

# Introduction to Micah

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<b>Author</b>	Micah, a prophet from Moresheth, “a village approximately twenty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem” (Longman 650); remembered by Jeremiah’s contemporaries as one who foretold Jerusalem’s destruction long in advance (Jer. 26:16-19; cf. Micah 3:12), he ministered over the course of a few decades
<b>Date</b>	735-700 BC <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Geisler dates Micah’s prophecy to 735-700 BC (231). Similarly, Merrill views it as beginning prior to 722 and extending toward the turn of the seventh century BC.</li><li>• According to McComiskey, “There is ... little reason to question the chronological span of time established by the superscription” (344). In other words, the prophecy belongs to the late eighth century BC.</li></ul>
<b>Kings Mentioned</b>	
<i>Judah</i>	Jotham (1:1), Ahaz (1:1), and Hezekiah (1:1)
<i>Israel</i>	Omri (6:16) and Ahab (6:16)—both referred to historically, describing the corrupt legacy handed down to Micah’s time over well more than a century
<b>Nation(s) Targeted</b>	
<i>Primary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Israel, as evidenced by references to Samaria (1:1; 1:5-6), the “house of Israel” (1:5; 3:1; etc.), kings of Israel (1:14; 6:16), etc.</li><li>• Judah, as evidenced by references to Jerusalem (e.g., 1:1; 1:9; 1:12), Judah (e.g., 1:5; 5:2), Zion (e.g., 3:12; 4:2; 4:7), the temple (3:12; 4:1-2), the Babylonian captivity (4:10), specific locales in Judah (e.g., 1:13; 1:15), etc.</li></ul>
<i>Secondary</i>	None
<b>Representative Texts</b>	1:1-9; 2:1-3; 3:5-4:5; 4:10-5:4; 6:1-2; 6:6-8; 6:10-13; 7:8-12; 7:18-20
<b>Core Message</b>	<p>Yahweh is coming to judge his people for their persistent sins. Oppression, corruption, greed, dishonesty, and idolatry are pervasive throughout Israel. The condition of the people reflects the failure of their rulers, prophets, and priests. Samaria and Jerusalem, respective capitals of the northern and southern kingdoms, will be destroyed thoroughly, and the people of Zion will be exiled in Babylon.</p> <p>Nevertheless, even in the midst of defeat, Israel has cause for hope, for God will vindicate it and gather a remnant to experience spiritual and economic prosperity. Evidence of religious devotion will be found in justice, kindness, and humility more than in sacrificial practices. Israel will dominate its enemies and its territory will be restored, to the awe of the nations. Jerusalem will emerge as a center of spiritual and political influence. Yahweh will reign and a ruler will arise from the small town of Bethlehem. Israel’s restoration is a sure eventuality because the Lord is compassionate, forgiving, and faithful to keep his promises.</p>

**New Testament  
References<sup>1</sup>**

5:2 (Matt. 2:6)  
7:6 (Matt. 10:35-36)  
7:20 (Luke 1:54-55)

**Features**

Structurally, the book of Micah consists of three sections: chapters 1-2, 3-5, and 6-7. Each section begins with a call to listen and contains oracles of judgment and promises of restoration (Waltke 525; McComiskey 345).

The prophet Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah, and their respective books overlap thematically. The clearest connection between the books is a string of near-identical verses (comp. Isa. 2:2-4 with Mic. 4:1-3). According to McComiskey, "it is not possible to state with certainty who the original author was, or whether the material was adapted from the utterances of some earlier prophet whose work has not otherwise survived" (345).

Micah's name means, "Who is like Yahweh?" The meaning of his name fits well with the question posed near the conclusion of the book: "Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance?" (7:18, ESV). Another literary feature not visible in English translations of Micah is paronomasia, whereby the author "plays on the sounds of words for literary effect" (McComiskey 345). A clear example occurs in 1:10, where "the inhabitants of Beth-le-aphrah ('house of dust') are told 'roll yourselves in the dust'" (345).

**Sources**

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<sup>1</sup> New Testament citations of texts from Micah were identified in part by consulting Beale and Carson's *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*.