

# Micah 1:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Declare ye it not at Gath, weep ye not at all: in the house of  
Aphrah roll thyself in the dust.

## Analysis

**Declare ye it not at Gath, weep ye not at all** (בְּגַת אֶל־תִּגִּידוּ בָכוֹ אֶל־תִּבְכּוּ, be-Gat al-taggidu bakho al-tivku). This echoes David's lament over Saul and Jonathan: **"Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon"** (2 Samuel 1:20). Gath was a Philistine city; publicizing Israel's defeat would give enemies occasion to rejoice and mock Yahweh. The wordplay continues: "weep not" (אֶל־תִּבְכּוּ, al-tivku) at בָּכוֹ (Bakho, possibly Bochim, "place of weeping"—Judges 2:1-5).

**In the house of Aphrah roll thyself in the dust** (בְּבֵית לַעֲפָרָה עָפָר הִתְפַּלְשִׁי, be-veit le-Aphrah aphar hitpallashi). עָפָרָה (Aphrah) means "dust"; the command to roll in עָפָר (aphar, dust/ashes) creates pun—"In Dust-town, roll in dust!" Rolling in dust/ashes expressed extreme mourning (Joshua 7:6; Job 2:8, 42:6; Jeremiah 6:26). The prophet employs multiple wordplays connecting town names to judgments—a poetic technique heightening pathos and memorability.

Verses 10-15 form a lament series using Judean town names with punning wordplays. This literary device (paronomasia) appears elsewhere in prophetic literature (Isaiah 5:7; Jeremiah 1:11-12). The towns mentioned lay in the Shephelah (lowlands) southwest of Jerusalem—Micah's home region (he was from Moresheth-Gath, v. 14). These weren't distant cities but his neighbors, making his grief intensely personal. The wordplays aren't mere cleverness but mnemonic devices ensuring the prophecy's retention and impact.

## Historical Context

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The Shephelah region was Judah's agricultural heartland and defensive buffer against Philistine incursions. When Assyria invaded under Sennacherib (701 BC), this region bore the brunt of devastation. Archaeological excavations at Lachish (one of Judah's strongest fortresses) reveal massive destruction layers from this period. Sennacherib's palace reliefs depict the siege of Lachish in graphic detail—battering rams, burning walls, impaled prisoners.

Micah's prophecy would resonate powerfully with audiences who witnessed these towns' destruction. The reference to Gath (a Philistine city) recalls Israel's historic enemy who would gloat over Judah's humiliation. David's lament in 2 Samuel 1:20 similarly expressed desire to prevent enemies from rejoicing over Israel's defeat. The prophet's wordplays served pastoral purposes—helping grief-stricken survivors process trauma through poetic expression while recognizing divine judgment behind Assyrian invasion.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does the command not to "declare it in Gath" reflect concern for God's reputation among hostile nations?
2. What does Micah's use of wordplays teach about communicating difficult truths in memorable, impactful ways?
3. In what ways should believers mourn sin's consequences while avoiding giving God's enemies occasion to blaspheme?

## Interlinear Text

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בַּגַּת	אֶל	תִּגַּד יָדוֹ	וּ תִבְכּוּ	אֶל	וּ תִבְכּוּ	בְּיָת
ye it not at Gath	H408	Declare	weep	H408	weep	H1004
H1661		H5046	H1058		H1058	
לְעֶפְרָה	עָפָר	הִתְפַּלְשְׁתִּי:				
in the house of Aphrah	thyself in the dust	roll				
H1036	H6083	H6428				

## Additional Cross-References

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**2 Samuel 1:20** (Parallel theme): Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

**Jeremiah 6:26** (Parallel theme): O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us.