



# MICAH

## Read Micah 1–2

Micah, the last of the eighth-century prophets, accuses both Samaria and Judah: “Hear.” Oracles of doom predominate in the book. Samaria will be destroyed because of its social sins and Jerusalem lives on borrowed time. Hope exists for a remnant that will remain faithful.

**Reflect:** Sin is not only personal but social. The division between rich and poor and leaders and subjects remains today. The rich and the leaders have obligations to the poor and to their subjects. How does this apply to our church and to our government?

**Pray:** In your prayer, ask that church and civil leaders may recognize their social obligations.

**Act:** Be generous to others today, especially those in need. Express your hope in action.

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

### Judgment Pronounced against Samaria

- 2 Hear, you peoples, all of you;  
listen, O earth, and all that is in it;  
and let the Lord GOD be a witness against you,  
the Lord from his holy temple.
- 3 For lo, the LORD is coming out of his place,  
and will come down and tread upon the high  
places of the earth.
- 4 Then the mountains will melt under him  
and the valleys will burst open,  
like wax near the fire,  
like waters poured down a steep place.
- 5 All this is for the transgression of Jacob  
and for the sins of the house of Israel.  
What is the transgression of Jacob?  
Is it not Samaria?  
And what is the high place<sup>a</sup> of Judah?  
Is it not Jerusalem?
- 6 Therefore I will make Samaria a heap in the  
open country,  
a place for planting vineyards.  
I will pour down her stones into the valley,  
and uncover her foundations.
- 7 All her images shall be beaten to pieces,  
all her wages shall be burned with fire,  
and all her idols I will lay waste;

<sup>a</sup> Heb what are the high places

for as the wages of a prostitute she  
gathered them,  
and as the wages of a prostitute  
they shall again be used.

### The Doom of the Cities of Judah

- 8 For this I will lament and wail;  
I will go barefoot and naked;  
I will make lamentation like the  
jackals,  
and mourning like the ostriches.
- 9 For her wound<sup>a</sup> is incurable.  
It has come to Judah;  
it has reached to the gate of my people,  
to Jerusalem.
- 10 Tell it not in Gath,  
weep not at all;  
in Beth-leaphrah  
roll yourselves in the dust.
- 11 Pass on your way,  
inhabitants of Shaphir,  
in nakedness and shame;  
the inhabitants of Zaanan  
do not come forth;  
Beth-ezel is wailing  
and shall remove its support from  
you.

- 12 For the inhabitants of Maroth  
wait anxiously for good,  
yet disaster has come down from  
the LORD  
to the gate of Jerusalem.
- 13 Harness the steeds to the chariots,  
inhabitants of Lachish;  
it was the beginning of sin  
to daughter Zion,  
for in you were found  
the transgressions of Israel.
- 14 Therefore you shall give parting gifts  
to Moresheth-gath;  
the houses of Achzib shall be a  
deception  
to the kings of Israel.
- 15 I will again bring a conqueror upon  
you,  
inhabitants of Mareshah;  
the glory of Israel  
shall come to Adullam.
- 16 Make yourselves bald and cut off  
your hair  
for your pampered children;  
make yourselves as bald as the  
eagle,  
for they have gone from you into  
exile.

### Social Evils Denounced

- 2** Alas for those who devise wickedness  
and evil deeds<sup>b</sup> on their beds!  
When the morning dawns, they perform it,  
because it is in their power.
- 2 They covet fields, and seize them;  
houses, and take them away;  
they oppress householder and house,  
people and their inheritance.
- 3 Therefore thus says the LORD:  
Now, I am devising against this family an evil  
from which you cannot remove your necks;  
and you shall not walk haughtily,  
for it will be an evil time.
- 4 On that day they shall take up a taunt song  
against you,  
and wail with bitter lamentation,  
and say, "We are utterly ruined;  
the LORD<sup>c</sup> alters the inheritance of my people;  
how he removes it from me!  
Among our captors<sup>d</sup> he parcels out our fields."

<sup>a</sup> Gk Syr Vg: Heb wounds

<sup>b</sup> Cn: Heb work evil

<sup>c</sup> Heb he

<sup>d</sup> Cn: Heb the rebellious

- 5 Therefore you will have no one to cast the line by lot in the assembly of the LORD.
- 6 “Do not preach”—thus they preach—  
“one should not preach of such things;  
disgrace will not overtake us.”
- 7 Should this be said, O house of Jacob?  
Is the LORD’s patience exhausted?  
Are these his doings?  
Do not my words do good  
to one who walks uprightly?
- 8 But you rise up against my people<sup>a</sup>  
as an enemy;  
you strip the robe from the peaceful,<sup>b</sup>  
from those who pass by trustingly  
with no thought of war.
- 9 The women of my people you drive out  
from their pleasant houses;  
from their young children you take  
away  
my glory forever.
- 10 Arise and go;  
for this is no place to rest,

because of uncleanness that  
destroys  
with a grievous destruction.<sup>c</sup>

- 11 If someone were to go about uttering  
empty falsehoods,  
saying, “I will preach to you of  
wine and strong drink,”  
such a one would be the preacher  
for this people!

### A Promise for the Remnant of Israel

- 12 I will surely gather all of you,  
O Jacob,  
I will gather the survivors of Israel;  
I will set them together  
like sheep in a fold,  
like a flock in its pasture;  
it will resound with people.
- 13 The one who breaks out will go up  
before them;  
they will break through and pass  
the gate,  
going out by it.  
Their king will pass on before them,  
the LORD at their head.

### Read Micah 3

“Listen.” Civil leaders are not doing what is right and the prophets are false prophets. Both groups are leading people astray. The prophets are selling their souls. All are doomed because they lack justice.

**Reflect:** Justice means balance and harmony. Where is the balance and harmony in your life? What is lacking?

**Pray:** To do justice depends on sensitivity to others, a sensitivity that can be fostered by prayer.

**Act:** Do something to create balance and harmony in your personal life and in your family’s life.

### Wicked Rulers and Prophets

- 3** And I said:  
Listen, you heads of Jacob  
and rulers of the house of Israel!  
Should you not know justice?—
- 2 you who hate the good and love the evil,  
who tear the skin off my people,<sup>d</sup>  
and the flesh off their bones;
- 3 who eat the flesh of my people,  
flay their skin off them,  
break their bones in pieces,  
and chop them up like meat<sup>e</sup> in a kettle,  
like flesh in a caldron.
- 4 Then they will cry to the LORD,  
but he will not answer them;  
he will hide his face from them at that time,  
because they have acted wickedly.
- 5 Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets  
who lead my people astray,  
who cry “Peace”  
when they have something to eat,  
but declare war against those  
who put nothing into their mouths.

<sup>a</sup> Cn: Heb *But yesterday my people rose*

<sup>b</sup> Cn: Heb *from before a garment*

<sup>c</sup> Meaning of Heb uncertain

<sup>d</sup> Heb *from them*

<sup>e</sup> Gk: Heb *as*

- 6 Therefore it shall be night to you,  
without vision,  
and darkness to you, without  
revelation.  
The sun shall go down upon the  
prophets,  
and the day shall be black over them;
- 7 the seers shall be disgraced,  
and the diviners put to shame;  
they shall all cover their lips,  
for there is no answer from God.
- 8 But as for me, I am filled with power,  
with the spirit of the LORD,  
and with justice and might,  
to declare to Jacob his transgression  
and to Israel his sin.
- 9 Hear this, you rulers of the house of  
Jacob

- and chiefs of the house of Israel,  
who abhor justice  
and pervert all equity,
- 10 who build Zion with blood  
and Jerusalem with wrong!
- 11 Its rulers give judgment for a bribe,  
its priests teach for a price,  
its prophets give oracles for  
money;  
yet they lean upon the LORD and  
say,  
“Surely the LORD is with us!  
No harm shall come upon us.”
- 12 Therefore because of you  
Zion shall be plowed as a field;  
Jerusalem shall become a heap of  
ruins,  
and the mountain of the house a  
wooded height.

**Read Micah 4**

Hope and consolation abound. God will restore Israel. “They shall beat their swords into plowshares,” they shall “walk in the name of the LORD our God forever.” Peace will abound. God will accomplish this.

**Reflect:** Still hoping for peace? Still wishing that one nation will not raise the sword against another? God accomplishes peace through human efforts. What can you do?

**Pray:** Prayer can move mountains. People generally pray for peace in times of war in their own country. Let us pray for peace in all countries. Let us pray for peace in the Middle East, the homeland of the prophets.

**Act:** Today pray especially for peace.

**Peace and Security through Obedience**

- 4** In days to come  
the mountain of the LORD’s house  
shall be established as the highest of the  
mountains,  
and shall be raised up above the hills.  
Peoples shall stream to it,
- 2 and many nations shall come and say:  
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob;  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths.”  
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,  
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
- 3 He shall judge between many peoples,  
and shall arbitrate between strong nations far  
away;  
they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war any more;
- 4 but they shall all sit under their own vines and  
under their own fig trees,  
and no one shall make them afraid;  
for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.
- 5 For all the peoples walk,  
each in the name of its god,  
but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God  
forever and ever.

**Restoration Promised after Exile**

- 6 In that day, says the LORD,  
I will assemble the lame  
and gather those who have been  
driven away,  
and those whom I have afflicted.
- 7 The lame I will make the remnant,  
and those who were cast off, a  
strong nation;  
and the LORD will reign over them in  
Mount Zion  
now and forevermore.
- 8 And you, O tower of the flock,  
hill of daughter Zion,  
to you it shall come,  
the former dominion shall come,  
the sovereignty of daughter  
Jerusalem.
- 9 Now why do you cry aloud?  
Is there no king in you?  
Has your counselor perished,  
that pangs have seized you like a  
woman in labor?
- 10 Writhe and groan,<sup>a</sup> O daughter Zion,  
like a woman in labor;

for now you shall go forth from the  
city  
and camp in the open country;  
you shall go to Babylon.  
There you shall be rescued,  
there the LORD will redeem you  
from the hands of your enemies.

- 11 Now many nations  
are assembled against you,  
saying, "Let her be profaned,  
and let our eyes gaze upon Zion."<sup>c</sup>
- 12 But they do not know  
the thoughts of the LORD;  
they do not understand his plan,  
that he has gathered them as  
sheaves to the threshing floor.
- 13 Arise and thresh,  
O daughter Zion,  
for I will make your horn iron  
and your hoofs bronze;  
you shall beat in pieces many  
peoples,  
and shall<sup>b</sup> devote their gain to the  
LORD,  
their wealth to the Lord of the  
whole earth.

**5**<sup>c</sup> Now you are walled around with a wall;<sup>d</sup>  
siege is laid against us;  
with a rod they strike the ruler of Israel  
upon the cheek.

**The Ruler from Bethlehem**

- 2<sup>e</sup> But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days.
- 3 Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
when she who is in labor has brought forth;  
then the rest of his kindred shall return  
to the people of Israel.
- 4 And he shall stand and feed his flock in the  
strength of the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.  
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be  
great  
to the ends of the earth;
- 5 and he shall be the one of peace.

<sup>a</sup> Meaning of Heb uncertain

<sup>b</sup> Gk Syr Tg: Heb *and I will*

<sup>c</sup> Ch 4.14 in Heb

<sup>d</sup> Cn Compare Gk: Meaning of Heb uncertain

<sup>e</sup> Ch 5.1 in Heb

**Read Micah 5**

The messiah will come from Bethlehem, bringing peace. Assyria, the chief enemy, will be destroyed. But because of the sins of the people, they will suffer and then be cleansed of their worship of false gods.

**Reflect:** People bring problems upon themselves. False gods abound. Anything that takes too much time or energy can be a false god. What are your false gods? The false gods of power, sex, and money seem to be part of American culture. Are they part of your life?

**Pray:** Prayer is worship of the one God. Let the Holy Spirit guide you in your prayer. Try to hear what the Holy Spirit is telling you about false gods in your life.

**Act:** Examine your conscience. Which false god needs to be eliminated?

If the Assyrians come into our land  
and tread upon our soil,<sup>a</sup>  
we will raise against them seven shepherds  
and eight installed as rulers.  
6 They shall rule the land of Assyria with the sword,  
and the land of Nimrod with the drawn sword;<sup>c</sup>  
they<sup>b</sup> shall rescue us from the Assyrians  
if they come into our land  
or tread within our border.

**The Future Role of the Remnant**

7 Then the remnant of Jacob,  
surrounded by many peoples,  
shall be like dew from the LORD,  
like showers on the grass,  
which do not depend upon people  
or wait for any mortal.  
8 And among the nations the remnant of Jacob,  
surrounded by many peoples,  
shall be like a lion among the animals of the  
forest,  
like a young lion among the flocks of sheep,  
which, when it goes through, treads down  
and tears in pieces, with no one to deliver.  
9 Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries,  
and all your enemies shall be cut off.  
10 In that day, says the LORD,  
I will cut off your horses from among you  
and will destroy your chariots;  
11 and I will cut off the cities of your land  
and throw down all your strongholds;  
12 and I will cut off sorceries from your hand,  
and you shall have no more soothsayers;  
13 and I will cut off your images  
and your pillars from among you,  
and you shall bow down no more  
to the work of your hands;  
14 and I will uproot your sacred poles<sup>d</sup> from among you  
and destroy your towns.  
15 And in anger and wrath I will execute vengeance  
on the nations that did not obey.

**God Challenges Israel**

**6** Hear what the LORD says:  
Rise, plead your case before the mountains,  
and let the hills hear your voice.  
2 Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the LORD,  
and you enduring foundations of the earth;  
for the LORD has a controversy with his people,  
and he will contend with Israel.

<sup>a</sup> Gk: Heb in our palaces  
<sup>b</sup> Cn: Heb in its entrances  
<sup>c</sup> Heb he  
<sup>d</sup> Heb Asherim

## Read Micah 6

“Hear.” God has done so much for the people of Israel, yet they have not responded in faith and obedience. God does not want sacrifices, but rather justice and kindness and humility.

**Reflect:** Here is what God requires of you: “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (v. 8).

**Pray:** In your prayer acknowledge your need for God. As you stand in God’s presence, remember that God is still God and you are still human. Pray in truth and humility.

**Act:** Focus on the goodness in another and perform an act of kindness for that person.

- 3 “O my people, what have I done to you?  
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!
- 4 For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,  
and redeemed you from the house of slavery;  
and I sent before you Moses,  
Aaron, and Miriam.
- 5 O my people, remember now what King Balak of  
Moab devised,  
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,  
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,  
that you may know the saving acts of the LORD.”

### What God Requires

- 6 “With what shall I come before the LORD,  
and bow myself before God on high?  
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,  
with calves a year old?
- 7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,  
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 has told you, O mortal, what is good;  
and what does the LORD require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God?

### Cheating and Violence to Be Punished

- 9 The voice of the LORD cries to the city  
(it is sound wisdom to fear your name):  
Hear, O tribe and assembly of the city!<sup>a</sup>
- 10 Can I forget<sup>b</sup> the treasures of wickedness in  
the house of the wicked,  
and the scant measure that is accursed?
- 11 Can I tolerate wicked scales  
and a bag of dishonest weights?
- 12 Your<sup>c</sup> wealthy are full of violence;  
your<sup>d</sup> inhabitants speak lies,  
with tongues of deceit in their mouths.
- 13 Therefore I have begun<sup>e</sup> to strike you down,  
making you desolate because of your sins.
- 14 You shall eat, but not be satisfied,  
and there shall be a gnawing hunger within you;  
you shall put away, but not save,  
and what you save, I will hand over to the sword.
- 15 You shall sow, but not reap;  
you shall tread olives, but not anoint  
yourselves with oil;  
you shall tread grapes, but not drink wine.
- 16 For you have kept the statutes of Omri<sup>f</sup>  
and all the works of the house of Ahab,  
and you have followed their counsels.

<sup>a</sup> Cn Compare Gk: Heb *tribe, and who has appointed it yet?*

<sup>b</sup> Cn: Meaning of Heb uncertain

<sup>c</sup> Heb *Whose*

<sup>d</sup> Heb *whose*

<sup>e</sup> Gk Syr Vg: Heb *have made sick*

<sup>f</sup> Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb *the statutes of Omri are kept*



## Read Micah 7

The people recognize their sins and God forgives. God pardons. God remains faithful in the midst of human infidelity. God shows compassion and kindness and mercy. God has spoken and will always be faithful to the promises made to Abraham and his progeny.

**Reflect:** In the relationship between God and people, God alone remains faithful. The covenantal virtues of God, *hesed* (kindness, compassion, and mercy) and *'emet* (truth and fidelity) form the heart of the message of the prophets—a message meant not just for the ancient Israelites but also for us.

**Pray:** Ask for God's mercy, because you know God remains faithful to you even if you are not always faithful.

**Act:** Pick one of the covenantal virtues of God (i.e., kindness, compassion, mercy, truth, fidelity) and express that virtue in your dealings with someone today.

Therefore I will make you a desolation,  
and your<sup>a</sup> inhabitants an object  
of hissing;  
so you shall bear the scorn of my people.

### The Total Corruption of the People

- 7** Woe is me! For I have become like one who,  
after the summer fruit has been gathered,  
after the vintage has been gleaned,  
finds no cluster to eat;  
there is no first-ripe fig for which I hunger.
- 2** The faithful have disappeared from the land,  
and there is no one left who is upright;  
they all lie in wait for blood,  
and they hunt each other with nets.
- 3** Their hands are skilled to do evil;  
the official and the judge ask for a bribe,  
and the powerful dictate what they desire;  
thus they pervert justice.<sup>b</sup>
- 4** The best of them is like a brier,  
the most upright of them a thorn hedge.  
The day of their<sup>c</sup> sentinels, of their<sup>c</sup> punishment,  
has come;  
now their confusion is at hand.
- 5** Put no trust in a friend,  
have no confidence in a loved one;  
guard the doors of your mouth  
from her who lies in your embrace;
- 6** for the son treats the father with contempt,  
the daughter rises up against her mother,  
the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;  
your enemies are members of your own  
household.
- 7** But as for me, I will look to the LORD,  
I will wait for the God of my salvation;  
my God will hear me.

### Penitence and Trust in God

- 8** Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy;  
when I fall, I shall rise;  
when I sit in darkness,  
the LORD will be a light to me.
- 9** I must bear the indignation of the LORD,  
because I have sinned against him,  
until he takes my side  
and executes judgment for me.  
He will bring me out to the light;  
I shall see his vindication.
- 10** Then my enemy will see,  
and shame will cover her who said to me,  
“Where is the LORD your God?”

<sup>a</sup> Heb *its*

<sup>b</sup> Cn: Heb *they weave it*

<sup>c</sup> Heb *your*



My eyes will see her downfall;<sup>a</sup>  
 now she will be trodden down  
 like the mire of the streets.

### A Prophecy of Restoration

- 11 A day for the building of your walls!  
 In that day the boundary shall be  
 far extended.
- 12 In that day they will come to you  
 from Assyria to<sup>b</sup> Egypt,  
 and from Egypt to the River,  
 from sea to sea and from mountain  
 to mountain.
- 13 But the earth will be desolate  
 because of its inhabitants,  
 for the fruit of their doings.
- 14 Shepherd your people with your staff,  
 the flock that belongs to you,  
 which lives alone in a forest  
 in the midst of a garden land;  
 let them feed in Bashan and Gilead  
 as in the days of old.
- 15 As in the days when you came out of  
 the land of Egypt,  
 show us<sup>c</sup> marvelous things.
- 16 The nations shall see and be ashamed  
 of all their might;

- they shall lay their hands on their  
 mouths;  
 their ears shall be deaf;
- 17 they shall lick dust like a snake,  
 like the crawling things of the earth;  
 they shall come trembling out of  
 their fortresses;  
 they shall turn in dread to the LORD  
 our God,  
 and they shall stand in fear of you.

### God's Compassion and Steadfast Love

- 18 Who is a God like you, pardoning  
 iniquity  
 and passing over the transgression  
 of the remnant of your<sup>d</sup> possession?  
 He does not retain his anger forever,  
 because he delights in showing  
 clemency.
- 19 He will again have compassion  
 upon us;  
 he will tread our iniquities under foot.  
 You will cast all our<sup>e</sup> sins  
 into the depths of the sea.
- 20 You will show faithfulness to Jacob  
 and unswerving loyalty to Abraham,  
 as you have sworn to our ancestors  
 from the days of old.

<sup>a</sup> Heb lacks *downfall*

<sup>b</sup> One Ms: MT *Assyria and cities of*

<sup>c</sup> Cn: Heb *I will show him*

<sup>d</sup> Heb *his*

<sup>e</sup> Gk Syr Vg Tg: Heb *their*

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