

Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, but it is out of focus. The background is a bright blue sky with some light clouds. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

Judgement is Coming!

Scripture text: Micah 1

I. **First Message: Judgment Will Come** (chaps. 1–2)

Here Micah foretold God's judgment on Israel and Judah. He also wrote that the nation will ultimately be restored to prominence and prosperity. The prophet was sure because of the promises God had given other writers. God had promised Abraham that he would have many descendants and they would dwell in Palestine (Gen. 12:2; 15:18–21; 17:1–8, 16, 19–20).

Genesis 12:2 **And I will make of you a great nation,** and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Genesis 15:18-21 On that day **the LORD** made a **covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land,** from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites."

Genesis 17:1-2 When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and **may multiply you greatly.**"

Genesis 17:3-8 Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, "Behold, my covenant is with you, and **you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.** No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, **for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.** I will make you **exceedingly fruitful,** and I will make you **into nations,** and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and **your offspring after you** throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And **I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."**

Genesis 17:16 I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. **I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."**

Genesis 17:19-21 God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. But **I will establish my covenant with Isaac,** whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year."

Through Moses God promised the people they would enjoy great blessing in the land (Deut. 30:1–10).

He told David that his offspring and throne would continue forever (2 Sam. 7:11b–16).

2 Samuel 7:12-23 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, **I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.** He shall build a house for my name, and **I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.**

Deuteronomy 30:1-5 "And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, and **return to the LORD your God**, you and your children, and **obey his voice** in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, then the **LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you**, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there he will take you. And the LORD your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, **that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.**

The Major and Minor Prophets also wrote messages of consolation **that God will ultimately bless the nation because of His promises.** Isaiah, Micah's contemporary, also prophesied that God will restore the nation (see, Isa. 65–66).

The theme of judgment, voiced repeatedly in the prophetic books, **can be traced back to Deuteronomy 27–28** when Moses **warned the people** about to enter the Promised Land about the **dangers that awaited them there.** The previous adult generation (except Caleb and Joshua) had died in the wilderness **because of their refusal to follow God's command** to possess the land.

Deuteronomy 28:1-6 "And if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And **all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God.** Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

Deuteronomy 28:15-20 "But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then **all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.** Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field. Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out. **"The LORD will send on you curses, confusion, and frustration in all that you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and perish quickly on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken me.**"

So Moses told the new generation **that they had a choice**. They could either follow the covenant given them by God and live in the land with prosperity (Deut. 28:1–14), or they could refuse and be cursed in the land with a lack of fertility and productivity (of people, animals, and crops) and **ultimately be exiled from the land of promise**. From that point on, much of the narrative and prophetic portions of the Old Testament **focus on Israel's failure to live according to God's covenantal stipulations**. Micah, along with Amos, **especially pointed up the social failures of the nation in not keeping the covenant** (see, e.g., Micah 2:1, 8–9; 3:11; 6:11).

A. Introduction (1:1)

1:1. A number of important introductory points are made in this opening verse. Micah said the message of his book **was the word of the Lord**. This phrase, common to many of the prophets, is important in light of this revelation or “word” from the Lord to His people. **God wanted Israel to react rationally to His word and to make proper decisions based on it**. Her religious system contrasted directly with the contemporary **pagan fertility religions** in which **sensory experience was the highest form of religious expression**.

The prophet said he was from Moresheth (called Moresheth Gath in v. 14; perhaps modern Tell Judaiyideh). The town was about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem, though its exact location has been disputed.

Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Micah prophesied about both the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms, but he mentioned only these three kings of Judah because the kings in the north **were not in the Davidic line.**

The dates of these three kings means that Micah's ministry fell between 750 and 686, though scholars normally assume that Micah's ministry ended in the early part of Hezekiah's reign (perhaps before 700 b.c.).

Micah's book relays the vision (cf. Isa. 1:1; Obad. 1; Nahum 1:1) he saw concerning Samaria, capital of the Northern Kingdom (Israel), and Jerusalem, capital of the Southern Kingdom (Judah). The Hebrew word for "vision" suggests that God gave these passages to Micah **who "saw" them mentally and spiritually.**

These cities obviously represented all 12 tribes of the nation. The prophet **denounced evil which was rampant throughout the nation.**

The Northern Kingdom had long before strayed from the covenant given through Moses. And the people in the Southern Kingdom were acting like their brothers and sisters to the north, **failing to live according to the covenant.**

Today, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Chicago, Baltimore, Miami, Las Vegas, Huston, New Orleans, New York, and Minneapolis.

B. Prediction of coming judgment (1:2–7)

1:2. Verses 2–7 form the backdrop for the rest of the book. After calling on the earth to hear God’s lawsuit against His covenant people (v. 2), the prophet spoke **of the results of God’s punishment** (vv. 3–4), the **reason for the judgment** (v. 5), and the **certainty of judgment** (vv. 6–7).

In a kind of cosmic law court Micah asked all the peoples of the earth, like a jury, to “**hear**” what God as a witness would **say about the nation’s sins**. Micah implied that everyone, **given the opportunity, would agree that God’s judgment against His people was just**.

Micah called God the Sovereign ('ăḏōnāy) Lord (Yahweh), and in the last line of verse 2 he used 'ăḏōnāy (Lord) again. In 4:13 Micah used the shortened form 'āḏôn. On the title “**Sovereign Lord**”

Micah noted that the Lord would come from His holy temple. Of course the temple did not contain God; even all creation could not contain Him (1 Kings 8:27). His dwelling place (Micah 1:3) is in heaven (2 Chron. 6:21, 30, 33, 39).

However, God had chosen to localize His presence in the tabernacle and later the temple above the atonement cover, the lid of the ark of the Testimony.

Inside the ark were the two tablets on which were written the Ten Commandments, a portion of God's Word. As stated earlier, the **Israelites were responsible to live according to the Mosaic Covenant.**

The sacrificial system and the temple were at the core of the covenantal system. Therefore to speak of the Lord going "from His holy temple" to witness against the nation meant He would judge them **on the basis of the Mosaic Covenant which gave Him every right to do so.**

1:3–4. Micah called on the people to look for God coming in judgment from heaven, His dwelling place.

The prophet pictured God treading or walking on the high places (the mountains; cf. v. 4) of the earth. In His majesty He was like a gigantic person stepping from one mountain peak to another. **Thus God is capable of doing whatever He wants to do without being stopped by anyone.** As God trod the mountains they melted like wax before a fire or like water rushing down a slope which cannot be stopped. Even the valleys split, disturbed by God's awesome power.

These “high places” (v. 3) may have also subtly implied the pagan altars on hilltops.

1:5. The reason for this judgment **was Jacob’s transgression and the sins of the house of Israel.**

“Jacob” or “Jacob’s” occurs 11 times in Micah. Nine times it refers to the entire nation of Israel (in the first question in v. 5 Jacob means the Northern Kingdom, and in 7:20 Jacob is the patriarch). “Jacob” and “Israel” are used together as synonyms in 1:5a; 2:12; 3:1, 8–9. Transgression and “sin(s)” occur together four times in Micah (1:5; 3:8; 6:7; 7:18).

The sins of the residents in Samaria, capital of Israel, and Jerusalem, capital of Judah, **typified the sins of people throughout both nations.** The capital cities apparently “**set the pace**” for the rest of Israel and Judah, with **the worst sins being committed in the largest urban areas.**

A high place was a place on a mountain or hill where people worshiped God (2 Chron. 33:17 Nevertheless, *the people still sacrificed at the high places, but only to the LORD their God.*) or idols. Pagan people in the land of Israel often worshiped on hilltops (perhaps to symbolize a closer relationship to their gods).

Before David placed the central sanctuary in Jerusalem, the **people worshiped the Lord at altars throughout the land**. After the central sanctuary was set up the Israelites were then supposed to go to Jerusalem to worship God. But many of them, attracted to the nearby pagan high places, **abandoned the worship of the Lord for pagan worship**. This even took place in Jerusalem. **No wonder that Micah sarcastically called Jerusalem the high place of Judah**.

The Jerusalemites **were disobeying God outwardly as well as inwardly**.

1:6. God's judgment was to come first on the Northern Kingdom (vv. 6–7) and then on the Southern Kingdom (vv. 9–16).

The capital city of the North would be completely destroyed, even to its foundations. **Samaria's ruins can still be seen today.** Rather than a populated city, Samaria is only a heap of rubble (cf. 3:12), a field for vineyards. **This prophecy was fulfilled in 722 b.c.** when the Assyrian army captured the city after a three-year siege (2 Kings 17:1–5). The time leading up to the fall had **been filled with political intrigue and assassinations** (2 Kings 15:8–31).

2 Kings 17:1-5 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea the son of Elah began to reign in Samaria over Israel, and he reigned nine years. And **he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD**, yet not as the kings of Israel who were before him. Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria. And Hoshea became his vassal and paid him tribute. But the king of Assyria **found treachery in Hoshea**, for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and offered no tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria invaded all the land and came to Samaria, and for three years he besieged it.

Most of the people of Samaria and the Northern Kingdom were taken away and **others were brought in to intermarry with the remaining people** (cf. 2 Kings 17:6, 22–24).

1:7. Because much idolatrous worship had been going on in Samaria (idols and images were numerous) the **Lord said He would bring it all to an end by a great destruction of the city.** Samaria's idols would be smashed, the temple gifts ... burned, and the images destroyed. In Baalism, a pagan fertility religion, "sacred" prostitutes were set apart for the "worship" of pagan fertility deities.

Wages paid to temple prostitutes were in turn given by them to the temple as “temple gifts.” Apparently this practice had permeated Samaria. **This illicit sexuality graphically pictured the illicit departure of the Northern Kingdom from their solemn covenant arrangement with the Lord.** In effect, they were bound to God in a “marriage agreement” and to depart to other **gods was tantamount to committing spiritual adultery**

Hosea 4:10-11 They shall eat, but not be satisfied; they shall play the whore, but not multiply, **because they have forsaken the LORD to cherish whoredom, wine, and new wine, which take away the understanding.**

Hosea 4:12-15 My people inquire of a piece of wood, and their walking staff gives them oracles. **For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the whore.** They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good. Therefore your daughters play the whore, and your brides commit adultery. I will not punish your daughters when they play the whore, nor your brides when they commit adultery; for the men themselves go aside with prostitutes and sacrifice with cult prostitutes, and **a people without understanding shall come to ruin.** Though you play the whore, O Israel, let not Judah become guilty. Enter not into Gilgal, nor go up to Beth-aven, and swear not, "As the LORD lives."

Since Israel had committed adultery with temple prostitutes, the temple gifts would be smashed by the Assyrians and used again by them in their prostitution.

Becoming captives of Assyria the Israelites **would be forced to continue in a prostituted relationship.**

They had sought out other gods so now God would send them away to lands where foreign gods were worshiped, giving them what they evidently wanted.

C. Lament over the people (1:8–16)

Micah said he would lament because of Samaria's destruction (vv. 8–9); then through a clever use of several wordplays he called on certain towns of Judah to mourn for Samaria and for themselves because **they too would feel the brunt of an Assyrian invasion** (vv. 10–16).

1. Micah's lament (1:8–9)

1:8–9. Because of the punishment to come on the Northern Kingdom, Micah **was in a state of agitation**. To weep and wail and to go ... **barefoot and naked were signs of extreme mourning** (cf. 2 Sam. 15:30; Isa. 20:2; 22:12; Jer. 25:34).

2 Samuel 15:30 But David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, **weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered.** And all the people who were with him covered their heads, and they went up, weeping as they went.

Jeremiah 25:34 "Wail, you shepherds, and cry out, and roll in ashes, you lords of the flock, for the days of your slaughter and dispersion have come, and you shall fall like a choice vessel.

Isaiah 20:2 at that time the LORD spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, "**Go, and loose the sackcloth from your waist and take off your sandals from your feet,**" and he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

Identifying with the people, **Micah felt as desolate as a jackal** (a nighttime scavenger) and an owl (a nocturnal bird) who live in desolate places.

Micah viewed the punishment as already having happened. It was as inevitable and incurable as a wound.

In fact the sins of the Northern Kingdom had so influenced Judah that the “wound” (from God’s judgment) **would come on her too** (cf. Isa. 1:5–6). Judgment would reach the very gate of Jerusalem. This happened in 701 b.c. when Sennacherib’s Assyrian army destroyed 46 towns in Judah and **then surrounded Jerusalem** (2 Kings 18–19).

2. Micah's call for others to mourn (1:10–16)

Micah used several clever wordplays to describe the desolation the Assyrian invasion would bring to Judah's cities.

Interestingly Sennacherib too used wordplays when recording *his conquests*.

1:10. Tell it not in Gath recalls 2 Samuel 1:20 where David made the same statement. In that case David did not want the Philistines to be glad about the demise of Saul, Israel's former ruler. In Micah's case **he did not want the inhabitants of Gath to hear about the Assyrian attack on Judah.**

Nor should Gath weep, for then others would know about the desolation.

“Gath” (gat) and “tell” (taggîdû) sounded something alike in Hebrew because of the letters “g” and “t.”

However, Micah told the people of Beth Ophrah (“house of dust”) **to roll in the dust, in an expression of their grief** (cf. Jer. 25:34; also note “roll in ashes,” Jer. 6:26; Ezek. 27:20).

1:11–12. When attacked by Assyria, Shaphir (“beautiful or pleasant”) would become the opposite of its name—a town of nakedness and shame.

In Hebrew Zaanan (ša'ānān) and come out (yaṣ'âh) are related words; in contrast with their city's name, the Zaananites **would not dare go outside their city walls because of the warfare.** Nor would anyone go to Beth Ezel (“house of nearness or proximity”) for protection, for that town would itself be **in mourning and in need of help.** In Maroth (which sounds in Heb. like the word for “bitterness”) people would writhe in pain while waiting for relief from Jerusalem.

But no relief would come because the destruction would go all the way to the gate of Jerusalem (cf. v. 9).

1:13. Sarcastically Micah urged the citizens of Lachish (lākîš), which sounds something like the word for a team (rekeš) of horses, **to get a chariot ready for escaping from the Assyrians.** (Lachish was known for its horses.) But their escape attempt **would be in vain.**

Lachish was the beginning of sin to Jerusalem's inhabitants (the Daughter of Zion; *Lam. 1:6 From the daughter of Zion all her majesty has departed. Her princes have become like deer that find no pasture; they fled without strength before the pursuer.*).

Perhaps this means that Lachish influenced Jerusalem toward idolatry.

1:14. Moresheth Gath **would be given parting gifts**, perhaps by Jerusalem, if it is the city intended by the word you. **“Parting gifts” means betrothal gifts, as a father gives his daughter when she marries.** Similarly Jerusalem would “give” Moresheth Gath to the Assyrian king.

The town of Aczib (*'akzîb*, **“deception”**) when conquered by the Assyrians, **would become deceptive ('akzāb), unable to offer help to Israel's kings.**

1:15. A conqueror, a reference to Sennacherib, would go against ... Mareshah, another Judean town.

The two words in Hebrew are similar (“conqueror” is hayyōrēš, and “Mareshah” is mārēšâh). Ironically Mareshah, **which means possessor**, would become the possession of Sennacherib. As David had escaped to Adullam (cf. 1 Sam. 22:1), so the glory of Israel, probably her leaders, **would be shamed by becoming fugitives** in Adullam.

1:16. Even the children in those Judean towns would be exiled by the Assyrians. This would cause the people of the area to mourn, one sign of which was to shave their heads (cf. Job 1:20; Isa. 15:2; Jer. 47:5; Ezek. 27:31; Amos 8:10). **With heads shaved the mourners would look like bald vultures.**

Job 1:20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and **shaved his head** and fell on the ground and worshiped.

Isaiah 15:2 He has gone up to the temple, and to Dibon, to the high places to weep; over Nebo and over Medeba Moab wails. **On every head is baldness; every beard is shorn;**

Jeremiah 47:5 **Baldness has come upon Gaza;** Ashkelon has perished. O remnant of their valley, how long will you gash yourselves?

Ezekiel 27:31 **they make themselves bald for you and put sackcloth on their waist, and they weep over you in bitterness of soul, with bitter mourning.**

Amos 8:8-11 Shall not the land tremble on this account, and everyone mourn who dwells in it, and all of it rise like the Nile, and be tossed about and sink again, like the Nile of Egypt?" "And on that day," declares the Lord GOD, "I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight. I will turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on every waist and **baldness on every head**; I will make it like the mourning for an only son and the end of it like a bitter day. "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord GOD, "**when I will send a famine on the land-- not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.**"