Micah

Samaria and Israel to Be Punished

1 The word of the Lord came to Micah. This was during the time of kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. These men were kings of Judah. Micah was from Moresheth. Micah saw these visions about Samaria and Jerusalem.

2 Listen, all of you people! Earth and everyone on it, listen! My Master, the Lord, will come from his holy temple.* My Master 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* 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 Why? 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, 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. Why? Because Samaria got her riches by being unfaithful to me.* So those things will be taken by people that are not faithful to me.*

Micah’s Great Sadness

8 I will be very sad about what will happen. I will go without shoes and clothes. I will cry like a dog.* I will mourn like a bird.*

9 Samaria’s* wound can’t be healed. Her disease (sin) 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.*

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.
her riches … me Literally, “her wages were a prostitute’s wages.”
will be … me Literally, “will return to prostitute’s wages.”
dog Literally, “jackal,” a kind of wild dog.
bird Literally, “ostrich,” a large bird.
Samaria The capital of the northern ten-family group kingdom of Israel. Here it is often used to mean the northern kingdom itself.
Gath This is a word play. This name means, “tell.”
Acco This name means, “cry.”
Beth Ophrah This name means, “House of Dust.”
11 You people living in Shaphir,*
    pass on your way, naked and ashamed.
People living in Zaanan* will not come out.
The people in Beth Ezel* will cry,
    and take its support from you.
12 People living in Maroth* become weak
    waiting for good news to come;
Why? Because trouble has come down
    from the Lord to the city gate
    of Jerusalem.
13 Lady of Lachish,* hitch (tie) a fast horse
to the wagon.*
Zion’s sins started in Lachish.
    Why? Because you follow in
    Israel’s sins.*
14 So you must give goodbye gifts
to Moresheth* in Gath.
The houses in Aczib* will trick
    the kings of Israel.
15 You people living in Mareshah,*
    I will bring a person against you.
That person will take the things you own.
The Glory of Israel (God)
    will come into Adullam.*
16 So cut off your hair,
    make yourself bald.*
Why? Because you will cry for
    the children you love.
Make yourself bald like an eagle*
    and show your sadness*
Why? Because your children
    will be taken away from you.

The Evil Plans of People

Trouble will come to people
    that make plans to sin.
Those people lie on their beds
    making their evil plans
Then when the morning light comes,
    they do the bad things they planned.
Why? Simply 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.
They cheat a man
    and take his land from him.

The Lord’s Plans to Punish the People

3 That is why the Lord says these things.
    “Look, I am planning trouble
    against this family.
You will not be able to save yourselves.*
    You will stop being proud.
    Why? Because bad times are coming.
4 Then people will sing songs about you.
People 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.
The Lord 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 Preach

6 People say, “Don’t preach 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.

save yourselves Literally, “take your necks off it.”
Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22–28.
The Lord is losing his patience because of the bad things you did. If you people lived right, then I could say nice words to you. But to my people, they are like an enemy. You steal the clothes right off the backs of people walking by. Those people think they are safe. But you, like they are prisoners of war.* You have taken nice houses away from the women of my people. You have taken my wealth away from their small children forever. Get up and leave! This will not be your place of rest. Why? Because you ruined this place! You made it unclean, So it will be destroyed! It will be a terrible destruction! These people don’t want to listen to me.* But if a man came telling lies then they would 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

Yes, people of Jacob,* I will bring all of you together. I will bring together all the survivors* of Israel. 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. Then the “Crasher” will push through and walk to the front of his people They will break through the gates. and leave that city.*

The Leaders of Israel Are Guilty of Evil

Then I said, “Hear now, leaders of Jacob,* and officers of the nation* of Israel. You should know what justice is! But you hate good and love evil! You tear the skin off the people. You tear the flesh off their bones! 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! So, you might pray to the Lord, but he will not answer you. No, the Lord will hide his face from you. Why? Because you do evil things!”

False Prophets

Some false prophets are telling lies to the Lord’s people. The Lord says this about those prophets:

“These prophets are led by their stomachs! The prophets promise peace for people who give them food. But they promise war against people who won’t give them food.

That is why it is like night for you. That is why you don’t have visions.* You can’t see what will happen in the future, so it is like darkness to you. The sun has gone down on the prophets. They can’t see what will happen in the future, so it is like darkness to them.

Those people ... war. Or, “Those people think they are safe, returning from war.”
Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22–28.
survivors People that escape some accident or war.

nation Literally, “house.” This might mean the royal family of that country.
You are destroying my people Literally, “They eat the flesh of my people.”
visions Like a dream. God used visions to teach prophets what they should say to the people.
Mica 3:7–4:5

7 The seers* are ashamed. The fortune tellers* are embarrassed. They won’t 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. Why? 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!

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. And 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.

The Law Will Come from Jerusalem

4 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. They will say, “Come, let’s go up to the Lord’s mountain. Let’s go to the temple of the God of Jacob. Then God will teach us his way of living. And we will follow him.”

The teachings from God —the Lord’s message— will begin in Jerusalem on Mount Zion* and go out to all the world.

3 Then God will be a judge for the people of many nations. God will end the arguments for many* people in faraway countries. Those people will stop using their weapons for fighting. They will make plows from their swords. And they will use their spears as tools for cutting plants. People will stop fighting other people. People will never again train for war.

4 Each person will sit under his own grapevine and fig tree. No person will make them afraid! Why? 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. Jerusalem was thrown away. Jerusalem was hurt and punished. But I will bring her back to me."

7 The people of that ‘crippled’ city will become the survivors.* The people of that city 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.

Why Must the Israelites Go to Babylon?

9 Now, why are you crying so loud? Is your king gone? Have you lost your leader? You are suffering like a woman that is giving birth.

10 Daughter of Zion,* feel the pain. Give birth to your "baby." You must go out of this city (Jerusalem). You will live in the field. I mean, you will go to Babylon. But you will be saved from that place. The Lord will go there and rescue you. 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!”

Israel Will Defeat Its Enemies

13 “Daughter of Zion,* get up and crush those people! I will make you very strong. It will be like 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.”

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 for me. His beginnings* are from ancient times, from long, long ago.

3 So the Lord* 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 feed [the flock].

survivors People that escape some accident or war.
Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.
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.
Daughter of Zion Another name for Jerusalem.
threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.
hooves The hard part of a horse’s foot.
strong city Literally, “Daughter of troops.”
beginnings Or “family origins.”
the Lord Or, “the Ruler of Israel.”
They will live in peace because at that time, his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.*

5 There will be peace.
Yes, the Assyrian army will come into our country and trample our large buildings.
But the Ruler of Israel* will choose seven shepherds and eight leaders.*

6 They will use their swords and rule the Assyrians.
They will rule the land of Nimrod* with swords in hand.
They will use their swords to rule those people.
But then, the Ruler of Israel will save us from the Assyrians who will come into our land and trample our territory.

7 But the survivors* from Jacob scattered among the nations will be like dew from the Lord that doesn’t depend on any man.
They will be like rain on the grass that doesn’t wait for anyone.

8 But the survivors* from Jacob in the nations scattered among those people 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, then no one can save that animal.
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 not have any more people that try to tell the future.

13 I will destroy your statues of false gods. I will pull down your stones for remembering those false gods.
You will not worship the things that your hands have made.

14 I will destroy the Asherah poles.* And I will destroy your false gods.*

15 Some people will not listen to me. But I will show my anger. And I will get even with those people.”

The Lord’s Complaint

6 Now hear what the Lord says: Tell your side of the story 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!

3 The Lord 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 the things I did! I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to you. I brought you from the land of Egypt. I freed you from slavery.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.
fortress(es) A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.
Asherah poles Poles that helped people remember the Canaanite goddess, Asherah. At this time, the people thought she was the wife of Baal.
false gods Or, “cities.”
Let the hills This is like a case in court. The mountains and hills are like the judge and jury.
5 My people, remember the evil plans of Balak king of Moab.
Remember what Balaam son of Beor said to Balak.
Remember the things that happened from Acacia to Gilgal*.
Remember those things 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 the Lord with burnt offerings and a year-old calf?

7 Will the Lord be pleased with 1,000 rams or 10,000 rivers of oil?
Should I give my first child as payment for my crimes?
Should I give the child that came from my body as payment for my sins?

8 Man, the Lord told you what goodness is.
This is what the Lord wants from you:
Be fair to other people.
Love kindness and loyalty.
Live humbly with your God.
Don’t try to impress him with gifts.

What Were the Israelites Doing?
9 The voice of the Lord shouts to the city.
A wise person honors the Lord’s name.*
So pay attention to the punishing rod.
and to the One who holds that rod!*

10 Do the bad people still hide treasures that they have stolen?
Do bad people still cheat people with baskets that are too small?*
Yes! All of those things are still happening!*

11 Should I pardon the bad people who still use weights and scales to cheat people?
Should I pardon the people who still have bags with weights that give the wrong measure?

12 Rich people in that city are still cruel!
The people in that city still tell lies.
Yes, those people tell their lies!

13 So I have started 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 in 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 Why? Because you obey the laws of Omri.*
You do all the bad 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.*

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 I mean, all of the faithful people are gone.
There are no good people left in this country.
Every person is waiting to kill someone. Every person is trying to trap his brother. 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” don’t make good and fair decisions. They do whatever they want to do.

Even the best of them is like a thorn bush. Even the best of them is more crooked than a tangled thorn bush.

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! Now you will be confused!

Don’t trust your neighbor! Don’t trust a friend! Don’t even speak freely with your wife!

A person’s enemies will be the people in his 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
So I will look to the Lord for help! I will wait for God to save me. My God will hear me.

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
I sinned against the Lord. So he was angry at me. But he will argue my case for me in court. He will do the things that are right for me.

Then he will bring me out into the light. And I will see that he is right. 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.* People will walk over her, like mud in the streets.

The Jews to Return
The time will come when your walls will be built again. At that time, the country will grow.

Your people will come back to your land. They will come back from Assyria and from the cities of Egypt. Your people 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.

The land was ruined by the people that lived there and by what they did. So rule your people with your rod. Rule the flock of people that belongs to you. That flock lives alone in the woods, and up on Mount Carmel. That flock lives in Bashan and Gilead like they did in time past.

Israel Will Defeat Its Enemies
I did many miracles when I took you out of Egypt. I will let you see more miracles like that. 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.

watchmen Another name for prophets. This shows that the prophets were like guards that stood on a city’s wall and watched for trouble coming from far away.

laugh at her Literally, “my eyes will gawk (stare, look) at her.”
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

There is no God like you. You take away people’s guilt.

God forgives his people that survived. He won’t stay angry forever. Why? Because He enjoys being kind.

He will come back and comfort us again. He will crush our guilt and throw all of our sins into the deep sea.

God, please be true to Jacob,* Be kind and loyal to Abraham,* like you promised our ancestors* a long time ago.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22–28.
Abraham The father of the Israelites. Here Abraham is used to mean all the people of Israel.
ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.
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Last Updated: September 21, 2006

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