

The Minor Prophets

MICAH

- I. Central Message: The idolatry, social injustices and unethical practices will end in punishment, but hope is held out as a remnant will return and then later the Messiah will come.
- II. Introduction
 - A. Micah prophesied in the southern country of Judah
 - B. Name means, "Who Is Like Yahweh?"
 1. could be called "The Country Prophet" for he lived and worked in rural areas
 2. mentioned by name in Jeremiah 26:18
 3. other Micahs in the Bible but these are the only references to this particular one
 - C. Date of writing
 1. eighth century B.C.
 2. prior to destruction of Israel (1:1 speaks of Samaria which means that this capital of Israel was still intact)
 3. during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah
 4. contemporary with Amos and Hosea in the north and Isaiah in the south
 - D. About the book
 1. quoting of Micah 3:12 saved Jeremiah's life (Jeremiah 26)
 2. 4:1-3 almost identical to wording in Isaiah 2:2-4
 3. will be studied in three sections (1-3; 4-5; 6-7)
- III. First Section (Micah 1-3)
 - A. Chapter one
 1. verse 1
 - a. Micah identifies himself and his time
 - b. "the word of the Lord" indicates he is speaking the Lord's words
 - c. that he speaks of Samaria and Jerusalem is an indication that his message is for both kingdoms
 2. verses 2-5
 - a. anthropomorphism (describing God in the characteristics of a man)
 - i. God's holy temple is heaven (Psalm 11:4)
 - ii. He is coming out of His temple to set foot on the earth (used to describe His coming to punish)
 - iii. the imagery used shows the severity of the destruction
 - b. this is not being done on a whim or for an unjust cause
 - i. their transgressions have prompted this action on God's part
 - ii. the leaders in the transgressions have been the capital cities of Samaria and Jerusalem
 3. verses 6-7
 - a. Samaria will be razed
 - b. all the idols which they bought with their harlotry and to which they attributed so much power will be destroyed by God

4. verse 8
 - a. Micah's mourning will seek to impress upon them the urgency of his message
 - b. "dragons" also translated "jackals"
 - c. "owls" also translated "ostriches"
 - d. the howlings and shriekings of these two animals is reported to be terrifying
 5. verse 9
 - a. the evil done in Israel has spread into Judah
 - b. the latter part of the verse seems to have reference to the advances of the Syrian army
 - i. Assyria carried Israel into captivity (II Kings 18:9-12)
 - ii. eight years later they came after Judah and took all the fenced cities of it (II Kings 18:13)
 - iii. eventually the Assyrian army made their way to the city of Jerusalem ("he is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem") and would have destroyed it had it not been for a miracle granted on behalf of righteous king Hezekiah (II Kings 18-19)
 6. verses 11-16
 - a. Micah plays on the names of four cities in describing the progression of the Assyrian armies
 - i. "Aphrah roll thyself in the dust" (Aphrah = house of dust)
 - ii. "the inhabitant of Zaanan came not forth" (Zaanan = going out)
 - iii. "the houses of Achzib shall be a lie" (Achzib = lie)
 - iv. "Yet will I bring an heir unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareshah" (Mareshah = inheritance)
 - b. the city of Lachish is called "the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion"
 - i. some have said this has reference to the people resting the horses the Judean armies had purchased from Egypt to help defend themselves (the act of getting assistance from other countries was a sinful one)
 - ii. others have said that Lachish was the first to introduce idol worship
 - c. cutting off one's hair was an act of grief
- B. Chapter two
1. verses 1-6
 - a. these wealthy individuals to whom he is speaking were so bent on evil that they lay awake at nights devising ways to take other people's property and then as soon as the morning light broke they anxiously put their plans into action
 - b. they rich felt they had the power to do anything they wanted to do and so they took what they wanted when they wanted it
 - i. they even resorted to violence
 - ii. "oppress" in verse 2 is rendered "defraud" in the column
 - iii. they cheated and engaged in violence in order to get property for themselves
 - iv. they even took away a man's heritage (inheritance)
 - v. see I Kings 21

- c. just as they had devised evil, the Lord would devise an evil against them in the form of punishment
 - i. they would not be removed from this punishment
 - ii. they would be humbled by it
 - d. they fields which they had gotten by evil will be taken away from them along with those which they had already owned so that they would possess nothing
 - e. they urged Micah to stop preaching the message he was delivering
 - i. they could not stand to be confronted in their evil
 - ii. many are still like this
2. verses 7-10
- a. notice that their protests did not stop Micah from teaching the truth
 - b. verse 7
 - i. is God the cause of the message they were hearing? were they themselves not responsible for provoking the anger of God?
 - ii. God's Word does good to the faithful
 - A. if they would be faithful then they would not hear this from Him
 - B. the faithful man is blessed by God
 - C. the reason they were receiving these denunciations was because they were evil
 - c. some more of their evils
 - i. they made themselves enemies to God as well as to one another
 - ii. they take away the basic necessities from each other and even do harm to those who are peaceable (i.e., they start trouble)
 - iii. they abused the women and the children and deprived them
 - d. their land is polluted by their sins
3. verses 11-13
- a. any man who would tell them otherwise, who would prophesy of safety and plenty and glory, they would respect and honor
 - i. in essence, the person who said what they wanted to hear would be heard
 - ii. it is still relatively easy to employ this type of person today
 - iii. but hearing what we want to hear does not always (and rarely does) help us
 - b. verses 12-13 deal with restoration
- C. Chapter three
1. verses 1-4
- a. a message to the governmental leaders of Israel
 - b. of all people, they should have been most acquainted with judgment and justice
 - c. instead, they hated good and loved evil
 - d. verses 3-4 are not literal but are very graphic in order to show just how severely the common man in Israel was oppressed by the leadership (with the way the leaders were depriving the poor of homes and food and clothing, it's almost as if they were doing these things to them)
 - e. these unjust leaders will receive a just reward fitting their evils

2. verses 5-7
 - a. a message to the false prophets of the land
 - b. false teachers lead people into error
 - c. these false prophets said what the people wanted to hear and would continue saying it as long as the people continued to pay and feed them
 - d. on the other hand, the true prophet was not only not fed, he was counted as an enemy and the people made war against him
 - e. the false prophets will have no real visions or no understanding of spiritual things; this shall lead to their shame "for there is no answer of God"
3. verse 8 - in contrast to these false prophets was Micah who taught only what the Lord said
4. verses 9-12
 - a. the corruption was in the leadership
 - b. they hated judgment and did their best to be unfair, making sure that decisions went their way or the way of the person who paid them the most money
 - c. they were building up the wealth and prominence of Jerusalem, but they were doing it in a sinful manner that hurt people
 - d. verse 11 focuses the problem precisely
 - i. their only interest in doing anything was to get money
 - ii. they cheated and lied and stole and killed and yet continued to believe that God was pleased with them
 - iii. perhaps a forerunner of the "once saved, always save" doctrine ("Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us.")
 - e. the damage done to Jerusalem as a result of the destruction is seen in verse 12
 - i. a plowed field is clear and turned over (it will be as if it never even existed but was always an open field)
 - ii. "heaps" has reference to rubble piled up, a mere reminder of the existence of a structure

III. Second Section (Micah 4-5)

A. Chapter four

1. verses 1-5
 - a. compare to Isaiah 2:1-4
 - b. verse 1
 - i. "last days" when used in Old Testament has reference to the last dispensation, the Christian age
 - ii. "the mountain of the house of the Lord" = the church (see Daniel 2:35 where the kingdom of Christ, the church, is described as a small stone that grew into a great mountain and filled the whole earth; also see Romans 10:18 and Colossians 1:23 where Paul talks about the Gospel of Christ having been taken into the whole world)
 - c. verse 2
 - i. this kingdom shall be characterized by the teaching and obeying of God's truth
 - ii. the Word was to go forth from Jerusalem (see Acts 2)

- d. verse 3
 - i. reference is to the spiritual nation of the kingdom of Christ
 - ii. the kingdom of the Lord does not need to be defended with physical armament but spiritual (see Ephesians 6:11-18)
 - e. verse 4 - has reference to the peace in this kingdom
 - f. verse 5 - some will continue to follow idolatry, but the righteous will walk in God's way
2. verses 6-7
 - a. "her that halteth" has reference to the Jews who had crippled themselves with their idolatry
 - b. a remnant of them would return and be preserved so they would have opportunity to be in the great kingdom (church)
 3. verses 8-10
 - a. the coming of the kingdom in verse 8
 - b. the people are in pain as if they were a woman giving birth
 - i. they had rejected God as king
 - ii. the counsel they had from the prophets was ignored
 - iii. this is why they suffered and would suffer
 - c. they would be taken to Babylon but the Lord would redeem them after a designated period
 4. verses 11-13
 - a. the enemies were bent on destroying Jerusalem
 - b. these enemies thought that God would reject His people forever but God was only sending them into captivity for a little time and would restore them to their land (which He did under the reign of Cyrus)
 - c. Judah would regain power over those who had destroyed them
- B. Chapter five
1. verse 1
 - a. a continuation of the previous chapter
 - b. "daughter of troops" seems to have reference to the Babylonians
 - c. they smote the judge of Israel, caused the king to suffer many indignities
 2. verse 2
 - a. Bethlehem Ephratah
 - i. "Ephratah" included to distinguish this from another Bethlehem which was in Zebulun
 - ii. one of the characteristics of true prophecy is the preciseness of detail (how much more precise could this prophecy had gotten?)
 - b. Jesus' eternal nature referred to in the last part of the verse
 - c. compare this verse to a passage in the book of mormon (Alma 7:2) "And behold, he shall be form of Mary at Jerusalem..."
 - d. this prophecy fulfilled to the letter (Luke 2:1-7)
 3. verse 3 - the Jews would be turned away for a time
 4. verses 4-7
 - a. verse 4 - the universality of Jesus' kingdom
 - b. verses 5-6 - Assyria, though soon to conquer Israel, would one day be turned back
 - c. verse 7 - a remnant shall remain

5. verses 8-15 - God's continued promise to take vengeance against the enemies of His people and restore Jacob
 - a. they would not need horses and chariots for God would fight for them
 - b. they would not need fortified cities for God would defend them
 - c. they would not need witchcrafts for God, not sorcery, would save them

IV. Third Section (Micah 6-7)

A. Chapter six

1. verses 1-5
 - a. God pleads with the people to repent
 - b. what marvelous mercy of God that, in spite of the many offenses committed against Him, He still pleads for the return of His people
 - c. in verse 3 God seeks to have them answer what evil He has done to them
 - i. He has done nothing to hurt them but everything to help
 - ii. it was their rejection of His Word that caused their problems and would lead to their punishment
 - d. in verses 4 and 5 the Lord reminds them of some of the blessings He had given them
 - i. He delivered them from Egypt
 - ii. He gave them leadership
 - iii. He protected them from the Moabites
2. verses 6-7 - the people ask, "What does the Lord want from us?"
3. verses 8-16
 - a. verse 8 - what the Lord desires of them
 - b. those who are truly wise are those men and women who hear and heed God's Word
 - c. verses 10-12 - though they had asked what was to be done, they persisted in their evils
 - d. verses 13-15 - the frustration they would feel in association with their punishment
 - e. verse 16
 - i. in spite of all God said, they continued in their sins
 - ii. their deeds compared to those of king Omri and his son Ahab of whom it is said:
 - A. "But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all that were before him." (I Kings 16:25)
 - B. "And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him." (I Kings 16:30)

B. Chapter 7

1. verses 1-7
 - a. the righteousness in Jerusalem is like a fruit vine after the fruit has been picked
 - i. little, if any, is left
 - ii. Micah desires a return to the way of faithfulness
 - b. a good man was very difficult to find

- c. "they hunt every man his brother with a net" = each was trying to harm the other
 - d. the prince, judge and rich man conspire against the poor, taking bribes and even shamelessly talking about the evil they do
 - e. at the very best, the least evil among them is like a thorn, but the day of retribution will come
 - f. the times were so evil that one dared not even trust anyone
 - i. friends betrayed friends
 - ii. wives betrayed husbands
 - iii. family members betrayed family members
 - iv. compare to Matthew 10:21,36
 - g. Micah concludes that the only hope at all in a time such as this is to turn to the Lord and rely on Him
2. verses 8-20
- a. the enemy should not think more of themselves than they ought for God is still with His people and will restore them
 - b. verse 18 lists some of the qualities of God
 - i. He pardons sin
 - ii. He gets angry
 - iii. He is forgiving and merciful
 - c. because of God's mercy and forgiveness, He would restore a remnant of Jacob in keeping with His promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1ff)