

Micah

The Twelve Minor Prophets · Biblical Prophets

From Moresheth-gath in Judah's Shephelah region, Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (c. 735-700 BC), making him a younger contemporary of Isaiah. While Isaiah ministered primarily to Jerusalem's royal court, Micah addressed common people and rural communities, giving his prophecies a distinctly populist character emphasizing social justice. His name, meaning 'Who is like Yahweh?', finds echo in his prophecy's concluding question: 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity?'

Micah denounced the sins of both Samaria and Jerusalem: greedy landlords who 'covet fields, and take them by violence,' false prophets who 'bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace,' corrupt judges who 'build up Zion with blood,' and priests who 'teach for hire.' Yet his condemnations always balanced judgment with restoration promises.

His most famous prophecy foretold Messiah's birth: 'But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.' The chief priests quoted this very passage to Herod when wise men inquired where Christ should be born.

Micah's summary of true religion—'what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'—distills biblical ethics to their essence, contrasting genuine piety with empty ritualism. His prophecies alternate between judgment oracles and restoration promises: Israel scattered then regathered, the mountain of the LORD's house established above all mountains, nations streaming to Zion to learn God's ways, swords beaten into plowshares. Jeremiah later cited Micah's

prophecy of Zion plowed as a field (26:18), crediting it with moving Hezekiah to repentance.

Note: Micah's Bethlehem prophecy not only predicts Messiah's birthplace but affirms His eternal pre-existence—"whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." The prophecy's context describes tribulation preceding millennial blessing, the woman in travail (possibly referencing both Israel and Mary), and the ruler feeding his flock in the LORD's strength. Micah's vision of universal peace (4:3-4) parallels Isaiah 2:2-4 so closely that scholars debate whether one borrowed from the other or both drew from common prophetic tradition. His theodicy—"I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him"—demonstrates submission under divine chastisement.

Key Verses

Micah 3:8

But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.

Micah 4:3

And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Micah 5:2

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Micah 6:8

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Micah 7:18

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

Micah 7:19

He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

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