

Micah

Judgment on Israel and Judah for Exploitation

Israel's Exploitation			Leaders' Exploitation		Wicked Ritualism		
Chapters 1–2 “Hear...” (1:2)			Chapters 3–5 “Hear...” (3:1)		Chapters 6–7 “Hear...” (6:1)		
Punishment & Blessing			Punishment & Blessing		Punishment & Blessing		
Wealth (2:1-2, 8-12)			Wealth (3:1-3, 9-11)		Wealth (6:10-12; 7:1-6)		
Destruction of Samaria & Judah 1:2-16	Judgment for Exploitation 2:1-11	Regathering 2:12-13	Judgment for Exploitation Ch. 3	Messianic Blessing 4-5	Religious Ritual & Exploitation 6:1-8	Wickedness 6:9-7:6	Confidence 7:7-20
Israel and Judah							
735-710 BC (Before, During, and After the Fall of Israel)							

Key Word: Exploitation

Key Verse: “He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).

Summary Statement:

God indicts Israel and Judah for wickedness and exploitation of the poor and declares a judgment in exile to motivate them to repent, but promises vindication and kingdom blessing under Messiah in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Application:

Show justice, mercy, and humility rather than getting rich by making others poor.

Micah

Introduction

- I. **Title** The name Micah (מִיכָה *Miykah*) is the shortened form of Micayahu (מִיכָיָהוּ *Mikayahu*), which means "Who is like Yahweh?"

II. Authorship

- A. **External Evidence:** Some explain Micah's affinities to Isaiah by postulating the same group of disciples ("the Isaiah School") who collected and edited Micah's prophecies (cf. B.F. Childs, *Intro. to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 434-36, 438; cited by LaSor, 356). This view, however, is mere speculation. The same response applies to the accusation that the notes of hope within the book must be later additions (J. L. Mays, *Micah*, OTL, 13; C. Kuhl, *The Old Testament: Its Origins and Composition*, 214; A. Weiser, *Old Testament*, 254f.). Obviously the same prophet can predict both judgment and restoration.
- B. **Internal Evidence:** As with nearly all the prophetic writings, the writer is clearly designated in the title: Micah of Moresheth (1:1; probably Moresheth Gath in 1:14). Some lines of evidence seem to indicate he was a "country preacher" (though not professionally; cf. Amos) from a rural area about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem near the Philistine city of Gath: "He attacks the crime and corruption of Jerusalem and Samaria as one not really at home in either capital (vv. 1, 5-9; 3:1-4, 12), and takes great pains to show how the impending judgment is to affect the villages and towns of his home region, southern Judah (1:10-16)" (LaSor, 356). Micah stands in contrast to Isaiah in this respect, who felt at home with kings and leaders, but both men held up the covenant with courage and conviction against the flagrant abuses by Israel's people and leaders.

III. Circumstances

- A. **Date:** Micah prophesied during the reigns of three kings of Judah (1:1): Jotham (739-731 BC), Ahaz (735-715 BC), and Hezekiah (715-686 BC). Therefore, his prophecies both preceded and followed the fall of Damascus in 732 BC and the historic fall of Samaria in 722 BC, which he predicts will fall in 1:6. Micah's strong denunciations of Judah's sins of exploitation suggest that most of his messages preceded Hezekiah's reforms, but his ministry during Hezekiah's reign nevertheless was significant (cf. Jer. 26:17). Sins condemned include idolatry (1:7; 5:12-14; 6:7, 16).
- B. **Recipients:** Micah's message was directed towards the capitals of both the northern (Samaria) and the southern (Jerusalem) kingdoms, which appear in the title (1:1). He spoke of the destruction of Samaria by the Assyrians (1:6) and Judah by the Babylonians (4:10).
- C. **Occasion:** While Micah preached against the exploitation of Israel and Judah, Assyria committed its own immoral expansion into the west under Tiglath-Pileser (745-727 BC), Shalmaneser V (727-722 BC), Sargon II (722-705 BC), and Sennacherib (705-681 BC). Micah announced that Assyria and Babylon would be God's agents of discipline upon His people for their violation of the Mosaic Covenant, which stipulated exile as His punishment for spurning His decrees (Deut. 28:15-68).

IV. Characteristics

- A. Micah remains the only Old Testament book to specify the exact city in which the Messiah was to be born (5:2).
- B. In many ways Micah is like a miniature Isaiah as both prophets addressed the same sins of the same people. Compare 1:2 (Isa. 1:2) and 1:9-16 (Isa. 10:28-32), etc. (*TTTB*, 264). However, most of Micah's prophecy concerned moral rather than eschatological issues.
- C. Micah speaks more of Israel's future, the Messiah, and the kingdom than any other prophet in proportion to his writing. "Among his predictions are: the fall of Samaria in 722 BC (1:6-7); the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib (1:9-16); the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the temple in 586 BC (3:12; 7:13); the exile in Babylon (4:10); the return from captivity and the future peace and supremacy of Israel (4:1-8, 13; 7:11, 14-17); the birth of the Messianic King in Bethlehem (5:2)" (Freeman, 217).

Argument

Micah's prophecy falls easily into three sections (chs. 1-2, 3-5, 6-7), each beginning with the word "hear" (1:2; 3:1; 6:1). The first section (chs. 1-2) indicts Israel and Judah twice for sins of exploitation and promises judgment in exile, ending with a short section on restoration (2:12-13). The second section (chs. 3-5) indicts the leaders for the same sins of exploitation but has a much longer hope section (chs. 4-5). In the third and final section (chs. 6-7) God twice more indicts His people but ends with a final hope section to encourage them that He has not abandoned them because of His promise in the Abrahamic Covenant (7:7-20). Micah answers each of the five indictments from God, generally lamenting the lack of godliness in the land but also prophesying of national restoration in order to convince his people to repent and not give up hope.

Synthesis

Judgment on Israel/Judah for exploitation

1-2	Exploitation message #1
1:1	Introduction
1:2-16	Destruction of Samaria and Judah
2:1-11	Judgment for exploitation
2:12-13	Regathering
3-5	Exploitation message #2
3	Judgment for exploitation
4-5	Messianic blessing
6-7	Exploitation message #3
6:1-8	Religious ritual/exploitation
6:9-7:6	Wickedness
7:7-20	Confidence

Outline

Summary Statement for the Book

God judges those who exploit the poor but will reward others during Messiah's rule in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant.

- I. **God indicts Israel and false prophets for exploiting the poor but promises restoration to instill hope (Chs. 1-2).**
 - A. Micah affirms God's authority to prophesy to Judah and Israel before and after Israel's fall to show this to be God's words (1:1).
 1. Micah declares this prophecy as God's word to affirm that God, not man, has spoken these words (1:1a).
 2. The country prophet Micah of Moresheth underscores God's authority by choosing one of humble origins as His mouthpiece (1:1b).
 3. Micah preached at the time of Jotham (739-731), Ahaz (735-715), and Hezekiah (715-686) when Israel was at the end of its downward spiral (1:1c).
 4. The recipients of the prophecy are Samaria and Jerusalem, capital cities of the northern and southern kingdoms (1:1d).
 - B. Both Samaria and ten cities of Judah are promised judgment to motivate the people to repent (1:2-16).
 1. God brings a case against both the northern and southern kingdoms and pronounces the judgment of desolation [by Assyria] for Samaria (1:2-7).

2. Micah laments the future destruction of nine cities of Judah up to Jerusalem to urge repentance (1:8-16; fulfilled when Assyria destroyed 46 towns in Judah; 2 Kings 18–19 in 701 BC).
- C. Judgment of the people and false prophets for exploitations defend Micah's prophetic ministry (2:1-11).
 1. Proud people who exploit others for their own prosperity will be humbled (2:1-5).
 2. Micah laments false prophets who also exploit people in God's name for alcoholic drinks to defend his own prophetic ministry (2:6-11).
- D. God predicts the nation's future regathering to instill hope (2:12-13).

II. God indicts prophets and rulers of Israel and Judah for exploitation but promises kingdom blessing under Messiah after they are judged to comfort the people (Chs. 3–5).

- A. God again indicts the nations for exploitation and Micah indicts the prophets and rulers for the same to warn them of impending judgment (Ch. 3).
 1. Israel and Judah must stop exploiting the poor, which is why God will not respond when they complain about His judgment (3:1-4).
 2. Micah scathes against self-serving false prophets and leaders to warn them of the impending destruction (3:5-12).
- B. Kingdom blessing under the Messiah will follow the necessary judgment to encourage the people that He has not abandoned them (Chs. 4–5).
 1. Jerusalem's strength, security and world prominence in the coming kingdom should encourage Israel now that He is still with them (4:1-8).
 2. Israel's exile, restoration and victory over its enemies prior to the kingdom will show that God's holiness is balanced with His mercy (4:9–5:1).
 3. The Messiah born in Bethlehem will initially be rejected but later gather Israel in the kingdom by destroying the forces attacking her (5:2-15).
 - a) The Messiah will reunite and restore the nation (5:2-3).
 - b) The Messiah will care for the people and give them security (5:4).
 - c) The Messiah will destroy Israel's enemies (5:5-9).
 - d) The Messiah will purge Israel of reliance on military power (5:10-11).
 - e) The Messiah will destroy false worship within Israel (5:12-15).

III. Israel's wicked religiosity will be judged but balanced with God's vindicating them to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant (Chs. 6–7).

- A. God hates the simultaneous religious ritual and exploitation of others (6:1-8).
 1. God again brings His case against His people for their sins to justify His blamelessness (6:1-5).
 2. God wants justice, mercy and humility instead of sacrifices (6:6-8).
- B. God's final warning of destruction for Israel's evil to convince them to repent show His holiness, but Micah only laments a lack of godliness in the land (6:9–7:6).
 1. God gives a final indictment on the people for their wickedness and warns of destruction as a final attempt to convince Israel to repent (6:9-16).

2. Micah again laments the lack of godliness in the land to prove the righteousness of God's actions (7:1-6).
- C. Micah trusts that God will shepherd and vindicate Israel to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant, thus closing his prophecy with expectation, hope, and comfort (7:7-20).

Structure of Micah

Adapted from Dr. Homer Heater, "Micah," class notes (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1987), 36

The OT prophets often employed a judgment-salvation (or judgment-hope) overall structure in their writings. Micah does this as well, but he does it three times.

	Hear—1:2		Hear—3:1		Hear—6:1	
JUDGMENT	God's case against Israel & the sentence pronounced by the judge	God's case detailed and more sentencing	God's further indictment	God's case against Israel	God's indictment	
—God	1:1-7 Cf. Isaiah 1	2:1-5	3:1-4	6:1-5	6:9-16 Statues of Omri Works of House of Ahab	
—Micah	Micah's lament over ten cities of Judah 1:8-16	Micah's lament and defense Cf. Paul 2:6-11	Micah's diatribe against false prophets 3:5-12	Micah's confession of what God requires 6:6-8	Micah's lament of lack of godliness 7:1-6	
HOPE						
—God		Hopeful Promise for Israel 2:12-13	Hope in Last Days (Zion) 4:1-8		Hope for Israel in the Future 7:7-20	
—God			Babylonian Exile & Return 4:9-5:1			
—God			More hope of future deliverance 5:2-15			