

I. **NAME AND PERSONALITY OF THE PROPHET.**

- A. The name *Micah* is a shortened version of Michael, like *Greg* is short for Gregory.
- B. The name *Micaiah* means "Who is like Jehovah?"
- C. We know very little about Micah's parents or occupation.
- D. Micah was a commoner, a man of strong convictions, courageous, a true patriot, a friend of the oppressed and prophet of the poor.
- E. Micah wrote excellent Hebrew. Great style, rhythm, cadence, and rhetorical force is present in his words.

II. **DATE OF THE BOOK AND THE PROPHET.**

- A. The date of the book of Micah (and his preaching) is between 735-700BC.
- B. Micah is a contemporary of Isaiah.
- C. Micah's message was about Samaria (capital of Israel) and Jerusalem (capital of Judah).
- D. He preached for a long time, under the reign of:
 - 1. Jotham (739-735 BC).
 - 2. Ahaz (735-715 BC).
 - 3. Hezekiah (715-686 BC).
- E. There was at this time:
 - 1. Corruption in administering justice.
 - 2. Greed in religious leaders.
 - 3. Cruelty of the people.
- F. The sins of the times were:
 - 1. Oppression of the poor (2:2, 8-9; 3:1-4).
 - 2. Unscrupulous use of power (2:1f; 3:10).
 - 3. Lack of integrity (6:12; 7:2-6).
 - 4. Reckless scorn of religion (3:5-6; 5:12-14).
 - 5. False prophets (3:5, 7, 9-11).

III. **OUTLINES OF THE BOOK OF MICAH.**

A. Simple outline:

- I. A Word to the people concerning Judgment, Chapters 1-3.
- II. A Word to the rulers concerning the Messiah, Chapters 4-5.
- III. A Word to the people concerning Salvation, Chapters 6-7.

B. Supplemental outline:

- I. Judgment Against Israel and Judah (1:1-2:13).
 - A. A Superscription (1:1).
 - B. These kingdoms to be punished (1:2-16).
 - 1. The Northern kingdom (1:2-7).
 - 2. The Southern kingdom (1:8-16).
 - C. The causes of judgment (2:1-11).
 - D. Restoration of the remnant promised (2:12-13).
- II. Present Humiliation and Future Glory (3:1-5:15).
 - A. The sins of the rulers (3:1-12).
 - B. The Messianic hope (4:1-5:15).

1. Glory in the latter days (4:1-8).
 2. Exile and suffering to come before glory (4:9-5:1).
 3. The reign of the Messiah (5:2-15).
- III. A Call to Repentance (6:1-7:20).
- A. God's case against the people (6:1-16).
 - B. The prophet's plea for Jerusalem (7:1-20).
 1. Bewailing the lack of righteousness (7:1-6).
 2. Confession of sin (7:7-17).
 3. Thanksgiving for mercy (7:18-20).

IV. THE THEME AND MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF MICAH.

- A. The theme of the book of Micah is: **God is a God of Ethics.**
- B. The message of the book of Micah is: **Judah too has sinned** (3:8).
- C. The nature of true religion is found in Micah 6:6-8:
 1. To do justly. The golden rule (Mt. 7:12). This is man's relationship to himself.
 2. To love kindness. Jesus said (quoting Hosea), "I desire mercy not sacrifice." This is man's relationship to others.
 3. To walk humbly before God (see Amos 3:3; Gen. 5:24; 6:9). This is man's relationship toward God--a life of humble service.
- D. These are three great qualities--justice, kindness, and humility. See Mt. 22:37-40; 23:23; Gal. 5:22; Jas. 1:27.

V. SPECIAL NOTES ON MICAH 1:10-16.

- A. Micah gives a play on words in the Hebrew which is completely lost in the English translation.
- B. Here is what he says in brief:
 1. See 1:10--

in Gath (tell-town)...	tell it not.
in Beth-le-Aphrah (dust-town)...	roll yourself in dust.
 2. See 1:11--

in Shaphir (fair-town)...	go in nakedness and shame.
in Zaanan (march-town)...	do not march forth.
in Beth-ezel (neighbor-town)...	no place to stand (no support).
 3. See 1:12--

in Maroth (bitter-town)...	there is no good, it is truly bitter.
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 4. See 1:13--

in Lachish (horse-town)...	harness horses to chariots.
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 5. See 1:14--

in Moreseth-gath (inheritance-town)...	give your inheritance to someone.
in Achzib (a false spring)...	will become Achzab (a disappointing brook).
 6. See 1:15--

in Mareshah (heir-town)...	there will be another to take what is yours.
in Adullam (a wild beasts cave)...	the glory of Israel will go.
 7. See 1:16--

in view of all of this, a call to repentance is given.	
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- C. These were stirring times. God was leading His followers and gradually working out His own great purpose in the world.

VI. PRACTICAL LESSONS OF PERMANENT VALUE.

- A. Elaborate pretensions of piety and liberal gifts in public cannot atone for a lack of true righteousness in the heart.
- B. The unscrupulous use of power, even though within the bounds of law, hurts the heart of God (1Cor. 6:12; 10:23).
- C. Courage comes to anyone who senses the presence of God in his life.
- D. The difference between the false prophet and the true is no more in creed than in conduct.
- E. The Nature of True Religion. How reasonable are God's basic requirements. How unchangeable are His demands. How deep and tender and changeless is His great love.
- F. Worship and morality cannot be separated without destroying true religion. We cannot live "good lives" without Christ and His church.

VII. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.

- A. What images come to mind when you imagine a courtroom and a criminal trial?
- B. If you picture the opening passage of Micah as a courtroom, how is it like and how is it different from a contemporary courtroom?
- C. Why is Micah so sad that he must "lament and wail?" What does this say about him?
- D. In what way did covetousness especially show up with the Israelites? What are the definitions of *covetousness* and *materialism*?
- E. What was the shallow theology the false prophets of Israel espoused at this time? Where do you see shallow theology today?
- F. What in your church or your own spiritual life are you concerned about that may be "soft religion" that pampers your pride and makes it easy to sin?
- G. Give a description of people who hate the evil and do the good. What are they like? What sorts of things do they do and say?
- H. Who are the people today whose lies have made it easy for corrupt officials to carry on their evil deeds? What, if anything, can we do about it?
- I. How can we balance being lovingly sensitive to people but not trying too much to please them?
- J. When you read the prophets rebuking those who commit or tolerate injustice, do you feel that they are talking about somebody else, or also about you? Explain.
- K. Why is it easy to take for granted the great things God has done on our behalf centuries ago, or even years ago?
- L. Micah 6:8 does not mention belief or faith as a requirement of God. How can this fit together with John 6:28-29?
- M. Why is the word *remember* so important in our spiritual lives?
- N. When the future seems hopeless, how can our trust in God be strengthened?