

# Micah 1:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls.

## Analysis

**Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked** (על־זאת אֶסְפֹּדָה וְאֵילֵלָה וְאֵיִלְיָהָ אֵילְכָה שׁוֹלָל וְעָרוֹם, al-zot espedah we-eylelah eilkhah sholal we-arom). Micah's response to Samaria's judgment is radical identification with the mourning. סָפַד (saphad, wail/lament) and יָלַל (yalal, howl) express intense grief. Going שׁוֹלָל (sholal, stripped) and עָרוֹם (arom, naked) imitates captives led away in humiliation (Isaiah 20:2-4). This isn't mere sympathy but prophetic embodiment—living out judgment to shock audiences into recognition.

**I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls** (אֶעֱשֶׂה מִסָּפַד כַּתַּנִּים וְאֶבְל כִּבְנוֹת יַעֲנָה, e'eseh misped ka-tannim we-evel kivnot ya'anah). תַּנִּים (tannim) likely refers to jackals (not mythical dragons), known for eerie nighttime howling. בְּנוֹת יַעֲנָה (benot ya'anah, daughters of the desert) are ostriches, whose mournful cries echo through wastelands. Micah compares his lament to desolate creatures inhabiting ruins—a sonic picture of devastation.

Why does the prophet mourn enemies' judgment? Because he understands

1. the tragedy of wasted potential—Israel was chosen, redeemed, privileged
2. covenant violation grieves God's heart (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11)
3. Judah faces similar danger (v. 9).

Prophets don't gloat over judgment but weep with God's broken heart. Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44); Paul wished himself accursed for Israel's sake

(Romans 9:1-3). True love mourns sin's consequences even while affirming justice's necessity.

## Historical Context

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Prophetic sign-acts were common in Israel—Isaiah walked naked and barefoot three years (Isaiah 20:2-3), Jeremiah wore a yoke (Jeremiah 27-28), Ezekiel enacted Jerusalem's siege (Ezekiel 4). These dramatic performances communicated God's word visually, breaking through audiences' hardened indifference. Micah's public mourning would shock comfortable Judeans who viewed Samaria's fall as distant northern problem.

The historical context: Assyria destroyed Samaria in 722 BC; Micah prophesied until roughly 700 BC, witnessing Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (701 BC) when the angel destroyed 185,000 Assyrians (2 Kings 19:35). Verse 9 warns judgment has reached Judah's gate—Jerusalem barely escaped. Micah's mourning aimed to provoke repentance before Judah suffered Samaria's fate. Jeremiah later employed similar mourning (Jeremiah 9:1, 10-11; 13:17) to no avail; Judah persisted in sin and faced Babylonian exile (586 BC).

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does Micah's mourning over sinners' judgment challenge Christians to grieve over the lost rather than adopting triumphalistic attitudes toward hell?
2. What does the prophet's willingness to publicly humiliate himself teach about the cost of faithful ministry?
3. In what ways should awareness of coming judgment provoke urgent, mournful intercession rather than satisfied complacency?

## Interlinear Text

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עַל	זֹאת	אֶסְפֹּד הַ	וְאֵיל יִלָּה	אֵילֶךְ הַ	שִׁילָ לַ	וְעָר וָם
H5921	H2063	Therefore I will wail	and howl	H1980	stripped	and naked
		H5594	H3213		H7758	H6174
אֶעֱשֶׂה הַ	מִסְפֵּד	כַּתְנֵי יָם	וְאֵ בָל	כָּבֵן וְתַ	יַעֲנֶה:	
I will make	a wailing	like the dragons	and mourning	as the owls	H3284	
H6213	H4553	H8577	H60	H1323		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 22:4** (Parallel theme): Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.