

# Micah

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Author: Micah of Moresheth · Written: c. 735-700 BC · Category: Minor Prophets

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## Introduction

Micah stands as one of Scripture's most powerful voices for social justice, a rural prophet from Moresheth who spoke God's truth to the corrupt urban centers of power. Contemporary with Isaiah, Micah witnessed the same historical upheavals—the fall of Samaria, Assyrian invasions, and the moral decay of Judah's leadership. Yet while Isaiah ministered in Jerusalem's court, Micah came from the countryside and understood intimately how the wealthy elite exploited common people. **His message cuts to the heart: religious ritual without justice is worthless, and God demands ethical living grounded in humble relationship with Him.** The powerful who devour the poor, the prophets who prophesy for money, and the priests who teach for hire all face devastating judgment.

Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (roughly 735-700 BC), a period of extreme social stratification. The wealthy accumulated land by fraud and violence, evicting families from ancestral inheritances. Courts were corrupt, rulers accepted bribes, and the legal system favored the powerful over the vulnerable. Religious leaders blessed this injustice, assuring people that God's presence in the temple guaranteed security regardless of behavior. **Micah exposes this hypocrisy with devastating clarity**—Jerusalem has become like a pagan high place, her leaders build Zion with bloodshed, yet they 'lean upon the LORD' saying 'Is not the LORD among us? No evil can come upon us' (3:11). This delusion would be shattered.

Yet judgment is not Micah's final word. Interwoven with doom oracles are magnificent promises of restoration. The famous prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah (5:2)—cited by Jewish scholars when Herod inquired where the Christ should be born—shows God's redemptive purposes extend beyond judgment. **The 'ruler in Israel' whose origins are 'from of old, from everlasting' will shepherd God's people in strength.** The nations that now trample Israel will stream to the mountain of the LORD, seeking instruction and peace. Swords will be beaten into plowshares when the LORD reigns from Zion.

Micah's summary of what God requires—'to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God' (6:8)—remains one of Scripture's most concise statements of true religion. This triad encompasses right treatment of others (justice), compassionate covenant love (mercy), and proper relationship with God (humble walking). **External religious observance—sacrifices, offerings, even extreme acts of devotion—cannot substitute for these essentials.** God desires transformed hearts that produce transformed lives, not empty ritual divorced from righteousness. The book concludes with a magnificent affirmation of God's incomparable character—'Who is a God like unto thee?'—the very meaning of the prophet's name. This God pardons iniquity, passes

by transgression, does not retain anger forever, and delights in mercy, ultimately casting all sins into the depths of the sea.

## Book Outline

- **Judgment Announced** (1-2) — Doom on Samaria and Jerusalem, oppression condemned
- **Leaders Indicted** (3) — Rulers, prophets, and priests denounced
- **Future Hope** (4-5) — Mountain of the LORD, Bethlehem's ruler, remnant restored
- **God's Lawsuit** (6) — The LORD's case against Israel, requirements stated
- **Lament and Hope** (7) — Sorrow over corruption, trust in God's mercy

## Key Themes

- **Social Justice and Oppression:** Micah exposes the systematic exploitation of the poor by the powerful. The wealthy 'covet fields and take them by violence' (2:2), tearing the skin from people and the flesh from their bones (3:2-3). Judges accept bribes, priests teach for hire, prophets divine for money (3:11). **God's passionate advocacy for the vulnerable runs throughout**—those who exploit the powerless face divine judgment because their victims matter to God.
- **Religious Hypocrisy:** Leaders claim God's presence while living unjustly, assuming that temple worship provides immunity from consequences. They 'lean upon the LORD' while building 'Zion with blood' (3:10-11). This false security—believing ritual guarantees blessing regardless of ethics—provokes God's fury. **Micah demonstrates that God despises worship divorced from justice**, that religious performance cannot compensate for moral failure.
- **The Bethlehem Prophecy:** From insignificant Bethlehem Ephrathah will come Israel's ruler 'whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting' (5:2). This specific geographical prophecy, fulfilled in Christ's birth, also emphasizes the ruler's eternal nature. **God's redemptive plan centers on one whose origins transcend time**—a divine ruler from David's line who will shepherd Israel in the strength of the LORD.
- **True Religion Defined:** The rhetorical questions of 6:6-7—'With what shall I come before the LORD?'—culminate in the definitive answer: 'to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God' (6:8). **This triad encompasses the entirety of covenant faithfulness**—justice in human relationships, mercy as covenant love, and humble fellowship with God. No amount of sacrifice can substitute for these essentials.
- **The Mountain of the LORD:** Micah 4:1-3 presents the eschatological vision of nations streaming to Jerusalem to learn God's ways. The transformation from warfare to peace—swords beaten into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks—results from universal instruction in God's law. **The reign of the LORD from Zion will establish global peace** as the word of God goes forth to all peoples.
- **The Remnant Restored:** Despite judgment, God promises to gather the remnant 'like sheep in a fold' (2:12). Those who survive discipline will be assembled and strengthened. The remnant of Jacob will be 'in the midst of many people as dew from the LORD' (5:7), bringing blessing. **God's purposes cannot be ultimately thwarted**—a purified people will emerge from judgment to fulfill His covenant promises.

- **God's Incomparable Forgiveness:** The book's climax celebrates God's character: 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression?' (7:18-19). This rhetorical question (reflecting Micah's name) has only one answer—no god compares to the LORD. **He delights in mercy, compassion triumphs over anger, and sins are cast into the sea's depths.** This incomparable grace defines God's relationship with His people.
- **Judgment and Hope Intertwined:** The book alternates between devastating judgment oracles and magnificent restoration promises, creating a pattern of woe and hope. This structure reflects God's dual commitment to justice and mercy. **Judgment serves redemptive purposes**, clearing away corruption to make way for restoration. The certainty of discipline balances the certainty of future blessing.

## Key Verses

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 5:2 (This prophecy, quoted by chief priests and scribes to Herod (Matthew 2:6) and fulfilled in Christ's birth, demonstrates **God's sovereignty in choosing the unlikely and unexpected**. Bethlehem, insignificant among Judah's towns, becomes the birthplace of the eternal King. The phrase 'goings forth from of old, from everlasting' points to the Messiah's pre-existence and divine nature—His origins transcend time itself. This ruler will shepherd Israel in the LORD's strength, bringing security and greatness.)

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 6:8 (After rhetorical questions exploring what offerings might please God—thousands of rams, rivers of oil, even child sacrifice—Micah provides **the definitive summary of covenant faithfulness**. God has already revealed what He requires: justice (right treatment of others), mercy (covenant love, hesed), and humble walking with God (proper relationship). These three elements encompass ethics, compassion, and devotion. External ritual without internal transformation and ethical living is worthless. This verse defines authentic religion.)

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. 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.

— Micah 7:18-19 (The book's climactic celebration of God's character plays on the prophet's name—'Who is like the LORD?' The rhetorical question has only one answer: **no deity compares to the God who pardons iniquity and delights in mercy**. God's anger is temporary; His mercy is His delight. The promise to 'cast all sins into the depths of the sea' pictures complete removal—sins drowned beyond recovery. This incomparable forgiveness defines God's essential character and relationship with His covenant people.)

The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.

— Micah 3:11 (This verse exposes **the deadly delusion of presuming on God's grace while living in flagrant disobedience**. Leaders accept bribes, priests commodify teaching, prophets sell their services—yet they assume God's presence in the temple guarantees security. They confuse proximity with relationship, ritual with righteousness. Micah demolishes this false confidence, warning that such hypocrisy invites judgment rather than protection.)

And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his

ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 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 4:2-3 (This eschatological vision, paralleled in Isaiah 2:2-4, presents **the ultimate fulfillment of God's purposes when the LORD reigns from Zion**. Nations that once warred against Israel will voluntarily seek instruction from the God of Jacob. Universal peace results from universal submission to God's law. The transformation of weapons into agricultural tools symbolizes complete cessation of warfare. This vision anticipates the Messianic age and the ingathering of Gentiles.)

Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.

— Micah 2:1-2 (Micah denounces **the calculated exploitation of the vulnerable by the powerful**. These oppressors plot injustice at night and execute it by morning—they have both the will and the power to wrong others. Seizing ancestral land violated covenant principles that guaranteed each family their inheritance. This systematic oppression of the poor and dispossession of families provokes God's fierce judgment. God champions those who cannot defend themselves.)

Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

— Micah 7:7 (Amid corruption where 'the good man is perished' and everyone 'hunts his brother with a net' (7:2-3), the prophet models **confident trust in God despite circumstances**. When human institutions fail, when even family relationships break down (7:5-6), the believer's hope remains in the LORD. This waiting is not passive resignation but active confidence that God hears and will act. It demonstrates faith that endures when visible supports collapse.)

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 3:8 (In contrast to false prophets who prophesy for money and tell people what they want to hear, Micah declares his authority comes from **the Spirit of the LORD empowering him to speak truth regardless of consequences**. True prophecy requires divine enablement to confront sin boldly. The prophet's legitimacy is demonstrated not by popularity or profit but by Spirit-given courage to declare God's Word faithfully, even when that word is unwelcome.)

## Historical Context

Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in Judah (roughly 735-700 BC). He witnessed the fall of Samaria to Assyria (722 BC) and Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (701 BC). Coming from the rural town of Moresheth, Micah understood the impact of elite exploitation on common people. His prophecies influenced Hezekiah's reforms (Jeremiah 26:18-19).

## Literary Style

Micah alternates between judgment oracles and hope passages, creating a pattern of doom-hope-doom-hope. His style is direct and passionate, with vivid imagery. Wordplays on town names in chapter 1 create a lament. The courtroom scene in chapter 6 is dramatic. The book's conclusion is a hymn of confidence in God's forgiving character—a play on the prophet's name, which means 'Who is like the LORD?'



## Theological Significance

Micah makes profound contributions to biblical theology, particularly in defining authentic religion and revealing God's heart for justice. The book teaches that **true worship cannot be separated from ethics**—ritual observance divorced from righteous living is not merely inadequate but offensive to God. The famous triad of requirements (6:8) demonstrates that covenant faithfulness encompasses the whole person: outward behavior (justice), inner disposition (mercy), and spiritual posture (humility before God). This integration prevents the reduction of religion to either external moralism or internal pietism.

The emphasis on **social justice as divine priority** establishes that God passionately advocates for the vulnerable. The wealthy who 'covet fields and take them by violence' (2:2), the rulers who 'eat the flesh of my people' (3:3), and the judges who accept bribes all face fierce judgment because their victims matter to God. This is not merely humanitarian concern but covenant obligation—oppression of the poor violates God's character and His covenant stipulations. The prophetic tradition of championing the marginalized against the powerful runs powerfully through Micah.

**Micah's doctrine of the remnant** contributes to understanding God's purposes in judgment. Though the nation faces destruction, God promises to 'surely gather the remnant of Israel' (2:12). Judgment serves to purify, not annihilate—a faithful core survives to fulfill covenant promises. This remnant theology develops throughout Scripture, culminating in Paul's teaching that God has always preserved a remnant chosen by grace (Romans 11:5).

The book's **eschatological vision** of nations streaming to Jerusalem to learn God's ways (4:1-3) expands Israel's election beyond national boundaries. The goal of Israel's existence is not exclusive privilege but inclusive witness—through them, all nations will come to know the true God. This universal scope anticipates the New Testament revelation that in Christ, the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile is broken down, creating one new humanity.

Micah's portrait of **God's emotional life** enriches our understanding of divine personhood. God is not a distant, unmoved deity but one who cares deeply about human suffering and sin. He 'delights in mercy' (7:18), experiences the wounds of His people's oppression, and rejoices to forgive. Yet this emotional engagement does not compromise His justice—love and justice coexist in perfect harmony in God's character. The book thus prevents both sentimental views of divine love and harsh views of divine justice.

Finally, Micah contributes to **messianic expectation** through the specific prophecy that the ruler will come from Bethlehem, whose origins are 'from everlasting' (5:2). This prophecy combines the human (Davidic lineage from Bethlehem) with the divine (eternal origins), preparing for the incarnational understanding that the Messiah would be both human and divine. The ruler as shepherd points to Christ's self-designation as the good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep.

## Christ in Micah

Micah's prophecies find multiple fulfillments in Christ, most famously in **the Bethlehem prophecy** (5:2) quoted by chief priests and scribes when Herod inquired where the Messiah should be born (Matthew 2:6). The specific geographical detail—Bethlehem Ephrathah, distinguished from another Bethlehem—was fulfilled precisely in Christ's nativity. The phrase 'whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting' points to Christ's pre-existence and eternal deity. While David came from Bethlehem, Christ's origins transcend time—He is the eternal Son become flesh.

The **ruler who shepherds** in God's strength (5:4) finds fulfillment in Christ the good shepherd. Where Israel's leaders devoured the flock (3:2-3), Christ feeds and protects His sheep. He shepherds not in His own power but 'in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God,' perfectly submitting to the Father's will while exercising divine authority. His shepherding brings security—'they shall abide'—and greatness—'he shall be great unto the ends of the earth.'

The vision of **nations streaming to the mountain of the LORD** (4:1-3) anticipates the ingathering of Gentiles into the church. What began as prophecy of restored Israel expands in fulfillment to include all peoples coming to God through Christ. The Great Commission to 'make disciples of all nations' implements this vision. Christ is the one from whom 'the law goes forth' and whose word brings peace, transforming weapons of warfare into instruments of cultivation.

**Christ perfectly embodies** the requirements of Micah 6:8. He lived justly, treating all people rightly and championing the marginalized. He loved mercy, showing compassion to sinners and offering forgiveness freely. He walked humbly with God, submitting perfectly to the Father's will even unto death. Where Israel failed to meet these standards, Christ fulfilled them completely, both modeling authentic religion and making possible our conformity to this image through His Spirit.

The promise of **sins cast into the depths of the sea** (7:19) finds fulfillment in Christ's atoning work. At the cross, our iniquities were submerged in the ocean of God's grace, removed as far as east from west, drowned beyond recovery. The incomparable forgiveness Micah celebrates becomes reality through Christ's blood, which cleanses from all sin. The God who 'delights in mercy' demonstrates that delight supremely in sending His Son to bear our judgment.

The **courtroom scene** in chapter 6, where God brings His case (rîb) against Israel, anticipates Christ as both accused and advocate. He stands in our place to answer God's charges, bearing the punishment our covenant-breaking deserves, while also serving as our defense attorney who pleads His own blood in our behalf. The rhetorical

question 'What have I done to you?' addressed to Israel finds inverted fulfillment in the question we must ask Christ—what has He done except love, serve, and die for us?

## Relationship to the New Testament

The New Testament engages Micah at multiple points, demonstrating the prophecy's enduring significance. **Matthew 2:6** quotes Micah 5:2 as authoritative prophecy fulfilled in Christ's birth at Bethlehem. Interestingly, Matthew's citation combines Micah with 2 Samuel 5:2, emphasizing both the location (Bethlehem) and the function (shepherd-ruler) of the Messiah. The Jewish scholars' immediate recognition of this prophecy shows it was understood messianically in Second Temple Judaism.

**Matthew 10:35-36** alludes to Micah 7:6 in Jesus' teaching about the divisions His message would create: 'For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother.' Micah described the breakdown of family relationships as evidence of complete social decay. Jesus applies this to describe the inevitable conflicts that arise when some family members follow Him and others reject Him. The gospel forces decisions that can fracture even the closest human bonds.

**John 7:42** records the crowd's question: 'Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?' This demonstrates common knowledge of Micah's prophecy. Ironically, the crowd's knowledge is correct but their conclusion wrong—they reject Jesus precisely because they think He comes from Galilee, unaware He was actually born in Bethlehem.

**Romans 10:15** quotes Isaiah 52:7, which itself echoes Micah's language about 'feet of those who bring good news' (though the specific Micah passage is 7:15, referring to future deliverance). Paul applies this to gospel preachers who announce the good news of peace through Christ. The beautiful feet belong to those who proclaim that the war between God and humanity has ended through Christ's reconciling work.

Micah's emphasis on **justice, mercy, and walking humbly with God** (6:8) resonates throughout Jesus' teaching and New Testament ethics. Jesus' condemnation of religious leaders who 'neglect justice and the love of God' (Luke 11:42) echoes Micah's priorities. James's definition of pure religion as caring for orphans and widows (James 1:27) reflects Micah's concern for the vulnerable. The Sermon on the Mount's beatitudes blessing the meek and merciful align with Micah's values.

The theme of **God delighting in mercy** (7:18) shapes New Testament understanding of divine character. Jesus' parable of the prodigal son portrays a father who delights to forgive, running to embrace the returning rebel. The teaching that there is 'joy in heaven over one sinner who repents' (Luke 15:7) reflects this delight. God is not a reluctant forgiver but one whose essential nature is mercy.

**The universal scope** of Micah's vision—nations streaming to Jerusalem, worldwide peace under God's reign—finds fulfillment in the church's mission and anticipation in

Revelation's vision. The Great Commission sends disciples to all nations (Matthew 28:19). Revelation portrays worshipers from every tribe, tongue, and nation before the throne (Revelation 7:9). The beating of swords into plowshares awaits final fulfillment when Christ returns to establish universal peace.

Micah's denunciation of **false prophets who prophesy for money** (3:5, 11) anticipates New Testament warnings against false teachers. Peter warns of those who 'in their greed exploit you with fabricated stories' (2 Peter 2:3). Paul instructs that elders who labor in preaching are worthy of support (1 Timothy 5:17-18), but condemns those who see godliness as means to financial gain (1 Timothy 6:5). The prophetic critique of commodified ministry remains relevant.

## Practical Application

Micah's message remains powerfully relevant for contemporary believers, challenging both personal spirituality and social engagement. First, **the book exposes the danger of separating worship from ethics**. Going through religious motions while living unjustly—attending services, giving offerings, performing rituals—without pursuing justice and mercy is the empty religion Micah condemns. The test of authentic faith is not primarily doctrinal correctness or worship style but whether our religion produces justice, mercy, and humility. This calls for honest self-examination.

**Micah's advocacy for the vulnerable** challenges comfortable Christianity that accommodates injustice. The oppression of the poor, exploitation of workers, corruption of legal systems, and indifference to suffering all provoke God's judgment. Believers cannot claim to love God while ignoring those He champions—the widow, orphan, immigrant, and poor. This is not optional charity but covenant obligation. How we treat the vulnerable reveals our true relationship with God.

The warning against **presuming on God's grace** (3:11) remains urgent. Assuming that church attendance, orthodox belief, or past spiritual experiences guarantee God's blessing while living in unrepentant sin is deadly delusion. We must not confuse proximity to God's people with relationship with God Himself. True security comes from obedient faith, not mere religious association. Micah calls for genuine conversion, not religious performance.

**The requirements of Micah 6:8** provide a practical test of spiritual authenticity. Do I act justly in all my dealings—business, family, relationships? Do I love mercy, extending compassion and forgiveness to others? Do I walk humbly with God, acknowledging my dependence and submitting to His will? These three questions expose whether faith is real or merely professed. They prevent reduction of Christianity to either social activism without devotion or personal piety without ethics.

Micah's **alternating pattern of judgment and hope** teaches that God's discipline is not His final word. Even when we face consequences for sin, restoration remains possible. The God who judges also promises to gather the remnant, heal backsliding, and cast sins into the sea. This provides both warning against presumption and encouragement for the repentant. No failure is final for those who return to the LORD.

The **courtroom scene** where God asks 'What have I done to weary you?' (6:3) invites reflection on God's faithful provision. When we grow weary of serving God, the problem is not divine failure but our own forgetfulness. Rehearsing God's past faithfulness—like Israel's deliverance from Egypt—renews motivation for obedience. Remembering what God has done sustains faithfulness when feelings flag.

**The incomparable forgiveness** celebrated in 7:18-19 provides assurance for believers burdened by guilt. God does not merely tolerate His people but delights in showing mercy. He subdues our iniquities—they don't subdue Him. He casts sins into the sea—not onto a shelf where they might be retrieved but into depths beyond recovery. This lavish grace should produce both grateful worship and readiness to extend forgiveness to others.

Finally, **the vision of God's ultimate victory**—nations seeking the LORD, universal peace, God's reign over all the earth—provides hope amid present darkness. When injustice seems entrenched and evil appears triumphant, we remember that God's purposes will prevail. History moves toward the day when 'nation shall not lift up sword against nation.' This certain hope motivates present faithfulness, knowing our labor is not in vain.



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# Chapter 1

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## Judgment Against Samaria and Jerusalem

1 The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

2 Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is: and let the Lord GOD be witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple.

3 For, behold, the LORD cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth.

4 And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place.

5 For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem?

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6 Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof.

7 And all the graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof shall be burned with the fire, and all the idols thereof will I lay desolate: for she gathered it of the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot.

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8 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.

9 For her wound is incurable; for it is come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem.

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

11 Pass ye away, thou inhabitant of Saphir, having thy shame naked: the inhabitant of Zaanan came not forth in the mourning of Beth-ezel; he shall receive of you his standing.

12 For the inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good: but evil came down from the LORD unto the gate of Jerusalem.

13 O thou inhabitant of Lachish, bind the chariot to the swift beast: she is the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion: for the transgressions of Israel were found in thee.

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

15 Yet will I bring an heir unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareshah: he shall come unto Adullam the glory of Israel.

16 Make thee bald, and poll thee for thy delicate children; enlarge thy baldness as the eagle; for they are gone into captivity from thee.

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## Chapter 2

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### Woe to Oppressors

- 1 Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.
- 2 And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.
- 3 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily: for this time is evil.
- 4 In that day shall one take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, and say, We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed it from me! turning away he hath divided our fields.
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- 5 Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the LORD.
- 6 Prophecy ye not, say they to them that prophesy: they shall not prophesy to them, that they shall not take shame.
- 7 O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the LORD straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?
- 8 Even of late my people is risen up as an enemy: ye pull off the robe with the garment from them that pass by securely as men averse from war.
- 9 The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever.
- 10 Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction.
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- 11 If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.
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### Promise of Deliverance

- 12 I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men.

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13 The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them.

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## Chapter 3

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### Leaders and Prophets Rebuked

1 And I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel; Is it not for you to know judgment?

2 Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones;

3 Who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron.

4 Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.

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5 Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him.

6 Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them.

7 Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God.

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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.

9 Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity.

10 They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity.

11 The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.

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12 Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.

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# Chapter 4

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## The Mountain of the Lord

1 But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

2 And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

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.

4 But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.

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5 For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.

6 In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted;

7 And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.

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8 And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.

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## The Lord's Plan and Deliverance

9 Now why dost thou cry out aloud? is there no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail.

10 Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies.

11 Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion.

12 But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.

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13 Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.

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# Chapter 5

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## The Ruler from Bethlehem

1 Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.

2 But thou, Beth-lehem 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.

3 Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.

4 And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.

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## Deliverance and Judgment

5 And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men.

6 And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.

7 And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.

8 And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.

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9 Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.

10 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots:

11 And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds:

12 And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers:

13 Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands.

14 And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities.

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15 And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard.

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# Chapter 6

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## The Lord's Case Against Israel

- 1 Hear ye now what the LORD saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice.
- 2 Hear ye, O mountains, the LORD'S controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.
- 3 O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.
- 4 For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.
- 5 O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD.
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## What the Lord Requires

- 6 Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?
- 7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
- 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?
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- 9 The LORD'S voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.
- 10 Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable?
- 11 Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?
- 12 For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.
- 13 Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of thy sins.

14 Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee; and thou shalt take hold, but shalt not deliver; and that which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword.

15 Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.

16 For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people.

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## Chapter 7

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### Israel's Misery and Hope

1 Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the firstripe fruit.

2 The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net.

3 That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up.

4 The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchmen and thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity.

5 Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.

6 For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.

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### Prayer and Praise

7 Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

8 Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.

9 I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.

10 Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the LORD thy God? mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

11 In the day that thy walls are to be built, in that day shall the decree be far removed.

12 In that day also he shall come even to thee from Assyria, and from the fortified cities, and from the fortress even to the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain.

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13 Notwithstanding the land shall be desolate because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings.

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### **God's Compassion on Israel**

14 Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old.

15 According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things.

16 The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf.

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17 They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee.

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.

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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20 Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.