

# **MICAH**

## **WRITER**

Micah is given credit for writing this book (1:1). This is not the Micah of 1 Kings 22:8, but the Micah from the farming village of Moresheth Gath, about thirty kilometers from Jerusalem. The name Micah means “who is like the Lord.” We know nothing about Micah other than what is mentioned in this book. He was mentioned by Jeremiah (Jr 26:18; see Mc 3:12). Other prophets also validated the authorship of Micah by quoting from his writings (See Is 41:15; Ez 22:25; Zp 3:19; compare Mc 4:1-4 and Is 2:2-4).

Micah was a country prophet. At the time of his ministry, there was great oppression of the poor by the rich. Micah prophesied against the rich who were taking advantage of the poor for their own benefit. In dealing with the sins of a morally unjust society, he validated his message to be coming from the power of the Spirit of God (3:8). He was thus very confident and straightforward in his stern message to those who perpetuated the evil injustices of society. Micah was a fearless preacher of the will of God.

At the time of his ministry, Isaiah was preaching to the aristocrats in the city of Jerusalem. Micah was the country preacher to the southern kingdom, and thus remained in the rural areas. He prophesied against the northern kingdom until its fall in 722/21 B.C. He then focused on the social evils of Jerusalem, for the unrighteous rulers and religious leaders of the city were leading Judah in the same direction of destruction as their northern sister.

## **DATE**

Micah prophesied in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, who were kings of the southern kingdom. He began his ministry before the fall of the northern kingdom in 722/21 B.C. He continued his prophecy into the reign of Hezekiah (Jr 26:18). The book was probably written sometime between 735 and 700 B.C.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Micah was called into the prophetic ministry at a time when the northern kingdom of Israel was coming to an end. The Assyrian Empire had grown strong, and was thus to be God’s proxy judge of the northern kingdom. In 734-732 B.C., Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, led a military campaign against the Syrians, Philistia and regions of Israel and Judah. As a result, in 734 B.C. the Syrians formed an alliance with the northern kingdom in order to overthrow Ahaz who was the king of Judah.

Ahaz would not join with the alliance with the Syrians against Assyria, and thus there was an effort to bring Judah into subjection in defense against the Assyrians to the north. The Assyrians had already conquered Galilee and Gilead, and had their sights set on Samaria and Jerusalem. In 722/21 B.C. they were eventually successful in their conquest of the northern kingdom, and thus Israel was taken into captivity. At the same time, Judah was placed under heavy tribute that was to be paid to Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. In 711 B.C. King Yaman of Ashdod, with Judah, Moab and Edom, rebelled against the Assyrian oppression and looked to Egypt for help. Egypt did not help, and thus King Sargon of Assyria put down the rebellion, though Jerusalem was spared. In 701 B.C. Hezekiah of Judah rebelled against paying tribute to Assyria. As a consequence, Sennacherib, who was then king of Assyria, subjugated the countryside of Judah, but was not allowed by God to take Jerusalem (See 2 Kg 15:29 – 19:37; 2 Ch 28 – 32). With the death of 185,000 of his soldiers, Sennacherib returned to Assyria. However, Jerusalem remained in her sin, and thus Micah rose up to pronounce judgment against her by saying that she too would eventually go into captivity.

---

### The Coming Judgment (1:1 – 3:12)

**Outline:** (1) God's judgment (1:1-16),  
(2) Reason for judgment (2:1 – 3:12)

### Chapter 1 GOD'S JUDGMENT

**1:1-7 Word of the Lord:** Because Micah knew that his message was from God, he was fearless in delivering it to the people. His confidence in the revelation from God gave him confidence to stand up against a sinful generation. He knew that his message was from God, and thus he did not turn from delivering to the people what they needed to know. **Samaria and Jerusalem:** Micah immediately identifies the focus of his prophetic message. His message was directed first to Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom. He then turned to address Jerusalem, the capital of the south-

ern kingdom. **The Lord comes forth out of His place:** The Bible does not teach that God is remote from His creation. He is transcendent. He intervenes in the affairs of man, first through the revelation of His will, and then, through His work among the nations. In the case of Israel, He intervened in the history of Israel in order to bring to pass the purpose for which He brought forth Israel as a nation. Since the day He brought Israel out of Egyptian captivity He was working to bring them to the fullness of times when the Christ, the Savior of the world would be born. Once this was accomplished, He would have fulfilled His promise to Abraham (Gn 12:1-3), and preserved the seed of woman until the crushing of the head of Satan (Gn 3:15). **Rebellion ... sins of the house of Israel:** The reason for this coming in judgment was because of the sin of both Israel and Judah. Both

were losing their identity as the people of God, and thus God had to purify them through captivity in order to restore them to faith in Him. **Samaria:** This city would become a heap of stones in the field. Her walls would be torn down, exposing the foundation. The gold and silver of her idols would be beaten into pieces and taken back to Assyria as plunder. The treasures of her temple would be plundered for those who destroy her. **Prostitutes:** Because Samaria had given herself over to spiritual harlotry, the prosperity of her harlotry would be taken from her. Her wealth would be seized by the Assyrians (See 2 Kg 17:4-6). All of this transpired when Shalmaneser attacked the city in 722 B.C., which attack eventually led to the fall of the city to Sargon who replaced Shalmaneser as king of Assyria. Sargon then took 27,290 Jews into captivity and scattered them throughout his empire. He left the poor in the land, and then imported others from other areas of the Assyrian Empire to care for the land. Through intermarriage, he sought to destroy the identity of the Israelite race of people. Fortunately, God would never allow this to happen, for He would restore a remnant of Jews to the land in order to restore the identity of Israel.

**1:8-16 Stripped and naked:** In order to dramatize their sinful state and destitution that was to come upon Israel, Micah roams barefoot and dressed only in his loin cloth. **Her wound is incurable:** The culture of wickedness could not be healed. The northern kingdom was beyond repentance, and thus could not

escape the judgment that was coming upon her. She had forsaken God, and thus God turned her over to the nations. **Come to Judah:** Not only did Micah mourn over the northern kingdom, but he also lamented over her sister to the south, Judah, who also was infected with the same wickedness. **Gath:** Micah used the meaning of several towns in the southern kingdom as puns to explain the calamity that was coming. In reference to Gath, the town where tales were told, there would be no one to speak a word. **Beth Ophrah:** In the house of dust, they were to roll in the dust. **Saphir:** In the beautiful city, they would walk in shame. **Zaanan:** In the town of marching, there would no longer be marching in pride. **Beth Ezel:** There would be no place for a foothold in the city on the hillside. **Maroth:** In the town of bitterness they would wait for something good. **Calamity came:** The Assyrians laid siege to Samaria. It fell in 721 B.C. Sennacherib then took the Assyrian army into Judah and thought to take those of Judah into captivity. Only by the grace of God Jerusalem was spared, though she eventually fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C. **Lachish:** The town that was known for its horses was exhorted to harness her swiftest horses to the chariots, for war was coming. The idolatrous sins of the northern kingdom possibly began in Lachish, and then spread throughout the southern kingdom. Lachish would thus flee from existence. She should thus give her parting gifts to Micah's hometown, Moresheth in Gath. She should do so because in her time of calamity, she

would need all the support possible from neighboring towns in order to defend herself against those who sought to destroy her. **Adullam:** David took refuge in a cave near this village when he was fleeing from Saul. Micah saw his people fleeing as David from those who would pursue them. **Make yourself bald:** It was a time for mourning, for the northern kingdom was in the twilight of their existence as an independent nation. Since Judah was following in the idolatrous sin of her northern sister, she too would eventually go into captivity. **Children ... into exile:** In 701 B.C. Sennacherib brought his army against Jerusalem. However, he was not able to take the city, for God sent His angel to kill 185,000 of his army. Through the repentance of Hezekiah, the city was spared (2 Kg 18:14-16; Is 37:36,37). However, the children of those who were spared would eventually go into captivity in the years to come. The parents handed their idolatrous and sinful behavior to their children, and eventually they went into Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C. because of their apostasy.

## Chapter 2

### REASON FOR JUDGMENT

**2:1-5** They had developed a culture of moral corruption. Since God had given Israel the civil laws by which to deal in civil matters with one another, their violation of these civil laws meant that they were sinning against God. They were a society of many social injustices. Their greed had led them to create moral standards that set one person against an-

other for the sake of gain. **Evil on their beds:** They would lie awake at night devising some plan to deal dishonestly with their neighbor. When they awoke in the mornings, they shamelessly carried out their sinful behavior with their fellow man. **Covet fields:** By bribing corrupt officials, they schemed to take the land possessions and houses of others. They plundered the land of others in order to increase their own heritage. In doing such, they created a class of poor who were exploited for the sake of sustaining the rich. **Oppress a man:** If Israel had remained a rural society as she was when she first possessed the land, then there would have been no class of poor people. Every person had his own land as a heritage to be given to his children. But as they forsook the law of God and became greedy, the greedy started, through injustice, to take possession of the land of others. The rich thus oppressed their fellow man. In doing so, the society developed a poor class that was oppressed by those who controlled all the wealth of the society (See Ps 36:1-4; Am 8:4; Mt 23:14; Mk 12:38-40). What led to the injustices of the society was a class of a wealthy few who controlled the wealth of the nation. The only way to correct this imbalance of wealth was through captivity. **Against this family:** God would bring calamity into the life of the rich family that gained its wealth through the oppression of others. **Not remove your necks:** They had removed their necks from the yoke of the commandments of God. But they would not be able to remove their necks from

the yoke of their captors as they were taken into captivity. **To the apostate He divided our fields:** God would give the fields that the rich had acquired through oppression to the Assyrians who would be their captors. What the Assyrians did was to take the rich into captivity and leave the land in the hands of the poor. The restitution of the land to the poor was made possible by the captivity. When considering texts that deal with the exploitation of people in reference to the land, we must not forget that the year of Jubilee was being ignored. God created the law of Jubilee in order that all acquired land be restored after fifty years to the original owners who had received it as an inheritance from their forefathers (See comments Lv 25). But this law was ignored, and thus a class of poor people developed who had no land by which to feed their families. The restoration of all land during the year of Jubilee was being ignored by the rich land owners in violation to the commandments of God.

**2:6-11 Do not prophesy:** Micah had exposed the social crimes of the wealthy class. The rich were thus indignant toward the message of his preaching. They tried to stop his speaking against their sins. As the preacher who preaches the truth of God, these hecklers sought to silence the voice of the prophet (See Is 30:10; Jr 5:30,31; Am 2:12; see comments 2 Tm 4:1-5; compare 2 Th 2:8-12). Micah presents four questions in order to reason with the people. **Should this be said ....:** In other words, should they be talking as they do. **Is the Spirit ...**” Do they think they can silence the Spirit

of God by telling Micah to stop prophesying? They could not frustrate the work of God through the prophets, for they had to be rebuked for their sin in order that God stand just in His judgment that He was bringing upon them. **Are these His deeds:** They were God’s actions taken because of their own sinful behavior. **Do not my words ....:** The upright need not fear anything from God. Only the wicked need to be afraid. **Risen up as an enemy:** They had become the enemy of God because their behavior worked against all that God had instructed. Instead of promoting righteousness before the nations, they had given themselves over to the idol worship and behavior of the nations. God could not, therefore, work His eternal plan to bring the Savior into the world through such an apostate society. **You strip off the robe:** They became a culture of crime, plundering innocent travelers as they passed through the land. Since judgment was coming on them because of their sinful behavior, their women and children would be taken from their homes by the invading Assyrians. The innocent would pay the price for their sins. **Arise and depart:** Micah exhorted them to depart from their wicked ways, for the land would have no rest if they continued in it as they were. **Wine and of strong drink:** The people did not want a preacher who would speak the truth concerning their wayward life. They wanted false prophets who would speak of peace and safety. The false prophets among them were telling the people that God would not allow His people to go into captivity. They

were lying to the people by saying to the people that they were speaking the word of God (See Jr 5:18-21,23,31; 23:25-28,32; 29:8,9).

**2:12,13** In these concluding words to the previous judgments of God, Micah revealed hope for the future. In this context, he looked to a time after their time in captivity. He saw their restoration to the land and restoration to fellowship with God. After scattering His people among the nations in order to cleanse them of their idolatrous behavior, God would bring them again into the land. They would be gathered into His fold for the coming Messianic age. **All of you ... the remnant:** This would not be a restoration of all the people of the captivity. Only a remnant of all twelve tribes would return in order to reestablish the identity of Israel in Palestine. **The One who breaks open the way:** Their King will break open the gate of bondage and lead the exiles to freedom. The historical reference to this event would be when Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire released the exiles to return to Palestine in 536 B.C. But we cannot escape the symbolism in reference to King Jesus leading His sheep from the nations into His fold, the spiritual Israel (See comments Rm 11:1-5). He would lead them out of bondage into the freedom that they would enjoy in Him (Gl 5:1).

### Chapter 3

#### REASON FOR JUDGMENT

**3:1-4 Heads of Jacob:** The injustice of society continued as a result of the leadership of the people. Those who

were to administer justice were corrupt (2 Kg 3:9-12; Jr 5:3-5). They were leaders who loved evil, but shunned good. When the leadership of a society leads in wickedness, then the society cannot be morally restored. In this case of fallen Israel, the leaders exploited the people for their own material advantage. Instead of being leaders who worked for the people, they saw the people as an opportunity for exploitation. In the time of calamity when these leaders cried out to the Lord for help, God would not listen to their pleas as they did not listen to the pleas of those they oppressed (See Pv 21:13; compare Is 1:12-15; Js 2:13). When the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom, they took the corrupt leaders into captivity and left the poor to care for the land. The land was restored to the original owners only when the oppressors were taken into captivity.

**3:5-7 Who make My people stray:** This would be the definition of the false prophet in the midst of a society that has departed from the word of God (See comments Hs 4:6). In view of the oppressing leadership that is explained in verses 1-4, these religious leaders condoned their wicked behavior in order to maintain their positions among the people (Compare Ez 13:19-23). Since Micah was speaking the truth, then these religious leaders were speaking lies in order to maintain their positions and pay (Is 3:12; compare Jr 9:16). In their greed to maintain their support, they sought to silence Micah and maintain their influence and financial support of the people. **Seers will be ashamed:** When the fulfillment

of the prophecies of God's prophets comes true, then the false prophets will be ashamed of what they said to the people. Israel was doomed to destruction because the civil and religious leaders were corrupt. They used their positions as the opportunity to satisfy their greed.

**3:8-12 Full of power by the Spirit:**

Because of the stern message of judgment that he had to declare to the people, Micah reaffirmed his inspiration for the message he delivered (See Ez 2:7,8; 2 Co 3:4-6). Micah stood against the unrighteous civil and religious leadership of his day who were oppressing the people through bribes and unjust exploitation of their lands and houses. **Judge for a bribe:** There was no justice because bribes had corrupted judgments. **Teach for hire:** The religious leadership taught for payment. They hijacked the spiritual requirements of the people in order to receive payment for what the people were required to do to fulfill their responsibilities toward God. Both priests and prophets were unscrupulous leaders who maintained their positions for the sake of money. **Lean on the Lord:** The religious leaders sought to validate their authority in religious matters by pretending that the Lord was among them. They lied to the people by asserting that the Lord had given them a message of peace and safety, when in reality, doom was in the near future. **On account of you Zion will be plowed:** The destruction of Israel had to be laid on the backs of the civil and religious leaders. When the people wanted to do that which was right

in their own eyes, the religious leaders followed along in order to maintain their salaries. They did not take a stand against the sin of the people. When a true prophet stands up among a people who have developed a culture of sin, and the prophet is accused of treason, then it can be determined that the people have gone beyond the point of repentance (See Jr 26:18). They will not listen to one they accuse of treason.

**Hope For The Future**

(4:1 – 5:15)

**Outline:** (1) The coming glory (4:1-8), (2) Birth for the future (4:9-13), (3) The coming Redeemer (5:1-15)

**Chapter 4**

**THE COMING GLORY**

**4:1-5** See comments Is 2:1-5; Zc 8:20-23. In the midst of an evil day in which Micah prophesied, this message of hope is given for a new era of peace on earth. This Messianic hope that was given from the country preacher was also given to the people in Jerusalem by Isaiah. The prophecies are parallel, emphasizing the fact that the kingdom reign of the Messiah would bring peace among all those who obeyed the gospel (See comments Jr 31:31-34; Dn 2:44; 7:13,14). Reference was not to peace among those of the world, but peace among those who would submit to the kingdom reign of the coming Messiah.

**4:6-8 In that day:** That day would be when the prophecy of verses 1-5 would be fulfilled in Christ. The day would be marked by the outpouring of

the Holy Spirit (See comments Jl 2:28-32; At 2:16,17). It would be the day when the church was established by those who first obeyed the gospel on the Pentecost of A.D. 30 (See comments At 2). ***A strong nation:*** The church would be the strong nation of God's people on earth. The church would be the manifestation on earth of the Son of God's kingdom reign from heaven (See comments Dn 7:13,14; Mt 16:18,19; Ep 1:20-22). ***In Mount Zion:*** The church, the manifestation of the kingdom reign of the Son of God on earth, would be the new Jerusalem in which the King would reign in the hearts of the obedient (See comments Lk 17:20,21). ***The kingdom will come:*** When the first people obeyed the gospel in Acts 2, and thus allowed Jesus to reign in their hearts on earth as He reigned in heaven (Lk 17:20,21), then the reign of Jesus was manifested on earth (See comments Mt 6:9). The prophecy of this context was fulfilled in the present spiritual kingdom reign of Jesus, not a reestablishment of a physical kingdom after the manner by which the nation of Israel was established when God brought them out of Egyptian captivity. The purpose for the existence of Israel was to bring the Messiah into the world, and then offer Him for the salvation of all men (See comments Ep 3:8-12). When this was accomplished, Israel had fulfilled the need for her existence, and thus the Jews of physical Israel were assimilated into the spiritual Israel, the church, through their obedience to the gospel (See comments Gl 3:26-29).

## BIRTH FOR THE FUTURE

**4:9-13** It is unfortunate that many interpreters skip over centuries of God's work through the sacrificial Lamb and His bride, the church, in order to dream of some fanciful hope of a carnal worldly empire on earth wherein they can exercise authority over their fellow man. The beauty of this context is hope for Israel in their restoration from captivity, and the metaphorical use of that restoration in their redemption through the Savior that was to come. ***Woman in labor pains:*** Israel went through the labor pains of captivity into order to bring forth a new Israel that was cleansed of idolatry. When the Messiah came, a new birth would bring forth new creatures who would be in a new covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ (2 Co 5:17; see comments Jr 31:31-34). ***The Lord will redeem:*** The northern kingdom went into captivity in 722/21 B.C. The southern kingdom, Judah, went into Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C. When the Medo-Persian Empire came into existence by the defeat of the Babylonians in 539 B.C., Cyrus, their king, allowed the exiled Jews to return to their homeland in 536 B.C. God thus redeemed His people out of the land of their captors. It was a beautiful metaphor to symbolize the redemption of all men from their bondage in sin through the precious blood of Jesus (Ep 1:7). The church is now the family of the redeemed. The saints now reign in this present life with King Jesus who reigns over all things (Rm 5:17).

## Chapter 5

### THE COMING REDEEMER

#### 5:1-6 *He has laid siege against us.*

Israel would eventually be redeemed out of the nations to which they would be sent in captivity. Before the redemption, however, the people were exhorted to prepare for battle against the invading Assyrian army. ***Bethlehem Ephratah:*** Ephratah was the original older settlement that was eventually absorbed into the larger village of Bethlehem (Gn 35:19). Bethlehem was not a significant settlement in the region. It was the first home of David, who was Israel's greatest king (Ps 89:19-37). Those who were descendants of David were called Ephrathites (1 Sm 17:12; Rt 1:2). The literal fulfillment of this prophecy was in reference to the birth of the Messiah (See Mt 2:4-6; compare Is 7:14; 9:6,7). The Messiah would come forth from Bethlehem and rule over the people. ***Until the time when she who labors:*** The One who would rule would give the people of God, the Israelites, over to the hands of the nations. In the travail of their captivity, Israel would eventually give birth to the incarnate Son of God, the One who had given the rebellious Israelites over to the nations. ***The remnant:*** The emphasis in the context is on the One who is brought forth in Bethlehem. His coming would result in the birth of the church of the Christ, and thus the spiritual remnant that would be born out of physical Israel. In this case, it would be the spiritual remnant that would be brought forth out of the physical remnant that returned from captivity.

Once the Jewish spiritual remnant, the church, was brought forth in Acts 2, then the church would go forth to the Gentiles (See comments Lk 24:46,47). The church would first begin with the Jews, and then go forth into all the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16; Rm 1:16). ***Reach to the ends of the earth:*** The word of the Christ would go beyond national Israel. His kingship would extend through all the world. As the Christ reigned in the hearts of men (Lk 17:20,21), His kingship would be worldwide (See comments Ph 2:5-11). As His word went forth into all the world, those of faith in all the world would submit to His kingship. ***This One will be the peace:*** See Lk 2:14 (Lk 10:36; Rm 5:1; 14:17; Ph 4:7). Peace would prevail among those who give their hearts to the King. The identity of the true spiritual Israel of God, the church, is determined by the peace that prevails among those who have given their hearts to King Jesus (See Jn 14:27). ***When the Assyrian comes:*** The literal invasion of Assyria into the land is here used as a historical metaphor to manifest the resistance of any invasion into the church of God's people. ***Seven:*** As the number "seven" stands for perfect or complete, so the resistance against the invasion of the enemy into the camp of God's people is perfect. ***Rule the land of Assyria:*** The literal fulfillment of this statement took place in 612 B.C. when the Babylonian Empire conquered Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. In this sense the Israelites were delivered from those who took them into captivity. This deliverance estab-

lished a metaphorical reference to the deliverance of all of God's people from all captors. Instead of the physical army of Assyria coming into Palestine to take captive the people as in the Assyrian conquest of 722/21 B.C., and then being delivered by the Babylonians, the King, through the church, would go into the land of Assyria and convert the Assyrians. The people of the King would be spiritually delivered by their faith and obedience to the King.

**5:7-9 Remnant of Jacob:** In the initial fulfillment, reference was to the remnant of all twelve tribes that would return from captivity. In the spiritual fulfillment, the remnant would be those of all the nations who would come out of the captivity of sin, and thus be the light of God to the world. **Dew from the Lord:** God's people are the preserving salt of the world (Mt 5:13). **Your hand will be lifted up:** To King Jesus would be given sovereignty over all things (See comments Dn 2:44; 7:13,14; Ph 2:5-11). He would be made head over all things for the sake of the church (See comments Ep 1:20-22). Regardless of what happens in the world, those who are of Jesus' flock can be assured that Jesus is in control of all things (Hb 1:3). Though the world may seem to be out of control, the disciples of Jesus can be assured that God is working all things together for their good (Rm 8:28). Through Israel God was working all things for the salvation of all men. Israel was the means through which God brought the Savior of the world into the world. He worked through the prophets, therefore, in order to preserve Israel

for the salvation of all nations.

**5:10-15** The picture that is painted by these verses is that God would be working among the captives in order to eradicate from them that which led to their captivity. Their senseless wandering after things of their own imagination would be terminated. They would be restored to the word of God, and thus willingly put away all idol gods that they had created after their own imagination and all spiritualistic worship practices. They would no longer look within themselves in order to find a god or a spirit. They would look to the one true and living God, and the Holy Spirit that He would send forth into the world. Their captivity would cause a paradigm shift in their culture. All those things in which they trusted in order to exist as a physical nation, and their religious imaginations, would be taken away. They would be restored to faith in God as their king, and thus the One in whom they would hope. Their security, therefore, would no longer be in the things that they would either construct or imagine, but in God who would reign from heaven in their hearts.

### **God's Complaint Against His People (6:1 – 7:20)**

**Outline:** (1) God's appeal (6:1-8), (2) Condemnation of evil (6:9-16), (3) Lament for the nation (7:1-7), (4) Faith in God (7:8-13), (5) Prayer for the people (7:14-20)

## **Chapter 6 GOD'S APPEAL**

**6:1-5** In verses 1-5 Micah reveals God's accusation against His people.

God asks for his people to enter into a legal debate with Him concerning His treatment of them throughout their history. He asks them these questions in order to bring to their attention that they have no excuse for their behavior. ***Mountains:*** The leaders of the nations are called upon to hear the complaint that God has against His people. ***Have I wearied you:*** God did not give them any commandments that were a burden to them (Compare Jr 2:5-8; 1 Jn 5:3). In this brief historical review of God's care over His people, He reviewed that His transcendent work in their history was for their good. In fact, without His involvement in their history, they would not exist as a nation. He had counselled them for good, while Balaam counselled them for evil and destruction (Nm 22-24). ***Gilgal:*** See Nm 22 - 27; Ja 1 - 4.

**6:6-8** Micah answered the Lord for the people. His answer reveals what God requires in order to live righteously. God does not seek ceremonial worship from those who would seek His favor. Countless ceremonial sacrifices will not forgive sins, neither will the ceremonies produce a spiritual life. There is no offering that a man can give that will atone for any sin. What God requires comes from the heart (See Dt 10:12,13; 30:11-14). ***Do justly ... love mercy ... walk humbly with your God:*** That which is good does not come from outward performances of law. In one's relationship with his fellow man, he is required to be just (Pv 21:3; Am 5:23,24; Zc 8:16) and have mercy (Js 2:13). Walking humbly with God involves being led by the will of God, not

one's own inventions of religiosity (See comments Rm 3:31; compare Mt 23:23; Lk 11:42; Js 1:27). Heartless obedience to ceremonial law is rejected by God (See comments Am 5).

### CONDEMNATION OF EVIL

**6:9-12** ***Cries out to the city:*** God makes His final plea to the city of Jerusalem. The plea is to fear His name, and thus obey His will. God was going to bring the rod of discipline on the city in order to encourage repentance. God addressed the misguided religiosity of the leaders and the injustices that prevailed throughout society. The city had become a gathering of the wicked who dwelt throughout the city. Once the city was vile with sin, then it spread throughout the country. The city of Jerusalem, therefore, was leading in the moral downfall of the nation. ***Treasures of wickedness:*** The rich had gained their wealth through their exploitation of the poor. ***Wicked balances:*** Through crooked business practices they had become wealthy. As long as such practices continued to be the principle by which they dealt with one another, they could not continue as a society that would represent God (See Dt 25:13; Pv 11:1; 16:11; Am 8:5). ***Violence ... lies ... deceitful:*** The city of Jerusalem was a spiritually sick society. When cities become as this, God gives them over to their own destruction as He gave over Sodom and Gomorrah (See comments Rm 1:18-32).

**6:13-16** The unjust would reap what they had sown. Their prosperity would be turned into poverty. Their lavish way

of life would be turned into a life of affliction. They would not be able to enjoy that which they gained through unjust business practices and exploitation. It would be taken from them by their captors. **Omri:** They had followed after the wicked leadership of King Omri, and his son, Ahab, who exploited others for their own benefit (See 1 Kg 16–22). **Reproach of My people:** God had established Israel as a nation that would bring glory to His name (See Dt 28:1-14). However, they rejected His leadership through His word, and thus created an unjust society that was scorned by the surrounding nations. They had the privilege of being given the oracles of God, and being led by God throughout their history. They thus had no excuse for their behavior. Their privilege of being God's people also brought upon them the burden of reaping His judgment.

## Chapter 7

### LAMENT FOR THE NATION

**7:1-7 No cluster to eat:** Micah had poured his heart out to the people, seeking for signs of repentance. He was as a farmer who went to the field seeking fruit from his labors. But he found none. The nation was morally barren and unwilling to repent. He could find no good man in Judah. It was a culture of wickedness, and thus beyond repentance. Their leaders led for their own gain. They maintained their positions for the sake of wealth. Even the best of their leaders was as a thorn bush. Justice no longer existed in the courts for decisions were made on the basis of how much the judge

could be bribed. And since the rich had the money to pay the bribes, judgments were made in favor of the rich. It was a nation in which the rule of law had failed, and thus the society was in disintegration (See Ps 37:35-38; Pv 14:24; Is 5:15; Jr 17:10,11). **Daughter rises up against her mother:** Jesus quoted verse 6 in reference to the response to His teaching of the generation in which He lived (See Mt 10:34-36; Lk 12:51-53). The teaching of the truth generated antagonism against the one who preached the truth. It caused animosity within families. Those in Micah's generation rose up against the prophets of God, as Jesus' generation of religious leaders rose up against him. Regardless of the opposition, however, Micah made a commitment to trust in the Lord.

### FAITH IN GOD

**7:8-13 Light to me:** Regardless of the persecution that would come on Micah because he preached the message of God, he trusted in God's protection (Compare Mk 6:48; At 12:5-10; 23:11). God watches over those who are His (Rm 8:28; 1 Co 10:13). **My enemy will see:** Micah placed himself in place of the people. Though for a time God would discipline His people through captivity, He would restore them to their land. He would bring them from their lands of captivity and plant them again in the land that He had given to them as an inheritance. In their restoration to the land, therefore, the enemies who previously mocked Israel would be shamed. They would be shamed because their nations

would have gone out of existence, but Israel as a race was restored to the land. ***The land will be desolate:*** Until the time of the restoration, God's people had to be disciplined with captivity. The land would be forsaken because the generation that was taken into captivity had to bear the fruit of their sins (Gl 6:7). Only their descendants would be restored to the land.

### PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE

**7:14-20** Carmel was a land of great vineyards, and Bashan and Gilead great pasture lands. As a farmer, Micah used the metaphors of the regions to portray God's care over His flock. ***Marvelous things:*** God had protected His people through great miraculous wonders when they came out of Egyptian captivity. He would show wonders of protection when He brought them back from their captivity. Verse 15 could look toward the introduction of the Messianic era (Compare Mt 4:23-25). God introduced the Mess-

anic age with miraculous wonders that drew the people to Jesus (See comments Mk 16:15-20). ***Who is a God like unto you:*** See Ex 15:11; Ps 89:6; Is 40:18-25; 46:5. In the context here, reference is to the unlimited grace that proceeds from God on behalf of His people. There is no limit to the grace of God. When men's mercy runs out, God continues to have mercy because of His boundless grace. ***True to Jacob:*** Israel was sent into captivity because of her spiritual harlotry with idol gods. She forsook God, but God showed mercy when she repented. He brought them back from their captivity in order to manifest His great mercy and forgiveness. God's restoration of His people from captivity illustrated His redemption of men from sin through Jesus. Though lost in the mire of sin, Jesus came into the world to die for sinners. He did not come because we were righteous, but because we were helpless in our sin (See comments Rm 8).