

Micah 1:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore shalt thou give presents to Moresheth-gath: the houses of Achzib shall be a lie to the kings of Israel.

Analysis

Therefore shalt thou give presents to Moresheth-gath (בָּכְנָה תָּתַת שְׁלֹוחִים עַל־) lakhen titteni shilluchim al-Moresheth Gat). Moresheth-Gath was Micah's hometown (1:1), located near the Philistine city Gath. **shilluchim** (shilluchim) means sending away, parting gifts, or farewell presents—the kind given to a departing daughter (Genesis 31:16). The wordplay suggests Moresheth (Moresheth) sounds like מִאָשָׁה (me'orasah, betrothed)—Jerusalem must give parting gifts as if divorcing a betrothed bride.

The houses of Achzib shall be a lie to the kings of Israel (בְּתֵי אַכְזִיב לֹא־קָבֵד לְמַלְכֵי) bottei Akhziv le-akhzav le-malkhei Yisrael). Akhziv (Akhziv) means "deceptive/lying"; the town becomes an אַקְזָב (akhzav, deception)—like a wadi that promises water but runs dry (Jeremiah 15:18; Job 6:15-20). Kings expected Achzib's support but found betrayal or collapse. The wordplay emphasizes covenant unfaithfulness produces unreliable relationships—you reap what you sow (Galatians 6:7).

Micah personalizes judgment—his own hometown faces devastation. Prophets didn't deliver abstract theology but costly, personal truth. Jeremiah's hometown Anathoth rejected him (Jeremiah 11:21-23); Jesus noted prophets aren't honored in hometowns (Luke 4:24). Micah's willingness to prophesy against Moresheth-Gath demonstrates prophetic integrity—he valued truth over popularity, God's word over hometown loyalty. The parting gifts symbolize irreversible loss—what was intimately connected must be released in judgment.

Historical Context

Moresheth-Gath's location is identified with Tel Goded, about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem near the Philistine border. The compound name (Moresheth-Gath) indicates proximity to the Philistine city Gath. This region saw repeated conflict between Judah and Philistia, making it culturally hybrid and militarily vulnerable. During Sennacherib's 701 BC invasion, border towns like Moresheth bore initial assault.

Achzib (possibly Tell el-Beida) was another Shephelah town. The prophet's wordplays emphasize that these towns—including his own birthplace—wouldn't escape judgment. The phrase "kings of Israel" in Micah sometimes refers to Judean kings (as Northern Israel had already fallen by 722 BC). The message: covenant violation produces systemic unreliability. Towns that should support the kingdom become deceptive disappointments. The theological principle extends beyond geography—unfaithfulness corrupts all relationships, personal and political.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does Micah's willingness to prophesy judgment against his own hometown teach about costly obedience to God's word?
2. How does the concept of Achzib as 'deception'—a dry wadi that betrays expectations—illustrate the unreliability of anything built on covenant unfaithfulness?
3. In what ways might churches or Christians become 'Achzibs'—promising spiritual resources but proving unreliable in times of need?

Interlinear Text

לְכָן	תַּתְנִין	יְמִים	שְׁלֹוחַ	עַל	שְׁתִּים	מִזְרָח	גַּת
H3651	Therefore	shalt thou give	presents	H5921	H0	to	Moreshethgath
	H5414		H7964			H4182	

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 15:44 (Parallel theme): And Keilah, and Achzib, and Mareshah; nine cities with their villages:

2 Kings 16:8 (Kingdom): And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria.

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