



Micah had harsh words for the rich people of Israel and Judah who exploited the poor. But he also looked forward to a day when justice would prevail and peace would be restored under the leadership of a chosen king.

1 I am Micah from Moresheth. And this is the message about Samaria and Jerusalem that the LORD gave to me when Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were the kings of Judah.

Judgment on Samaria

- 2** Listen, all of you!
Earth and everything on it,
pay close attention.
The LORD God accuses you
from his holy temple.
- 3** And he will come down
to crush underfoot
every pagan altar.
- 4** Mountains will melt
beneath his feet
like wax beside a fire.
Valleys will vanish like water
rushing down a ravine.
- 5** This will happen because of
the terrible sins of Israel,
the descendants of Jacob.
Samaria has led Israel to sin,
and pagan altars at Jerusalem
have made Judah sin.
- 6** So the LORD will leave Samaria
in ruins—
merely an empty field
where vineyards are planted.
He will scatter its stones
and destroy its foundations.

7 Samaria's idols will be smashed,
and the wages
of temple prostitutes
will be destroyed by fire.
Silver and gold from those idols
will then be used by foreigners
as payment for prostitutes.

Judah Is Doomed

- 8** Because of this tragedy,
I go barefoot and naked.
My crying and weeping
sound like howling wolves
or ostriches.
- 9** The nation is fatally wounded.
Judah is doomed.
Jerusalem will fall.
- 10** Don't tell it in Gath!
Don't even cry.
Instead, roll in the dust
at Beth-Leaphrah.
- 11** Depart naked and ashamed,
you people of Shaphir.
The town of Bethel mourns
because no one from Zaanan
went out to help.▷
- 12** Everyone in Maroth
hoped for the best,
but the LORD sent disaster
down on Jerusalem.

13 Get the war chariots ready,
you people of Lachish.
You led Jerusalem into sin,
just as Israel did.▷

14 Now you will have to give
a going-away gift
to Moresheth.▷
Israel's kings will discover
that they cannot trust
the town of Achzib.

15 People of Mareshah,
the LORD will send someone
to capture your town.
Then Israel's glorious king
will be forced to hide
in Adullam Cave.

16 Judah, shave your head
as bald as a buzzard
and start mourning.
Your precious children
will be dragged off
to a foreign country.

Punishment for Those Who Abuse Their Power

2 Doomed! You're doomed!
At night you lie in bed,
making evil plans.
And when morning comes,
you do what you've planned
because you have the power.

2 You grab any field or house
that you want;
you cheat families
out of homes and land.

3 But here is what the LORD says:
"I am planning trouble for you.
Your necks will be caught
in a noose,
and you will be disgraced
in this time of disaster."

4 When that happens,
this sorrowful song
will be sung about you:
"Ruined! Completely ruined!
"The LORD has taken our land
and given it to traitors."

5 And so you will never again
own property
among the LORD's people.

6 "Enough of your preaching!"
That's what you tell me.
"We won't be disgraced,
so stop preaching!"

7 Descendants of Jacob,
is it right for you to claim
that the LORD did what he did
because he was angry?
Doesn't he always bless
those who do right?

8 My people, you have even stolen
clothes right off the backs
of your unsuspecting soldiers
returning home from battle.

9 You take over lovely homes
that belong to the women
of my nation.
Then you cheat their children
out of the inheritance
that comes from the LORD.▷

10 Get out of here, you crooks!
You'll find no rest here.
You're not fit to belong
to the LORD's people,
and you will be 'destroyed.'

11 The only prophet you want
is a liar who will say,
"Drink and get drunk!"

A Promise of Hope

12 I, the LORD, promise
to bring together
the people of Israel
who have survived.
I will gather them,
just as a shepherd
brings sheep together,
and there will be many.
13 I will break down the gate
and lead them out—
then I will be their king.

Evil Rulers and Lying Prophets

3 Listen to me,
you rulers of Israel!
You know right from wrong,
2 but you prefer to do evil
instead of what is right.
You skin my people alive.
You strip off their flesh,

- 3 break their bones,
cook it all in a pot,
and gulp it down.
- 4 Someday you will beg the LORD
to help you,
but he will turn away
because of your sins.
- 5 You lying prophets promise
security for anyone
who gives you food,
but disaster for anyone
who refuses to feed you.
Here is what the LORD says
to you prophets:
- 6 "You will live in the dark,
far from the sight of the sun,
with no message from me.
- 7 You prophets and fortunetellers
will all be disgraced,
with no message from me."
- 8 But the LORD has filled me
with power and his Spirit.
I have been given the courage
to speak about justice
and to tell you people of Israel
that you have sinned.
- 9 So listen to my message,
you rulers of Israel!
You hate justice
and twist the truth.
- 10 You make cruelty and murder
a way of life in Jerusalem.
- 11 You leaders accept bribes
for dishonest decisions.
You priests and prophets
teach and preach,
but only for money.
- Then you say,
"The LORD is on our side.
No harm will come to us."
- 12 And so, because of you,
Jerusalem will be plowed under
and left in ruins.
Thorns will cover the mountain
where the temple now stands.

Peace and Prosperity

- 4 In the future, the mountain
with the LORD's temple
will be the highest of all.
It will reach above the hills,

- and every nation
will rush to it.
- 2 People of many nations
will come and say,
"Let's go up to the mountain
of the LORD God of Jacob
and worship in his temple."
The LORD will teach us his Law
from Jerusalem,
and we will obey him.
- 3 He will settle arguments
between distant
and powerful nations.
They will pound their swords
and their spears
into rakes and shovels;
they will never again make war
or attack one another.
- 4 Everyone will find rest
beneath their own fig trees
or grape vines,
and they will live in peace.
This is a solemn promise
of the LORD All-Powerful.
- 5 Others may follow their gods,
but we will always follow
the LORD our God.

The LORD Will Lead His People Home

- 6 The LORD said:
At that time
I will gather my people—
the lame and the outcasts,
and all into whose lives
I have brought sorrow.
- 7 Then the lame and the outcasts
will belong to my people
and become a strong nation.
I, the LORD, will rule them
from Mount Zion forever.
- 8 Mount Zion in Jerusalem,
guardian of my people,
you will rule again.
- 9 Jerusalem, why are you crying?
Don't you have a king?
Have your advisors gone?
Are you suffering
like a woman in childbirth?
- 10 Keep on groaning with pain,
you people of Jerusalem!
If you escape from your city
to the countryside,

you will still be taken
as prisoners to Babylonia.
But later I will rescue you
from your enemies.

- 11 Zion, because of your sins
you are surrounded
by many nations who say,
“We can hardly wait
to see you disgraced.”¹⁰
12 But they don’t know
that I, the LORD,
have gathered them here
to grind them like grain.
13 Smash them to pieces, Zion!
I’ll let you be like a bull
with iron horns
and bronze hoofs.
Crush those nations
and bring their wealth to me,
the LORD of the earth.

A Promised Ruler

- 5 Jerusalem, enemy troops
have surrounded you;¹
they have struck Israel’s ruler
in the face with a stick.
2 Bethlehem Ephrath,
you are one of the smallest towns
in the nation of Judah.
But the LORD will choose
one of your people
to rule the nation—
someone whose family
goes back to ancient times.²
3 The LORD will abandon Israel
only until this ruler is born,
and the rest of his family
returns to Israel.
4 Like a shepherd
taking care of his sheep,
this ruler will lead
and care for his people
by the power and glorious name
of the LORD his God.
His people will live securely,
and the whole earth will know
his true greatness,
5 because he will bring peace.

Assyria Will Be Defeated

Let Assyria attack our country
and our palaces.

We will counterattack,
led by a number of rulers
6 whose strong army will defeat
the nation of Assyria.³
Yes, our leaders will rescue us,
if those Assyrians
dare to invade our land.

The Survivors Will Be Safe

- 7 A few of Jacob’s descendants
survived and are scattered
among the nations.
But the LORD will let them
cover the earth like dew and rain
that refreshes the soil.
8 At present they are scattered,
but later they will attack,
as though they were fierce lions
pouncing on sheep.
Their enemies will be torn
to shreds,
with no one to save them;
9 they will be helpless,
completely destroyed.

Idols Will Be Destroyed in Israel

- 10 The LORD said:
At that time I will wipe out
your cavalry and chariots,
11 as well as your cities
and your fortresses.
12 I will stop you
from telling fortunes
and practicing witchcraft.
13 You will no longer worship
the idols or stone images
you have made—
I will destroy them,
14 together with the sacred poles
and even your towns.
15 I will become furious
and take revenge on the nations
that refuse to obey me.

The LORD’s Challenge to His People

- 6 The LORD said to his people:
Come and present your case
to the hills and mountains.
2 Israel, I am bringing charges
against you—
I call upon the mountains
and the earth’s firm foundation
to be my witnesses.

- 3 My people, have I wronged you
in any way at all?
Please tell me.
- 4 I rescued you from Egypt,
where you were slaves.
I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam
to be your leaders.
- 5 Don't forget the evil plans
of King Balak of Moab
or what Balaam son of Beor
said to him.
Remember how I, the LORD,
saved you many times
on your way from Acacia
to Gilgal.

True Obedience

- 6 What offering should I bring
when I bow down to worship
the LORD God Most High?
Should I try to please him
by sacrificing
calves a year old?
- 7 Will thousands of sheep
or rivers of olive oil
make God satisfied with me?
Should I sacrifice to the LORD
my first-born child as payment
for my terrible sins?
- 8 The LORD God has told us
what is right
and what he demands:
"See that justice is done,
let mercy be your first concern,
and humbly obey your God."

Cheating and Violence

- 9 I am the LORD,
and it makes sense to respect
my power to punish.
So listen to my message
for the city of Jerusalem:
- 10 You store up stolen treasures
and use dishonest scales.¹
- 11 But I, the LORD, will punish you
for cheating with weights
and with measures.
- 12 You rich people are violent,
and everyone tells lies.
- 13 Because of your sins,
I will wound you and leave you
ruined and defenseless.

- 14 You will eat,
but still be hungry;
you will store up goods,
but lose everything—
I, the LORD, will let it all
be captured in war.
- 15 You won't harvest what you plant
or use the oil
from your olive trees
or drink the wine
from grapes you grow.
- 16 Jerusalem, this will happen
because you followed
the sinful example
of kings Omri and Ahab.
Now I will destroy you
and your property.
Then the people of every nation
will make fun and insult you.

Israel Is Corrupt

- 7 I feel so empty inside—
like someone starving
for grapes or figs,
after the vines and trees
have all been picked clean.
- 2 No one is loyal to God;
no one does right.
Everyone is brutal
and eager to deceive
everyone else.
- 3 'People cooperate to commit crime.
Judges and leaders demand bribes,
and rulers cheat in court.'
- 4 The most honest of them
is worse than a thorn patch.
Your doom has come!
Lookouts sound the warning,
and everyone panics.
- 5 Don't trust anyone,
not even your best friend,
and be careful what you say
to the one you love.
- 6 Sons refuse to respect
their own fathers,
daughters rebel against
their own mothers,
and daughters-in-law despise
their mothers-in-law.
Your family is now your enemy.
- 7 But I trust the LORD God
to save me,

and I will wait for him
to answer my prayer.

The Nation Turns to God

- ⁸ My enemies, don't be glad
because of my troubles!
I may have fallen,
but I will get up;
I may be sitting in the dark,
but the LORD is my light.
- ⁹ I have sinned against the LORD.
And so I must endure his anger,
until he comes to my defense.
But I know that I will see him
making things right for me
and leading me to the light.
- ¹⁰ You, my enemies, said,
"The LORD God is helpless."
Now each of you
will be disgraced
and put to shame.
I will see you trampled
like mud in the street.

A Bright Future

- ¹¹ Towns of Judah, the day is coming
when your walls will be rebuilt,
and your boundaries enlarged.
- ¹² People will flock to you
from Assyria and Egypt,
from Babylonia[>]
and everywhere else.
- ¹³ Those nations will suffer disaster
because of what they did.

Micah's Prayer and the LORD's Answer

- ¹⁴ Lead your people, LORD!
Come and be our shepherd.

Notes

Phrases enclosed in half square superscript brackets (^(*)) are those that are difficult to translate from the original Hebrew with great certainty. Consequently, the English rendering given should be understood as only one possible way of translating such texts.

- ▷ **1.11** *The town ... help:* Or "No one from Zaanan refused to desert their town, and Bethel mourns because it is left undefended."
- ▷ **1.13** *led ... did:* Or "You led Jerusalem and Israel into sin."
- ▷ **1.14** *Moresbeth:* Hebrew "Moresbeth-Gath."
- ▷ **2.9** *inheritance ... LORD:* The Hebrew text has "my glory."
- ▷ **4.11** *We ... disgraced:* Or "We'll pull up your skirt and expose your nakedness!"
- ▷ **5.1** *Jerusalem ... you:* Or "Jerusalem, you are slashing yourself in sorrow, because of the enemy troops."
- ▷ **5.2** *family ... times:* Or "kingdom is eternal."
- ▷ **5.6** *the nation of Assyria:* The Hebrew text uses both "land of Assyria" and "land of Nimrod."
- ▷ **7.12** *Babylonia:* The Hebrew text has "the river."

Grasslands surround us,
but we live in a forest.
So lead us to Bashan and Gilead,
and let us find pasture
as we did long ago.

- ¹⁵ I, the LORD, will work miracles
just as I did when I led you
out of Egypt.
- ¹⁶ Nations will see this
and be ashamed because
of their helpless armies.
They will be in shock,
unable to speak or hear,
- ¹⁷ because of their fear of me,
your LORD and God.
Then they will come trembling,
crawling out of their fortresses
like insects or snakes,
lapping up the dust.

No One Is Like God

The people said:

- ¹⁸ Our God, no one is like you.
We are all that is left
of your chosen people,
and you freely forgive
our sin and guilt.
You don't stay angry forever;
you're glad to have pity
and pleased to be merciful.
- ¹⁹ You will trample on our sins
and throw them in the sea.
- ²⁰ You will keep your word
and be faithful to Jacob
and to Abraham,
as you promised our ancestors
many years ago.