

## NAME

The name "Micah" means "who is like Jehovah." The book gives a picture of who and what God is like in dealing with nations and men.

## AUTHOR

Little is known about the prophet Micah beyond what can be learned from the book itself and Jeremiah 26:18. Micah lived in a small village called Moresheth (1:1) located about 20 miles south of Jerusalem. Because of his intense emphasis on social justice, he is thought to have come from the poorer classes. Micah exhibits a deep sensitivity to the social ills of his day, especially as they affected the small towns and villages of his homeland. His ministry was primarily to Judah and Jerusalem. The capitol of Israel (Samaria) was also included.

## DATE

Micah ministered in the turbulent time of Jotham (750-732 B.C.), Ahaz (735-715 B.C.), and Hezekiah (715-686 B.C.). He was therefore a contemporary of Isaiah (see Isaiah 1:1) and Hosea (see Hosea 1:1). Jotham and Hezekiah were good kings. But, Ahaz was extremely wicked. Micah witnessed the spiritual and moral apostasy of the government under Ahaz as well as its recovery under Hezekiah. Micah predicted the fall of Samaria (1:6), which took place in 722-721 as well as the inevitable desolation of Judah (1:9-16).

NASB - Introduction to Micah:

Three significant historical events occurred during this period:

1. In 734-732 B.C. Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria led a military campaign against Aram (Syria), Philistia, and parts of Israel and Judah. Ashkelon and Gaza were defeated. Judah, Ammon, Edom, and Moab paid tribute to the Assyrian king, but Israel did not fare as well. According to 2 Kings 15:29 the northern kingdom lost most of its territory, including all of Gilead and much of Galilee. Damascus fell in 732 B.C. and was annexed to the Assyrian Empire.
2. In 722-721 B.C. Samaria fell, and the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria
3. In 701 B.C. Judah joined a revolt against Assyria and was overrun by King Sennacherib and his army, though Jerusalem was spared.

## THEME

Halley (page 44): *"Bethlehem to Be Birthplace of the Messiah"*

Mitchell: *"The chosen people's sin will not prevent the accomplishment of God's purposes through them."*

NASB: *"Judgment and Deliverance By God"*

Mitchell:

Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah. Like Isaiah, this prophecy is a beautiful and moving example of Hebrew literature. Isaiah was the court poet, while Micah was a rustic from an obscure village. Isaiah was a statesman; Micah an evangelist and social reformer. Isaiah was a voice to kings; Micah, a herald for God to the common people. Isaiah addressed himself to political questions; Micah dealt almost entirely with personal religion and social morality.

He rigorously condemns Israel and Judah because of their great wickedness, announces their punishment, and prophecies a subsequent restoration to God's favor. Somewhat unique is Micah's condemnation of many social sins rather than the sin of idolatry.

NASB - Introduction to Micah:

Micah's message alternates between oracles of doom and oracles of hope. Micah stresses that God hates idolatry, injustice, rebellion, and empty ritualism, but He delights in pardoning the penitent. Finally, the prophet declares that Zion will have greater glory in the future than ever before. The Davidic kingdom, though it will seem to come to an end, will reach greater heights through the coming Messianic deliverer.

Key Word (Nelson's): Judgment and Restoration of Judah - Micah exposes the injustice of Judah and the righteousness and justice of God. About one-third of the book indicts Israel and Judah for specific sins. Another third of Micah predicts the judgment that will come as a result of those sins. The remaining third of the book is a message of hope and consolation. God's justice will triumph and the divine Deliverer will come.

Key Verses (Nelson's):

*"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"* (Micah 6:8)

*"Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of His inheritance? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in steadfast love"* (Micah 7:18).

Key Chapters (Nelson's): 6,7 - The closing section of Micah describes a courtroom scene. God has a controversy against His people, and He calls the mountains and hills together to form the jury as He sets forth His case. There can only be one verdict: guilty.

Nevertheless, the book closes on a note of hope. The same God who executed judgment also delights to extend mercy (Micah 7:18-20).

Outline:

- I. The Message to the Nations 1,2
  - A. The Proclamation of Judgment 1:1-2:11  
The incurable world of Samaria
  - B. The Promise of Deliverance 2:12,13
- II. The Message to the Rulers 3-5  
Concerning God's program for his people
  - A. The Denunciation 3
  - B. The Deliverance 4,5  
A word of consolation to the faithful
- III. The Message to the People 6,7  
Concerning God's problem with His people

## **RECIPIENTS**

While chapters 1 and 2 contain an oracle addressed to all peoples and to the earth and all it contains, ultimately the prophecy is for Judah and Israel (primarily their capitals of Jerusalem and Samaria)... and us.

## **CONTRIBUTION TO CANON**

1. Persistent sin will bring judgment
2. Ritualism is no substitute for righteousness - *"What does God want? We're religious!"* - to walk humbly with your God (6:8)
3. Birth of Messiah in Bethlehem (5:2-5a)

The implications of Micah's message are relevant today.

- Greed and the rejection of truth for profit
- Unjust rulers
- False prophets
- An uncaring and detached social hierarchy
- The kind of government you have is not as important as the quality of its leaders

As God was justified in His condemnation and judgment in Micah's day God is similarly justified today. Micah's message is unsettling and something to wrestle with. Perhaps our response to *"Who is like God?"* should be, *"What will please God?"*

Note also that Micah's message is ultimately one of deliverance (blessing), hope, and victory.

## **RESOURCES**

Gromacki, Robert C. *New Testament Survey*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1978

Halley, Henry H. *Halley's Bible Handbook*, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan Publishing House

Horton, David, General Editor. *The Portable Seminary*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bethany House Publishers, 2006

*Nelson's Quick Reference - Bible Maps And Charts*, Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1994

As general resources I've relied on my class notes from various professors at Biola University (especially those of Dr. Curtis Mitchell), Western Conservative Baptist Seminary (WCBS), and Talbot Seminary as well as notes shared with me by Annie Kartoizian.

Additional reference material has come from the study Bibles of the English Standard Version, New American Standard Version, and The New Living Translation.

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