

THE MINOR PROPHETS

MICAH

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Location: Micah came from Shephelah, which means low place or lowlands. His hometown was Morsheth, Gath, near the border of Philistia and Judah a few miles away from Jerusalem.

Year: Written between 735 and 700 BC.

Author: Micah

Key Scripture: Micah 3:8, Micah 6:8, Micah 7:18

Key Points: Judgement on Israel and Judah and restoration of Gods people in the millennial kingdom.

About Micah

Micah came from Shephelah, His hometown Morsheth, near the border of Philistia and Judah a few miles away from Jerusalem, so he lived between the Jews and the philistines. Micah grew up in the countryside. He had strong concerns for the lowly and less fortunate (the lame, the outcasts, the afflicted Micah 4:6), therefore much of his prophecy is towards the leaders, the rich and those in places of authority or power.

Time: He prophesied during the momentous years surrounding the tragic fall of Israel to the Assyrian empire (Micah 1:6) and during the reign of King Jotham, King Ahaz and King Hezekiah.

King Jotham – mainly a good king but did not remove the high places from the land.

King Ahaz – was a very bad king. He was influence by the evil practices in the North (sacrificing his own children) 2 kings 16:3, 2 chronicles 28:3.

King Hezekiah – very good king. He destroyed all idols and pagan alters/temples.

About the Book of Micah

The book of Micah was written by Micah and talks about Gods judgement on Israel as a result of their rebellion. Micah prophesies on how the Assyrian empire followed by the Babylon empire, would try to destroy the nation and leave their land in ruins.

Micah accused Israel and Judah of committing evil crimes such as idolatry, wrongful and corrupt business practices, lies, bribery and much more.

'Listen to me you leaders of Israel! You hate justice and twist all that is right. You are building Jerusalem on a foundation of murder and corruption. You rulers make decisions based on bribes; you priests teach Gods laws only for a price; you prophets won't prophesy unless you are paid. Yet all of you claim to depend on the Lord 'No harm can come to us you say for the Lord is here among us'. (Micah 3:9-11)

Micah was warning the nation that God would not allow this behaviour to continue. He boldly accused the leaders for being responsible for leading the people into sin, however his message does not end there. Micah tells the nation how God is faithful, and he will deliver his people and bring peace among them.

Micah vs Isaiah

Micah and Isaiah preached and prophesied at the same time. Isaiah was born around royalty. Micah by contrast lived in a poor region. Micah was a simple countryman with a heart for ordinary people.

There are a few of scriptures in Micah that are similar and at times almost identical to those in the book of Isaiah (Micah 4:1-5 and Isaiah 2:1-4)

Links to the New Testament

The book provides one of the most significant prophecies of Jesus Christ’s birth in all the Old Testament.

Over 700 years before Christ is born, Micah talks about his birthplace.

But you O Bethlehem are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel whose origins are in the distant past will come from you on my behalf. (Micah 5:2)

He will be the source of peace. (Micah 5:5)

Verses in Micah	Verses Similar in the New Testament
Micah 5:2 But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the other people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from your behalf.	Matthew 2:6 ‘And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel’.
Micah 7:6 For the son despises his father. The daughter defies her mother. The daughter-in-law defies her mother-in-law. Your enemies are right in your own household!	Matthew 10:35-36 ‘I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. Your enemies will be right in your own household!’
Micah 7:20 You will show us your faithfulness and unfailing love as you promised to our ancestors Abraham and Jacob long ago.	Luke 1:72-73 He has been merciful to our ancestors by remembering his sacred covenant—the covenant he swore with an oath to our ancestor Abraham.

Micah gives prophetic warnings to both Israel and Judah. His message is not one that would tickle the ears of his hearers. In fact, his message was very unpopular because he foretold of the destruction and devastation of Israel and Judah. Although his message is filled with many warnings, he also offers the nation hope. He tells them how God will restore the land and his people because he is faithful to his covenant.

Micah explains how God will do this. He is going to rebuild Jerusalem and defeat evil for good. He describes the return of the messianic King and how there will be no more sin. Instead, he will rule with peace and justice, and the land along with the people will be blessed. But before God can do this, he must address the sin among the nation.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter 1- 3 – Judgement announced - He is accusing the leaders, the false prophets as well as the rich and powerful, of leading the nation astray and causing them to sin.

Chapter 4 - 5 – Millennial reign of Christ - He says Gods kingdom will be established here on earth.

Chapter 6 - 7. Justice and Mercy. Chapter 6 focuses on the punishment of the nations sin and chapter 7 focuses on Gods mercy.

Themes

Leaders and Religious Behaviour

Micah singles out the leaders for the wicked and evil ways. He says they hate good and love evil. (Micah 3:1-5). He talks about the prophets making people stray and how the religious leaders say, because God is among them no harm will come on them. Although they were performing their religious duties, their hearts were far from God (Micah 6:6-7). He was accusing them of a false commitment to him. It was superficial form of worship and there was no genuine love or concern for God. Similar to Isaiah 48:1-2 *Listen to me, O family of Jacob, you who are called by the name of Israel and born into the family of Judah. Listen, you who take oaths in the name of the Lord and call on the God of Israel. You don’t keep your promises, even though you call yourself the holy city...*

Justice and Mercy

‘Justice is giving people what they deserve but mercy is giving them what they don’t deserve’.

God will always act justly. He is a God of standards and he is holy. He must be just. But he is also a God that forgives, full of grace and mercy.

“If God forgave us without the cross then he would be merciful but not just. If He refused to forgive sin and punished it all, he would be just but not merciful” – David Pawson

How do we apply this to our lives?

- Make sure you are walking with God (Micah 6:8) and become complacent like Israel and Judah.
- If you are a leader or in a place of authority, do the right thing. As Christians we are called to be the light and the example to others. WE should be leading people to Christ not causing them to sin.
- Don't expect people to like you. They didn't like Micah or Jesus.
- Stand up for the word of God.

'He has shown you oh man what is good and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God'. (Micah 6:8)

Bibliography

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