeared like melted wax, people were gripped by the terrifying reality that they were to answer to the Judge of all the earth (Gen. 18:25; Amos 4:12-13).

Micah 1:3 "For, behold, the LORD cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth."

"The LORD cometh forth ... down":

A warning of impending divine judgment by One who sits in the ultimate High Place.

The sins of Israel had risen up to heaven.

God is above the highest place upon the earth.

He is Almighty God.

His place, spoken of here, is His throne in heaven.

One reason the high places are mentioned as being tread upon by the LORD, is because they were places of false worship.

Micah 1:4 "And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, [and] as the waters [that are] poured down a steep place."

As Sinai was when he descended on it, and as all nations will be at the general conflagration.

But here the words are to be taken, not literally, but figuratively.

For the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and for the kings, and princes, and great men in them, that lifted up their heads as high, and thought themselves as secure, as mountains.

Yet when the judgments of God should fall upon them, their hearts would melt through fear under him.

"As wax before the fire":

Melts, and cannot stand the force of it.

So the mountains should melt at the presence of the LORD; and kingdoms and states, and the greatest and mightiest of men in them, would not be able to stand before the fierceness of his wrath (see Psalm 68:2).

So should the judgments of God come down upon the lower sort of people, the inhabitants of the valleys; neither high nor low would escape the indignation of the LORD, or be able to stand against it, or stand up under it.

The mountain being molten makes you think of a volcano erupting.

This speaks of a terrible time of calamity.

This is the very thing that happens when a volcano erupts.

The lava pours down the sides of the mountains like a stream of water.

Micah 1:5 "For the transgression of Jacob [is] all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What [is] the transgression of Jacob? [is it] not Samaria? and what [are] the high places of Judah? [are they] not Jerusalem?"

“Samaria ... Jerusalem”:

The two capitals of Israel and Judah, here representative of their respective nations.

Their transgression that had angered God so greatly was apostasy.

They had gone away from their first love (God Almighty), and were worshipping false gods and idols.

This does not speak of just the ten tribes of Israel, but includes the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

In fact, it could easily be speaking of our churches today, as well.

The sad thing is that many of us are Christians in name only, we are not sold out to God.

We let things of the world take precedence over God.

Verses 6-7: The LORD spoke directly of the fall of Samaria at the hands of the Assyrians (ca. 722 B.C.).

Micah 1:6 "Therefore I will make Samaria as a heap of the field, [and] as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof."

As a field ploughed, and laid in heaps (see Micah 3:12).

Or as stones gathered out of a field, and out of a vineyard planted, and laid in a heap; so should this city become a heap of stones and rubbish, being utterly demolished.

This being done according to the will of God and through his instigation of Shalmaneser king of Assyria to it, and by his providence succeeding his army that besieged it, is said to be done by him.

With this agrees the Vulgate Latin version.

The stones of the buildings and walls of the city, which being on a hill, when pulled down rolled into the valley.

And with as much swiftness and force as waters run down a steep place (as in Micah 1:4); where the same word is used as here.

The foundations thereof which should be fused up and left bare, not one stone should be upon another; so that there should be no traces and footsteps of the city remaining.

And it should be difficult to know the place where it stood.

This is expressive of the total desolation and utter destruction of it.

This speaks of terrible destruction.

Actually, stones do pour down into the valley when a volcano erupts.

They were also thrown down in battle.

Samaria will be totally destroyed and when this destruction is over, it will be a barren land.

Micah 1:7 "And all the graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof shall be burned with the fire, and all the idols thereof will I lay desolate: for she gathered [it] of the hire of a harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot."

"The hire of a harlot":

Centers of idolatry were financed primarily through payments of money, food and clothing (Gen. 38:17-18; Ezek. 16:10-11; Hos. 2:8-9; 3:1).

The "harlot" spoken of here, is the harlot wife of God (Israel).

God looked upon idolatry as spiritual adultery.

They were unfaithful to God (their husband).

The Assyrians are just as idolatrous as Israel and they will get these idols for themselves.

Verses 8-16

The judgment was so grave that even the prophet lamented as he traced the enemy's irreversible invasion (verse 9).

Micah 1:8 "Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls."

“Wailing” and going about “naked” were signs of deep “mourning”.

This is speaking of the sorrow of Micah at the destruction which was to come.

He is trying to convey the magnitude of the destruction that God will bring upon these people, if they do not repent and return to the One True God.

Micah 1:9 "For her wound [is] incurable; for it is come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, [even] to Jerusalem."

“The gate of my people”:

Assyria, under Sennacherib, came close to toppling Judah in 701 B.C. (2 Kings 18:13-27).

It is best to see “my” in reference to Micah not God, contrary to some translations.

God will not show mercy to them, Israel will be destroyed.

The terrible thing is that Judah has become involved in the same sins, and they will not be spared either.

The destruction of Judah is much later, but prophets do not know the exact time of the fulfillment of their prophecy.

They just know it will happen.

God's holy city (Jerusalem), will even be destroyed.

Verses 10-12

Beth-aphrah, Saphir, Zaanah, Beth-ezel, and Maroth are all ancient cities of Judah that have passed into obscurity.

They seem to be mentioned by the prophet because, by playing on the sounds and meanings of their names, he is able to graphically describe the grave effects of the Assyrian invasion of Judah.

Eleven towns west of Jerusalem are mentioned (in verses 10-15), some with a play on words.

Micah 1:10 "Declare ye [it] not at Gath, weep ye not at all: in the house of Aphrah roll thyself in the dust."

“Declare ye it not at Gath”:

Reflective of David’s dirge at Saul’s death (2 Sam. 1:20), Micah admonished them not to tell the Philistines, lest they would be glad and rejoice.

Micah, because of the location of his upbringing, knew how they would react.

Gath was the place of the Philistines.

The people of Gath would be happy and spread the coming destruction, so they do not tell them.

"The house of Aphrah" means house of dust.

Rolling in the dust is a sign of extreme mourning.

Micah 1:11 "Pass ye away, thou inhabitant of Saphir, having thy shame naked: the inhabitant of Zaanan came not forth in the mourning of Beth-ezel; he shall receive of you his standing."

“Zaanan came not forth”:

These inhabitants, in danger and fear, would not go out to console their neighbors who had been overrun.

"Saphir":

Means fair city.

“Zaanan”:

Means going out.

"Beth-ezel":

Means house at one's side.

This is speaking of shame coming upon these cities, as well.

They should take up the mourning also.

Micah 1:12 "For the inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good: but evil came down from the LORD unto the gate of Jerusalem."

“Evil came down”:

This points to the LORD as the source of judgment (verses 3-4).

"Maroth":

Means bitterness.

They expected God to protect them.

They did not repent, and great sorrow came to them.

Micah 1:13 "O thou inhabitant of Lachish, bind the chariot to the swift beast: she [is] the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion: for the transgressions of Israel were found in thee."

“Lachish ... sin to the daughter of Zion”:

Located southwest of Jerusalem, Lachish was a key military fortress whose “sin” was dependence on military might.

Sennacherib of Assyria spoiled this city.

This is telling them to harness up their best horses and flee to safety in their chariots.

It appears from this, that Lachish was involved in the same transgressions as Israel.

It also appears they caused Jerusalem to get involved as well.

Micah 1:14 "Therefore shalt thou give presents to Moresheth-gath: the houses of Achzib [shall be] a lie to the kings of Israel."

“Shalt thou give presents”:

As parting gifts were given to brides (1 Kings 9:16), this was a symbol of the departure of Moresheth-gath into captivity.

Judah is involved in the very same sins as Israel.

The presents to Moresheth-gath are parting gifts.

This means that Judah has given up Moresheth-gath.

They have relinquished ownership.

This city is given up to the enemy.

Micah 1:15 "Yet will I bring an heir unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareshah: he shall come unto Adullam the glory of Israel."

“The glory of Israel”:

This is a reference to the leading citizens and nobility of Israel who have been fleeing continuously before the Assyrian invasion.

“Adullam the Glory of Israel”:

The people of Israel (i.e., her “glory”; Hosea 9:11-13), were to flee to the caves as David did to the cave at Adullam (2 Sam. 23:13).

"Mareshah":

Means inheritance.

"Adullam":

This is a place in Palestine.

Micah 1:16 "Make thee bald, and poll thee for thy delicate children; enlarge thy baldness as the eagle; for they are gone into captivity from thee."

“Make thee bald”:

Priests were forbidden to make themselves bald (Lev. 21:5), nor were the people to imitate the heathen practice of doing so (Deut. 14:1).

But here it would be acceptable as a sign of deep mourning (Ezra 9:3; Job 1:20; Isa. 22:12; Ezek. 7:18).

This baldness speaks of mourning.

It also speaks of adultery.

An unfaithful wife had her head shaved so the world would know she was an adulteress.

They have gone into captivity and Micah is telling them to mourn for them.

Micah Chapter 1 Questions

1. Micah was a prophet of the _____ tribes.
2. _____ was a prophet in Judah and _____ in Israel at the same time.
3. During whose reign did Micah prophesy?

4. What is the definition of true religion in Scripture?
5. Micah foretells the fall of _____ and _____.
6. Where is the prophecy of the birth of Christ?
7. What tells us, in verse 1, that Micah is under the authority of God?
8. Where is Morashite?
9. Who is this warning to?
10. The sins of _____ had risen up to heaven.
11. What is God's place spoken of here?
12. The high places were places of _____.
13. What is verse 4 speaking of?
14. What was their transgression that had angered God?
15. Who was their first love?
16. What is sad about many Christians today?
17. I will make Samaria as an _____ of the _____.
18. What will happen to the graven images?
19. Who is the "harlot" in verse 7?
20. What were the "hires"?
21. They were unfaithful to God (_____).
22. Who will get the idols?
23. Describe the sorrow of Micah for these people.
24. Will God have mercy and stop the punishment?
25. Gath was a city of the _____.
26. The "house of Arphrah" means house of _____.
27. What is rolling in the dust a sign of?
28. What does "Saphir" mean?

29. "Maroth" means _____.
30. Who spoiled Lachish?
31. What are the gifts in verse 14?
32. The baldness speaks of _____.
33. It, also, speaks of _____.