

**The Three Messages of Micah
Israel and Judah in the Crosshairs
Micah 1:1 – 7**

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On our trip through the Minor Prophets, we have now arrived at the book of Micah.

Who is this prophet, Micah? I believe we can get a lot about him, from his name. Micah means – “Who is like unto Jehovah?” (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 174)

The derivation of this name is the same as “Michael (the name of the archangel) which means “who is like God?” There are many Micahs mentioned in the Scriptures, but this man is identified as a Morasthite (Mic. 1:1), since he was an inhabitant of Moresheth-gath (Mic. 1:14), a place about twenty miles southwest of Jerusalem, near Lachish. He is not to be confused with any other Micah of Scripture.” (McGee 1997, 768)

Moresheth Gath (the possession of the winepress).

So, the word of the Lord has come to “who is like God, the possession of the winepress. Micah is His Prophet and belongs to no other and answers to no other. The message he is going to bring comes from the one who is, in this alliteration, the winepress. This implies right up front that the message is intended to be one that is going to pressing hard onto both Israel and Judah. They are about to be squeezed and tested because of their sin. What will be seen when they are squeezed? Will we see them repent or will we see who they really have become, apostate.

Here is a view of Micah's hometown looking from the south. Moresheth Gath is southwest of Jerusalem and 7 miles southeast of Gath just north of the Guvrin Valley. It is located north of Lachish on the road to Azekeh.



(Bolen 2012, Used with Permission)

Micah 1:1

“The word of the LORD which came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and **which he saw** regarding Samaria and Jerusalem.” (NASB 2020)

Based on the information provided to us by the prophet here in verse 1, his ministry takes place during the rule of three Judean kings, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. His ministry overlapped the ministries of Isaiah, Hosea and Amos. He may have even been a friend of Isaiah.

As we move through Micah, we will discover there are also similarities with the book of Isaiah. Keil and Delitzsch point them out.

Micah not only predicts, in Mic. 1:6, 7, the destruction of Samaria, which took place in the sixth year of Hezekiah; but he also mentions Asshur, the great enemy of Israel at that time, as the representative of the power of the world in its hostility to the kingdom of God (Mic. 5:4); and he agrees so thoroughly with Isaiah in his description of the prevailing moral corruption, as well as in his Messianic prophecies, that we are warranted in inferring the contemporaneous labours of the two prophets (compare Mic. 2:11 with Isa. 28:7; Mic. 3:5–7 with Isa. 29:9–12; Mic. 3:12 with Isa. 32:13, 14; and Mic. 4:1–5 with Isa. 2:2–5; Mic. 5:2–4 with Isa. 7:14 and 9:5). (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 285)

Micah will prophesy of the coming destruction of Jerusalem during the rule of Hezekiah, yet he will be allowed to continue his ministry with out any hinderance from the King. Something Jeremiah could only wish for later.

Micah and his ministry will be referred to later in order to prevent the arrest and execution of Jeremiah. After a round of prophecy by Jeremiah, there was a call to arrest him and have him executed since it was not good news for Jerusalem. But Micah was used as an example to mitigate the desire of some.

Jeremiah 26:16–19

“Then the officials and all the people rendered their verdict to the priests and the prophets. They said, “This man should not be condemned to die. For **he has spoken to us under the authority of the LORD our God.**” Then some of the elders of Judah stepped forward and spoke to all the people gathered there. They said, “Micah from Moresheth prophesied during the time Hezekiah was king of Judah. He told all the people of Judah, ‘The LORD of Heaven’s Armies says, “ ‘Zion will become a plowed field. Jerusalem will

become a pile of rubble. The temple mount will become a mere wooded ridge.” ’ “King Hezekiah and all the people of Judah did not put him to death, did they? Did not Hezekiah show reverence for the LORD and seek the LORD’s favor? Did not the LORD forgo destroying them as he threatened he would? But we are on the verge of bringing great disaster on ourselves.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Those providing the counsel got it. They knew they were already in trouble and did not want to further spiral the situation downward.

At this point Judah’s history had reached a stage in which the words of Micah became resonant with the realities of the times. The same sins of which Micah spoke were rife. As the Babylonian crisis deepened, the possibility that Micah’s prophecies would be fulfilled heightened. (Mays 1976, 24)

That was the reason for the concern, fulfilled prophecy. They knew what Micah had said so thus, the counsel to leave Jeremiah alone, for this time.

Because of the timeframe for his ministry, Micah will witness war with Syria, the civil war between the two kingdoms and the brutality connected with that. He will also prophesy about and then see Israel go into exile by the hand of Assyria leaving only Judah.

The second King he ministers under, Ahaz, was a miserable failure as a King in Judah. He did his best to try and copy the idolatry of Israel.

Things went south for him rapidly and one would think he would repent, but he never did. It was while he was King that he was attacked by Syria and Israel. Ahaz then invited Assyria to take them out.

2 Chronicles 28:5–8

“The LORD his God handed him over to the king of Syria. The Syrians defeated him and deported many captives to Damascus. He was also handed over to the king of Israel, who thoroughly defeated him. In one day Pekah son of Remaliah killed 120,000 warriors in Judah, because they had abandoned the LORD God of their ancestors. Zikri, an Ephraimite warrior, killed the king’s son Maaseiah, Azrikam, the supervisor of the palace, and Elkanah, the king’s second-in-command. The Israelites seized from their brothers 200,000 wives, sons, and daughters. They also carried off a huge amount of plunder and took it back to Samaria.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Micah is unique. He is the only prophet tasked with going to both kingdoms. As he begins his ministry, there was peace in both kingdoms as well as economic well being. That all unravels though due to the sin of both nations, something Micah would indeed talk about.

He will prophesy against Israel and the destruction coming from Assyria as well as Judah and what is coming from Babylon.

Minor Prophets

- Hosea – Israel 748 – 686 BC
- Joel – Judah 835 – 796 BC
- Amos – Israel 786 – 746 BC
- Obadiah – Edom 848 – 841 BC
- Jonah – Assyria 771 – 754 BC
- Micah – Israel / Judah 750 – 686 BC
- Nahum – Assyria 661 BC
- Habakkuk – Judah 625 – 597 BC
- Zephaniah – Judah 640 – 608 BC
- Haggai – Judah 520 BC
- Zechariah – Judah 520 – 480 BC
- Malachi – Judah 455 – 432 BC

Micah further identifies for us in verse 1 that his prophecy will concern the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Samaria, as well as the capital of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Jerusalem.

I enjoy reading Micah as he writes much like a reporter would and is easy to follow.

Geopolitically, as he begins to minister, Assyria is beginning to come out of the post-Jonah phase and new rulers take over determined to spread their power throughout the region.

The book has three messages, each can be identified by the word “hear” or “listen.”

The first message begins in Micah 1:2, the second in Micah 3:1 and the third in Micah 6:1.

In Hebrew, the book is predominately poetry. The theme predominately judgment but there is also discussion of restoration as well as the remnant in each of the three messages.

Micah will tell us where Messiah will be born and will also refer to Him as King and Ruler.

The upcoming fall of the Northern Kingdom will have impacts on Judah. Many will escape to the south from the Assyrians, and this will cause issues in Jerusalem shifting the inclination from YAHWEH more towards the fertility gods of the north which were brought along with them. The refugees brought their lifestyle with them.

Some of Micah’s comments allude to events taking place in Jerusalem after the fall of Israel. “In the late eighth century, Jerusalem grew to three or four times its previous size, according to archaeological data. Broshi accounts for this growth as follows: “... the main reasons behind the expansion was (sic) the immigration of Israelites who came to Judah from the Northern Kingdom after the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C. and the influx of dispossessed refugees from the territories that Sennacherib took from Judah and gave to the Philistine cities.”” (Hillers 1984, 5)

Micah does not provide his call to ministry for us like Isaiah does, but he does relate that the word of the Lord came to him. “The claim that “the word of I AM” came to him and that he “prophesied” his “vision” (Mic 1:1) gives him the status of I AM’s plenipotentiary. As a messenger from the heavenly court, he was invested with all its authority in his addresses to Israel’s royal capitals of Samaria and Jerusalem.” (Waltke 2007, 1-2)

Recall Amos always related that he was a shepherd and not a professional prophet. Micah will claim to be a prophet and he would carry that identity.

For Micah, some of the covenant threats for disobedience that YAHWEH proclaimed, were about to take place in the Northern Kingdom. The social problems that were explained to us in detail in Hosea, have begun to show up in the southern kingdom. “...we learn that the contagious social injustices that prevailed in Samaria now prevailed in her prostitute sister Jerusalem as well.” (Waltke 2007, 3)

Throughout the book, future judgment (discipline) is held in tension with Israel’s future hope. The two coexist in Yahweh’s plan for his people. The coming judgment consisted of a valley the Israelites needed to go through because of their sin. But at the other end of the valley there was hope and restoration. (Hoyt 2018, 554)

By the time we get to the end of Micah, hope is the message while at the same time, a dread over the near future.

The book of Micah physically is at the middle of the minor prophets. It will be the last book to deal with Israel and lays the groundwork for the next three books after this.

The Assyrian threat leads us into Nahum and the upcoming downfall of Nineveh.

The discussion of the situation in Judah prepares us for Habakkuk and the corruption in Jerusalem. Finally, the promises related by Micah are further expanded upon in Zephaniah.

A Masoretic note beside 3:12 (the last verse of the chapter) signals that 3:12 is the halfway point of the Book of the Twelve by verse count. Micah 4 thus begins the second half of the Book of the Twelve, making these chapters a propitious place to reflect upon the “future” and recurring themes. (Nogalski 2011, 519)

Our outline is quite simple.

Outline

1:1 – Introduction
1:2 – 2:13 – Message One
The Coming Judgement of Israel 1:2 – 1:7
The Coming Judgement of Judah 1:8 – 16
The Coming Judgement Against Oppressors 2:1 – 5
True and False Prophecy 2:6 – 11
A Remnant will Be Restored 2:12 – 13
3:1 – 5:15 – Message Two
The Removal of Evil Leaders 3:1 – 12
Deliverance of Zion and the Coming King 4:1 – 5:15
6:1 – 7:20 – Message Three
Covenant Lawsuit 6:1 – 16
Lamentations Over an Evil Culture 7:1 – 6
Future Deliverance 7:7 – 20

Micah 1:1–2

“The word of the LORD which came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and which **he saw** regarding Samaria and Jerusalem. Hear, you peoples, all of you; Listen carefully, earth and all it contains, And may the Lord GOD be a witness against you, The Lord from His holy temple.” (NASB 2020)

Micah has been in the divine council. He has heard the word of the Lord and met with the council. He has seen things regarding the future of the the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. The term relating that Micah “saw” the prophecies is the Hebrew word הָזָאָה (hāzāh).

This means “to see God, sometimes used of the real sight of the divine presence, Ex. 24:11; Job 19:26 (compare 38:1), elsewhere applied to those who enter the temple, Ps. 63:3. So “to behold the face of God” is used metaphorically for to enjoy His favour, to know Him as propitious, an image taken from the custom of kings, who only admit to their presence those whom they favour, Ps. 11:7; 17:15. This word is especially appropriated to speaking of those things which are presented to the minds of prophets, whether in visions properly so called, or in oracular revelations. (Gesenius and Tregelles 2003, 268)

This is “a technical term of prophecy which developed to refer not only to visions but to the wider perception of divine revelation.” (Allen 1976, 265)

We are told right up front that Micah is a prophet of God, his ministry is rooted in a specific historic period but as a prophet, the words he gives are the words given by God and as such may be applicable for believers in every age, including ours. We will learn there really is not much difference regarding apostasy over the centuries.

We have talked about the timeframe of the three kings referenced before, but it is always good to be reminded of the when. “Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah: Jotham reigned approximately 740–736 B.C., Ahaz 736–716 B.C., and Hezekiah 716–687 B.C.” (Clark and Mundhenk 1982, 124)

Jotham was Uzziah's son and mostly a good king. Ahaz is a waste of air and the worst king in the history of Judah. Hezekiah is a good king who encouraged a revival during his reign.

A portion of his ministry is to Israel, but he does not refer to any of the kings there, Isaiah and Hosea did not refer to any kings in the northern kingdom either. This might be a deliberate act by all three. "Micah would not lend even minimal respectability to those who had 'usurped the Lord's throne through assassinations; they set themselves up, but not by divine prophetic designation.'" (Prior 1988, 110)

This lack of kingly reference under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is reflective of God's view of the Kingship in the north kingdom becoming one of illegitimacy after the rule of Jehu and his family ends.

Jehu was the last King to be anointed by a Prophet of God in Israel.

2 Kings 9:1–3

"Then Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets and said to him, "Tie up your garments, and take this flask of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth-gilead. And when you arrive, look there for Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi. And go in and have him rise from among his fellows, and lead him to an inner chamber. Then take the flask of oil and pour it on his head and say, 'Thus says the LORD, I anoint you king over Israel.' Then open the door and flee; do not linger." (ESV)

This did not lead to good kings in Israel, but it did establish a line that lasted through Jeroboam II.

Now that we know who he is, Micah begins with an announcement. This announcement reflects the scope of what it is he has to say on behalf of YAHWEH.

Micah 1:2

"Hear, you peoples, all of you; Listen carefully, earth and all it contains, And may the Lord GOD be a witness against you, The Lord from His holy temple." (NASB 2020)

In typical prophetic fashion we begin with the dual command to hear and to listen.

Everyone and everything in the entire world is required to pay attention to these words. They may be concerned with one small area at one specific point in time, but they contain crucial lessons for all people at any time. (Prior 1988, 111)

Why the whole world, because this is also a trial, and the world is to listen as God Himself will be acting in the role of witness against Judah and Israel.

"It is the Sovereign Lord who is standing waiting to bear witness to what he knows. The solemn thing is that the witness which God is going to bring is one that is against his own people. God himself is sitting in his court of justice—that is, heaven. Micah called it, with great awe, God's 'holy temple.'" (Bentley 1994, 17)

God is the judge and the witness as he leaves His chambers the world is called to attention.

Micah 1:3–5

"For behold, the LORD is coming forth from His place. He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth. The mountains will melt under Him And the valleys will be split, Like wax before the fire, Like water poured down a steep place. All this is due to the wrongdoing of Jacob And the sins of the house of Israel. What is the wrongdoing of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? What is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem?" (NASB 2020)

As the Lord arrives, we see pictures of His arrival here on the planet. In prophecy, when God comes down, we are normally talking about in judgement about to occur.

God has come from His place because of the egregious nature of the crimes which have been committed. We have judgement being combined with a theophany, an appearance of God. As He comes, He is intentionally treading on all the so-called holy places worldwide.

One reason for the world to hear and listen, this is directed to the nations and their false religious systems as well as those false gods which have become a problem with His own people.

More specifically, this is directed to His people who have walked away from Him and apostatized themselves.

Micah 1:4

“The mountains will melt under Him And the valleys will be split, Like wax before the fire, Like water poured down a steep place.” (NASB 2020)

The intentional picture being drawn here is that as God appears on the earth, it is accompanied with catastrophe. As the I AM is coming to earth, a cosmic reversal takes place. This will later be reflected in Zechariah 14:1 – 6 and in Revelation 19:11 – 19 concerning the nations. We do not see a referral to the “Day of the Lord” here, but it is a clear reference to what will take place during it. Nothing escapes nor remains. When this majestic God suddenly erupts with justice, puny man’s proud walls and fortifications crumble and fall into the ravines. Humans feel secure as long as the long-suffering God remains in heaven, but when he marches forth in judgment, they are gripped by the stark reality and gravity that they must meet the holy God in person (cf. Amos 4:2). (Waltke 2007, 57)

As reflected in Zechariah and Revelation, those who are in alignment with the purposes of the King as He arrives have nothing to fear, but those who are in rebellion, like Israel and Judah are, have everything to fear.

The nations are invited to observe and learn that there is a future day coming when this judge will be coming not to deal with His people, but in response to His people who are being oppressed by the nations.

I like how Dr. Waltke describes our culture today and where we stand versus where we should be standing. “Unbelieving secular humans sees no connection between their immoral behavior and the cycles of depression, increasing crime, politicians instead of statesmen to guide them, ceaseless war, and venereal diseases. If they would “see” God ruling earth’s affairs, and tremble before him, they would have nothing to fear.” (Waltke 2007, 58)

The question in the mind of those from the nations who are observing the I AM coming from His Holy Temple, His Place, is simple, why is He coming with judgement?

Even His people would be wondering that, and they would be thinking that it must obviously be for judgment against the nations. Why did He call them to the court room unless it was to be against them. What comes in verse 5 would hit hard as it does not fit the narrative for those who are in Judah or Israel.

Both Kingdoms are still living under the misperception that sine they are God’s chosen people, they get a pass. So long as they give a nod every now and then, everything is good.

There is a complete misunderstanding of what the law says and what was desired by YAHWEH. Faithfulness and obedience were requirements of the deal they had cut with God in order to be His chosen people. They are not holding up their end of the deal, but God will, and that is the problem when apostasy comes into those who were followers of Him and have identified as such.

Micah 1:5

“All this is due to the wrongdoing of Jacob And the sins of the house of Israel. What is the wrongdoing of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? What is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem?” (NASB 2020)

“The cause of YHWH’s appearance is the ‘crime of Jacob’ and ‘sins of the house of Israel’. The theophany, which is almost always an action against those who oppose YHWH’s purpose, has become an action against the very people for whose deliverance he had acted in the past. The word-pair ‘crime/sin’ specifies the reason for the reversal. ‘Crime’ (peša’) means rebellion against YHWH’s authority. Sin (ḥaṭṭa’t) means failure, missing the goal of the norms set by Israel’s relation to YHWH. The pair constitute a comprehensive characterization of the people’s conduct; their corporate identity is that of sinner, and in that identity YHWH comes to deal with them.” (Mays 1976, 44)

What? How could this be? This has been presented in a way to elicit shock and outrage among the Jews who had been listening up to this point ready to join in on a diatribe against the nations, but it is against them.

As Micah relates the reason for the court appearance, he begins with a global statement and then drills down to specifics. To make sure there is no doubt that this is for the north and the south, he relates this is due to the wrongdoing “of Jacob.” The entire Hebrew population has now been identified as criminals. They have broken the covenant they had with YAHWEH. How bad is this?

As this is being delivered, when Micah drills down from Jacob to Samaria, you can almost hear the residents of the Southern Kingdom looking at each other and saying things like “no surprise here.”

We knew this was going to happen to them since they worship gold calves. “Everyone knew that the Assyrian army was threatening Samaria; and it could only be a matter of time before the northern kingdom fell under its onslaughts. Amos had warned them: ‘Woe to you who are complacent ... who feel secure on Mount Samaria’ (Amos 6:1).” (Bentley 1994, 18)

Micah 1:5b

“...What is the wrongdoing of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? ...” (NASB 2020)

Literally “Who is Jacob’s transgression?” That is, who is [responsible] for Jacob’s transgression? Samaria is responsible, that is, the capital of the country has infected the rest of the country with its idolatry (cf. 1:7). (Dempster 2017, 70-71)

It is the last part of this verse though that silences those who have been talking about Israel negatively.

This prophet is talking about the North, and the South.

Micah 1:5c

“...What is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem?” (NASB 2020)

The key phrase is the use of “high place of Judah.” This has a very specific meaning for those listening and paints a picture that is less than flattering.

“A “high place” was an open-air or roofed site where pagan religious rites were practiced. Jerusalem, the supposed center of true worship, is no different than its Canaanite neighbors. Indeed, Jerusalem is no different than Samaria. The two kingdoms are thus inextricably linked by their common sin. What had formerly united them were God’s dynastic promise to David (2 Samuel 7) and the glorious temple of Jerusalem (1 King 6–8). Now frequently bitter enemies since the secession of the northern kingdom in 920 b.c., Israel and Judah are united, ironically, only in apostasy, Micah declares.” (Brown 1996, 35)

The covenant crime of the Hebrews – apostasy. Both in the north and in the south.

We listen to this today and start talking to ourselves much the same way the people of Judah did. Why didn’t the people of Israel and Judah get it? Look at all that God did for them and how much He loved them and cared for them. How could they simply walk away and follow false gods? How could God’s people become apostates?

We need to be careful though as we do so, since as we point one finger at them, there are three fingers pointed right back at us.

A Biblical hallmark of the last days, which we are living in, is apostasy. A deliberate walking away from the clearly revealed teaching of Jesus Christ.

Apostasy is not something that unbelievers do, it is something that those who say they are believers slip into. "Deepening apostasy is a sign of the times. Apostasy to some degree has always been within the church, but a future, distinct period of moral darkness and spiritual deception is coming. There is no doubt today that deepening deception and surging apostasy are upon us. What we see in the visible church today is nothing short of shocking. We are witnessing the increase and intensification of apostasy we should expect if the coming of Christ is near." (Hitchcock and Kinley 2017, 36-37)

We forget the phases of apostasy seen in the book of Revelation. It begins with tolerating false teaching as in Thyatira.

Revelation 2:19–20

"I know your deeds: your love, faith, service, and steadfast endurance. In fact, your more recent deeds are greater than your earlier ones. But I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and by her teaching deceives my servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols." (NET 2nd ed.)

There is a reaction, but toleration has caused drowsiness to slip in.

Revelation 3:1–2

"To the angel of the church in Sardis write the following: "This is the solemn pronouncement of the one who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars: 'I know your deeds, that you have a reputation that you are alive, but in reality you are dead. Wake up then, and strengthen what remains that was about to die, because I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God.'"" (NET 2nd ed.)

Wake up and strengthen what is there, there still is hope. Not everyone has gone there yet. The reaction is the church in Philadelphia, but the drowsiness and toleration are strong and never really gone away, and we arrive finally in Laodicea.

Revelation 3:15–17

"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot! So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of my mouth! Because you say, "I am rich and have acquired great wealth, and need nothing," but do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked,"" (NET 2nd ed.)

Apostasy eventually arrives at unbelieving believers. This is where Israel and Judah have arrived as Micah ministers to them, and this is where the church today is sitting.

How are we doing on this these days. The conventional wisdom seems to be that there is a problem but as a culture, we are running so fast that we just don't have time to look, diagnose the problem and act.

Last year, the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University conducted a world view inventory of born-again parents of pre-teen children, to see if we can determine how the church is doing on the question of apostasy.

The results were not encouraging.

World View Inventory 2022

Identified five key beliefs and behaviors among born-again parents that miss the mark when it comes to biblical worldview understanding:

1. A foundational biblical worldview belief is that absolute moral truth exists; determining right from wrong is not left up to each individual but is derived from biblical teaching and principles. Only 30% of born-again parents embrace the existence of Bible-based, absolute moral truth.
2. The biblical worldview defines success as consistent obedience to God. Fewer than four out of 10 (38%) parents of preteens hold this view.
3. The biblical worldview teaches that human life is sacred. This viewpoint is held by just one-third (35%) of born-again parents.
4. There is no value to embracing faith for the sake of having faith. The biblical worldview asserts that Christianity is the one true faith and the only faith of true and lasting value. However, only one out of every three born-again parents of preteens (33%) maintains that point of view.
5. The biblical worldview holds that any wealth we possess is a gift God entrusts to us to manage for the advancement of His kingdom. Only one-quarter of this born-again segment (26%) embrace this view of wealth. (Barna 2022)

Most of the church in America today has already walked away from the historic Christian faith. America is predominately apostate.

People have many expectations of pastors of Christian churches. One of those expectations is that pastors possess a philosophy of life that largely reflects biblical principles, a perspective commonly called a biblical worldview. But a new nationwide survey among a representative sample of America's Christian pastors shows that a large majority of those pastors do not possess a biblical worldview. In fact, just slightly more than a third (37%) have a biblical worldview and the majority—62%—possess a hybrid worldview known as Syncretism. (Barna, Release #5: Shocking Results Concerning the Worldview of Christian Pastors 2022)

Our nation has rushed into apostasy these past few years. "Apostates are those who profess faith but rebel or fall away from it. They never possessed Christ and eternal life but simply professed faith. Apostates are consistently characterized by two things in the New Testament: false doctrine and ungodly living. Apostates believe wrong and behave wrong. "They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him." Apostates are the fifth column within the visible church." (Hitchcock and Kinley 2017, 24)

Laodicea lives.

2 Timothy 4:1-4

"I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he comes to set up his Kingdom: Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching. **For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching.** They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. They will reject the truth and chase after myths." (NLT)

We live in that day.

Just as Israel and Judah went into apostasy, we see, just as anticipated by Jesus, the church going the same way in these last days.

For the Hebrew nation, Micah is preparing them for what is coming. Discipline. Peter did the same as persecution began to heat up in the Roman world.

1 Peter 4:17

“For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin with God’s household. And if judgment begins with us, what terrible fate awaits those who have never obeyed God’s Good News?” (NLT)

In the text of the Bible, apostasy is dealt with severely. Micah will be no different. The Old Testament indicated that judgment would begin with God’s people in His own temple.

Ezekiel 9:4–6

“And the LORD said to him, “Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it.” And to the others he said in my hearing, “Pass through the city after him, and strike. Your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity. Kill old men outright, young men and maidens, little children and women, but touch no one on whom is the mark. And begin at my sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were before the house.” (ESV)

The Lord, per Micah, has pointed out the problem. “The prophet has little to say about the content of the people’s guilt beyond labelling it first as rebellion, breaking free from obligations to an overlord, warrant enough for divine reprisals, and then as sin, strictly a falling short of the moral ideal, or failure to follow the right way.” (Allen 1976, 272)

Judah now knows they are included. But since Samaria is first, what will YAHWEH do to the Northern Kingdom?

The problem is simple, “mornings would find the Jews offering sacrifices to Jehovah in the temple. But evenings would find them worshipping idols in the groves. So too, in Washington, D.C., many of our country’s leaders attend prayer breakfasts in the morning and endless rounds of cocktail parties in the evening.” (Courson 2006, 829)

Both Kingdom’s are corrupt. Micah will make that clear for us.

Micah 1:6–7

“For I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the open country, Planting places for a vineyard. I will hurl her stones down into the valley, And lay bare her foundations. All of her idols will be crushed, All of her earnings will be burned with fire, And all of her images I will make desolate; For she collected them from a prostitute’s earnings, And to the earnings of a prostitute they will return.” (NASB 2020)

The High Place of Dan Today



(Bolen, Dan aerial from east 2012, Used with Permission)

The foundations are laid bare, but not removed. This pictorial detail is quite realistic. A common feature of a tell in the Near East is the presence in its sloping sides of visible lines of foundation stones (or lower courses) of ancient walls. Exposure of the foundations (Ps 137:7) means deliberate systematic destruction. (Anderson and Freedman 2008, 178)

The amazing thing, that is what is left of much of the Northern Kingdom.

The judgment against Samaria is one of utter and complete destruction; the ruins of her city will be covered with fields. No indication of civilization will be left. (Hoyt 2018, 591)

Hazor



(Bolen, Hazor upper city aerial from west 2012, Used with Permission)

Micah 1:7

“All of her idols will be crushed, All of her earnings will be burned with fire, And all of her images I will make desolate; For she collected them from a prostitute’s earnings, And to the earnings of a prostitute they will return.” (NASB 2020)

Under the law, this is exactly what should have happened. “But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire.” (Deuteronomy 7:5, ESV)

But they built their own. God has not changed His viewpoint.

When they failed, he would do it himself. This would happen, according to Micah, because the Israelites not only failed to eradicate the idols themselves, but even added to the number and became practitioners of the idolatry they were ordered to remove. (Anderson and Freedman 2008, 180)

Remember when we studied Hosea how we discussed the practices taking place at the so-called temples in Israel. Male and Female prostitution was involved.

The proceeds went to the gold and silver placed over the top of the idols. Literally a prostitute’s wages. The irony is that when Assyria would take the silver and gold off the idols, the soldiers would then use it themselves to pay the prostitutes who would travel with the military camp.

Micah will respond to the courtroom scene, the evidence presented as well as the coming judgement.

That we will pick up next time.

The sin of both Kingdoms was that of walking away from God.

It didn't happen overnight but over time. The problems we see in our culture today is the result of the church walking away from Jesus Christ and chasing after other things which are good, but not the mission that our Lord assigned us of making disciples.

Getting distracted is easy, so easy we are told to check out ourselves from time to time. How are we doing in our relationship with the Lord.

Philippians 2:9–13

“As a result God highly exalted him and gave him the name, that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—in heaven and on earth and under the earth—and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. So then, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence but even more in my absence, **continue working out your salvation with awe and reverence**, for the one bringing forth in you both the desire and the effort—for the sake of his good pleasure—is God.” (NET 2nd ed.)

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