

MICAH (trial of the capitals 1:1 – 2:13; trial of the leaders 3:1 – 5:15; trial of the people 6:1-7:20)

Micah is the short form of Macaiah. The name means "who is like Jah?" (Jehovah or the LORD). It is similar to Michael "who is like El (God)?" He was a contemporary of Isaiah. See the similarity of Micah 1:1 with Isaiah 1:1. Several passages in their works are very similar. They may have been given the same words or been influenced by each others work through the Holy Spirit. (Jeremiah 26:18) From the dates of the kings reign and the mention of certain cities, we can place the time of his ministry between 722 and 701 BC. Parts of the book have been attacked because of their precise prophetic details, but there is not credible evidence that this is anything other than the work of one man in this specific time period.

Verse 1 Samaria is the capital of the Northern Kingdom and Jerusalem the capital of the Southern Kingdom. Isaiah was ministering to the South and Micah was working mostly with the North.

Verse 2 This verse includes us. All the inhabitants of the earth are supposed to hear the words of Micah, and the Lord is the witness that we have heard.

Verse 3 The high-places were the locations of idol worship and the cities. The Lord was about to come and step on them.

Verse 4 Sounds like earthquakes and volcanic activity. Compare with Psalm 18:7-10 God brings natural disasters as judgement. Why?

Verse 5 The sins of the capital cities of these two nations, where the moral and spiritual example was set for the nation. In Jerusalem they were worshipping God, but they were also going to the high places and committing the grossest forms of immorality in worship of false gods. It is similar to going to church on Sunday and worshipping mammon or some other god the rest of the week.

Verse 6 From here to 16 is one long statement of judgement (the longest in Micah). Today Samaria is exactly as Micah describes it. The Arabs have planted little fields and vineyards. It is still a pile of rubble. There is a little Arab shop where the busses park and some of the ruins were restored to get a little idea of the former grandeur, but it is mostly rubble rolling down the hills. The archeologists dig down to the foundations, leaving the foundation stones bare, literally as Micah describes.

Verse 7 The temples had prostitutes that the "worshippers" paid the temple for the privilege of using. The temples of those gods were nothing more than great houses of prostitution. The priests collect the "offerings" and turn around and use it themselves to hire prostitutes. Others consider this spiritual prostitution making the Assyrian idols of gold and silver that would be captured and taken to Assyria.

Verse 8 Like Jeremiah and Hosea, this prophet had a tender broken heart. He saw the soon coming consequences of sin and was grieved at the devastation. To remove the

outer garments is a sign of deep mourning. Job 30:29 The people can see in him how grieved God is over their sin and the justice He must render.

Verse 9 They had crossed the line and could not go back. God says, "My Spirit will not always strive with man." It seems we can get to a point of hardening our hearts until no amount of God's grace will turn us around. When Assyria came to conquer the area they went all the way to the gates of Jerusalem, but God delivered Jerusalem miraculously. It was a strong warning to them.

Verse 10 A play on words. Gath sounds like the Hebrew for tell. The Septuagint has the second phrase, "weep not in Acco" and Acco sounds like the Hebrew for 'weep'. Beth Ophrah means house of dust. Putting dust on the head was a sign of deepest grief.

Verse 11 Continues the word plays but now in contrast. Shaphir means pleasant. Zaanan sounds like the Hebrew word for 'come out'.

Verse 12 Maroth means 'bitterness'. Here the destruction is predicted to stop at the gate of Jerusalem, which it did.

Verse 13 Lachish sounds like 'team'. Archeology has shown that this is the place the horse were kept that drew a chariot in the worship of the Sun. This city brought idolatry into the nation of Judah.

Verse 14 He mentions his home town receiving parting gifts. Achzib means 'winter brook' or 'deception'.

Verse 15 Mareshah sounds like the Hebrew for 'conqueror'. An alternate translation would be that their heirs, the glory of Israel, (i.e. youth) would flee to Adullam.

Verse 16 Shaving the head was an indication of grief. When Assyria came they took all the youth into captivity. The Mosaic law forbids shaving the head. There was always hope of repentance and restoration, but Israel had gone too far. There was no hope for them now. Isaiah 15:2

Proverbs 29:1 There comes a time when reproof is given but no longer heard. What a warning to stay sensitive and responsive to the LORD.

Throughout Micah the main warnings are against the perversion of worship and injustice toward your fellowman. These prophecies against Israel were fulfilled in 722 BC.