

Micah

Samaria and Israel to Be Punished

¹ During 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, * listen!

The Lord GOD will be a witness against you.

The Lord will come from his holy temple.

³ See, the LORD is leaving his place

to come down and walk on the high places[†] of the earth.

⁴ The mountains will melt under him

like wax in a fire.

The valleys will break apart

and slide like water rushing down a hill.

⁵ This will happen because of Jacob's sin,

because of the sins of the nation[‡] 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,

* 1:2 everyone on it Literally, "its fullness." † 1:3 high places Here, this might mean simply "hills," or it might mean places of worship (see "high place" in the Word List). ‡ 1:5 nation Literally, "house." This might mean the royal family of that country.

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 to pieces.
 And the offerings to her idols will be burned.
 I will destroy all her statues of false gods,
 because she got them as pay for being a prostitute.
 So those things will be taken away
 to be used again for paying prostitutes.

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. §
 I will mourn like a bird.*
 9 Samaria's † 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. ‡
 Don't cry in Acco. §
 Roll yourself in the dust
 at Beth Ophrah.*
 11 You people living in Shaphir, †
 pass on your way, naked and ashamed.
 The people living in Zaanan ‡
 will not come out.

§ 1:8 dog Literally, "jackal," a kind of wild dog. * 1:8 bird Literally, "ostrich," a large bird. † 1:9 Samaria The capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel. ‡ 1:10 Gath This is a wordplay. This name means "tell."
 § 1:10 Acco This name means "cry." * 1:10 Beth Ophrah This name means "house of dust." † 1:11 Shaphir This name means "beautiful."
 ‡ 1:11 Zaanan This name means "come out."

The people in Beth Ezel[§] will cry
and take their support from you.

¹² The people living in Maroth^{*}
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,[†]
get the horses ready for your chariots.

You are guilty of the same sins Israel[‡] committed,
and you brought those sins to Jerusalem.[§]

¹⁴ So you must give goodbye gifts
to Moresheth^{*} in Gath.

The houses in Aczib[†] will trick
the kings of Israel.

¹⁵ You people who live in Mareshah,[‡]
I will bring someone against you who will take the
things you own.

The Glory of Israel
will come into Adullam.[§]

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

Make yourself bald like an eagle[†] and show your sadness,

[§] 1:11 Beth Ezel This name means “house of support.” ^{*} 1:12 Maroth This name means “bitter,” “angry,” or “sad.” [†] 1:13 Lachish This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “horse.” [‡] 1:13 Israel Here, probably the northern kingdom of Israel centered in Samaria. [§] 1:13 Jerusalem Literally, “Daughter Zion.” See “Zion” in the Word List. ^{*} 1:14 Moresheth Micah’s hometown. [†] 1:14 Aczib This name means “lie” or “trick.” [‡] 1:15 Mareshah The name means “a person who takes things.” [§] 1:15 Adullam A cave that David hid in when he ran away from Saul. See 1 Sam. 22:1. ^{*} 1:16 cut ... bald This showed that a person made a special agreement with God or that a person was very sad. [†] 1:16 eagle Or “vulture.” See “vulture” in the Word List.

because your children will be taken away from you.

2

The Evil Plans of People

- ¹ Trouble 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.*
 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.' "

Micah Is Asked Not to Prophesy

* 2:3 save yourselves Literally, "take your necks off it."

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

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.[†]

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

[†] 2:8 They think ... war Or “Returning from war, they think they are safe.”

- 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.

3

The Leaders of Israel Are Guilty of Evil

- ¹ Then I said, “Listen, leaders of Jacob and officers of the
 nation* 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.†
 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

* 3:1 nation Literally, “house.” This might mean the royal family of that country. † 3:3 You are destroying my people Literally, “You who eat the flesh of my people.”

⁵ Some 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 “This 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.‡
You build Jerusalem by cheating people!

‡ 3:10 murdering people Literally, “bloodshed.”

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.
Temple Mount will be an empty hill[§] overgrown with
bushes.

4

The Law Will Come From Jerusalem

¹ In 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

§ 3:12 empty hill Or “high place,” a term usually used for local shrines
(places for worship) where people often worshiped idols.

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!*

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 “The 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.

* 4:5 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!”

He will rule from Mount Zion forever.
 8 And you, Tower of Flocks,[†]
 your time will come.
 Ophel, hill of Zion,
 you will again have the right to rule.
 Yes, the kingdom will be in Jerusalem
 as 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,[‡] 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.

[†] 4:8 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. [‡] 4:10 people of Jerusalem Literally, “daughter Zion,” a name for Jerusalem. Also in verse 13. See “Zion” in the Word List.

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

¹ Now strong city,* gather your soldiers!
 They are surrounding us for the attack!
 They will hit the Judge of Israel
 on the cheek with a stick.

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[†] are from ancient times,
 from long, long ago.
³ The Lord will let his people be defeated
 until the woman gives birth to her child, the
 promised king.
 Then the rest of his brothers will come back
 to join the people of Israel.
⁴ He will begin to rule Israel in the power of the LORD.

* 5:1 strong city Literally, “daughter of troops.” † 5:2 beginnings Or
 “family origins.”

Like a shepherd, he will lead his people in the
wonderful name of the LORD his God.
And they will live in safety
because then his greatness will be known all over the
world.
5 He will bring a time of peace.

Yes, the Assyrian army will come into our country
and march through our land.‡
But we have plenty of leaders§
we can send against them.
6 With swords in hand our leaders will defeat the Assyri-
ans
and rule the land of Nimrod.*
They† will save us from the Assyrians
when they come into our land and march through
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,

‡ 5:5 march ... land Or “trample our palaces.” § 5:5 plenty of leaders
Literally, “seven shepherds, no eight leaders.” * 5:6 land of Nimrod
Another name for Assyria. † 5:6 They Literally, “He.”

no one can save it.
 The survivors will be like that.
 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.‡
 15 Some nations will not listen to me,
 but I will show my anger and get my revenge.”

6

The Lord's Complaint

1 Now hear what the LORD says:
 “Present your argument to the mountains.
 Let the hills hear your story.*
 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!”

‡ 5:14 false gods Or “cities.” * 6:1 This is like a court case. The mountains and hills are the judge and jury.

- 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,[†]
 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?
 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.[‡]

[†] 6:5 Acacia to Gilgal This story is found in Num. 22-25. [‡] 6:9 the Lord’s name Literally, “your name.”

- So pay attention to the punishing rod and to the one
 who uses it!§
- 10 Do the wicked still hide treasures
 that they have stolen?
 Do they still cheat people
 with baskets that are too small?*
- 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.†
- 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.‡

§ 6:9 So pay attention ... uses it The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.

* 6:10 baskets ... too small Literally, "short ephahs." An ephah is about 1/2 bushel. † 6:14 You ... empty The Hebrew text here is unclear. ‡ 6:16 Omri A king of Israel who led his nation to worship false gods. See 1 Kings 16:21-26.

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.”§

7

Micah Is Upset at the Evil People Do

- ¹ 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* has come.
 Now you will be punished.

§ 6:16 Then ... you Or “My people’s shame will be taken away.” * 7:4
 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.

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.†

† 7:10 laugh at her Literally, "my eyes will stare at her."

People will walk over her,[‡] 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

[‡] 7:10 enemy, don't laugh ... walk over her This probably refers to an enemy city, such as the capital of Edom.

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,[§] as you promised our
ancestors long ago.

[§] 7:20 Abraham Here, Abraham is used to mean all the people of Israel. See "Abraham" in the Word List.

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