

MICAH

STUDY GUIDE

AUTHOR & DATE

Micah (“who is like Jehovah”) is sometimes referred to as the “Amos of the Southern Kingdom” because of his similar passion about social injustice and religious apostasy. A contemporary of Isaiah, also preaching to the southern kingdom of Judah, Micah’s early years of ministry coincide with the end of Hosea’s ministry to the northern kingdom of Israel.

We can learn quite a bit about Micah from the first verse of the book. Within that verse he names himself as the author, his hometown, and which kings of Judah were in place during his time. This makes the book relatively easy to date between 735-700 B.C.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The time of Micah’s preaching follows a period of peace and prosperity for both kingdoms, where there was a rise in cities and urban populations, an emergence of wealth, rapid growth of commerce, and an economic/social class structure where the rich ruled the poor and exerted authority and influence over priests and judges. It’s easy to see why these things would lead to a society of corruption and injustice. However, there were spiritual influences upon these kingdoms as well, leading to the saddened state of God’s chosen people by the time Micah arrived on the scene.

Around 745 B.C., under the rule of Tiglath-pileser III, Assyria was a rising empire and a threat to surrounding nations. Within ten years (734 B.C.), Judah and Israel had become vassals of Assyria, or in other words, they made payments to Assyria in order to protect their tiny nations. In 724 B.C., Israel withheld payment from the Assyrians and incurred a siege against Samaria that lasted nearly two years. Finally overtaken, many of the wealthy and influential Samaritans were taken captive by Assyria and exiled.

Meanwhile in Judah, king Ahaz thwarted an attack by kings of the northern kingdom, Israel, and further aligned with the Assyrians. While in Damascus to meet with Tiglath-pileser, Ahaz saw an altar and had it built in Jerusalem where he then offered sacrifices instead of at the temple, which he eventually had closed. Hezekiah, a righteous king who followed Ahaz’s rule, had the temple reopened and worship to the Lord reestablished. Like Israel, Hezekiah also ceased to pay the Assyrian tribute and Jerusalem was attacked in 701 B.C. Through the divine hand of God, Jerusalem was not overtaken (2 Kings 19:35-36), but Hezekiah did reestablish payments to Assyria.

During this siege, Hezekiah asks the prophet Isaiah to pray for the remnant – but the meaning of this remnant is twofold: 1) Jerusalem as a remnant of Judah, and 2) the remnant of the whole of God’s people, many of whom were refugees from Samaria following its takeover twenty years prior.

Look up the following passages to further understand the historical background of the kings mentioned in Micah. Take note of what you learn.

- 2 Kings 15:32 – 20:21
- 2 Chronicles 27:1-33:20
- Isaiah chapters 7, 20, 36-39

Micah 1:10-15 names 9 locations within Judah. This passage can be confusing unless you know the meanings behind each place. As you read, use the following chart to understand what is meant by each location, then complete the chart by describing what happens in each town.

Location	Meaning	What Happens
Beth Aphrah	House of Dust	
Shaphir	Pleasantness; Beautiful	
Zaanah	Going Out	
Beth Ezel	House of Removal, Taking Away	
Maroth	Bitterness	
Lachish	Sounds like "To the steeds"	
Moreseth (Micah's home)	Possession	
Achzib	Deception	
Mareshah	Inheritance, Possession	

UNIQUENESS OF THE BOOK OF MICAH



The book of Micah can be described as a compilation of compilations, containing twenty oracles with no definitive chronological or topical order. That said, this book has a consistent pattern of judgment and hope as well as striking prophecies of the coming Messiah, specific mention of the Spirit of God, and insight into the “last days.”

Micah swaps terms frequently for the northern and southern kingdoms, so keep in mind:

- Samaria and Israel = Northern Kingdom
- Jerusalem and Judah = Southern Kingdom

LITERARY STRUCTURE

Micah follows three cyclical patterns of judgement and salvation/hope; therefore, its outline is best following those cycles:

First Cycle	Judgment of Israel & Judah (1:1-2:11) Restoration of a Remnant (2:12-13)
Second Cycle	Indictment of Judah’s Leaders (3:1-12) Future Hope (4:1-5:15)
Third Cycle	God’s Charges against Primarily Judah (6:1-7:7) Ultimate Triumph of God’s Kingdom (7:8-20)

Outline by Kenneth L. Barker

OBSERVATION WORDS

- **God / Lord** (any other names, references of God, character traits, etc.)
- **Jesus** (prophecies, foreshadowing, types, etc.)
- **Holy Spirit** (specific mentions, miracles/wonders, fulfilled prophecy, symbols, etc.)
- **Judah/Jerusalem**
- **Samaria/Israel**
- **“I will...”**
- **“On that day”**
- **Remnant**

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

- What is something the Lord taught you through this book? How will you apply this to your life?

- Look up the following passages to connect what you've been reading to other locations in the Bible.
 - **Isaiah 8:19-20; 2 Timothy 4:3-4** – What do you learn about prophets of that time and specifically how does this apply to Micah? What about our culture today?

 - **Exodus 23:8; Deuteronomy 16:19; Isaiah 1:23, 5:23; 1 Timothy 6:10** – What do you see as a key part of corruption and injustice?

- List passages speaking of or foreshadowing Jesus. What do you learn about the coming Messiah through these passages?

- How did you see the Holy Spirit represented in the book?

- What do you learn about "last days?"

- What do you learn about the “remnant?”
- Describe the Lord’s case against Israel and Judah. What does He accuse them of? How does He describe His viewpoint?
- How does Israel & Judah respond to the Lord’s charges against them? (Micah 6:10-16)
- What does it mean to you to “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God?”
- This book reveals how deceptive humankind can be, but how trustworthy is the Lord. How is your trust in God, or do you tend to trust people more? Why or why not? What’s a practical step you can take to trust the Lord more?
- How do you feel pressured to not speak for God in your world? How can you stand firm in what the Lord desires of you?

KEY WORD:

KEY VERSE:

KEY CHAPTER: