

A LOOK AT THE BOOK MICAH

AUTHOR

Micah was born in Moresheth, near Gath, which is 20 miles west of Jerusalem.

He served as a prophet in Judah during the reigns of Jotham (739-731 B.C.), Ahaz (731-715), and Hezekiah (715-686).

He would have been a contemporary of Isaiah (739-686)

Micah was apparently raised in humble surroundings.

He continually identifies with and appeals to the common people and peasants (compare Isaiah—in the royal court, with kings, etc.)

He mainly prophesied before the reforms in Judah and before the fall of Israel.

DATE

Prophecies were given before the reforms of Hezekiah and the fall of Israel, since he mentions neither.

Therefore, prophecies should probably be dated between about 735 and 725 B.C.

BACKGROUND

The setting is a condition of immorality and idolatry in both Israel and Judah.

Both are rapidly heading toward judgment and destruction unless they repent.

PURPOSE AND THEME

The theme of the book is that God demands righteousness and faithfulness from His people.

Because they failed in this, both kingdoms are headed for destruction, unless they repent.

Following the coming judgment, God will remain faithful to them and restore them.

The purpose is to call God's people to repentance so they will return to Him and experience His blessing.

This is one of the hardest books to distinguish from others because of the general nature of the message of coming judgment.

ORGANIZATION

The structure of the book centers on three messages the prophet preached (1-2; 3-5; 6-7).

Although each message is distinct, the similarities make the development of the book difficult to trace.

The three separate messages each have the same main message: unless they conform to God's demand for righteousness and faithfulness, they will be judged.

Each message contains:

accusation of sin,
prophecy of coming judgment,
promise of future restoration.

ARGUMENT

Introduction 1:1

The book is introduced by declaring its content to be the word of God and not the word of the prophet.

The author and time are designated and then the message is related to both Israel and Judah.

FIRST MESSAGE: JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL 1-2 – "Hear"

The first message is addressed to all peoples and warns of a coming judgment against Israel.

Announcement of judgment 1:2-5

It begins with a message of judgment against Samaria, the capital of Israel. The judgment is caused by sin and idolatry.

Description of judgment (results) 1:6-16

What would be the results of the judgment? 1:6, 7

As a result of that judgment, the city will be destroyed.

Notice the extent of the judgment? 1:8-16

Cause of judgment 2:1-11

Why was God going to judge them? 2:1, 2, 6, 8, 11

The extent of their evil is described and the cause of judgment expanded.

Promise of restoration after judgment 2:12-13

In the midst of the declaration of judgment, what promise does He make to them?

Even in this message of judgment, the prophet concludes with a promise of restoration.

SECOND MESSAGE: PROMISE OF RESTORATION 3-5 – "Hear now"

The second message is addressed to the rulers of the people and, while correcting their sin, emphasizes the promise of restoration.

Condemnation of leaders 3

Message begins by outlining the sins of the rulers and the prophets (3:1-12)
He tells of the coming judgment which will include rejection by Yahweh,
cessation of revelation, and destruction of the city.

Who does He condemn?

Rulers 3:1-4

Cause 3:1-3 *Why?* 3:1, 2a, 2b-3
Injustice and violence

Judgment 3:4 *What will He do to them?*
God will not hear them

Prophets 3:5-8

Cause 3:5 *Why?*
They mislead the people

Judgment 3:6-7 *What will He do to them?*
No revelation will be given to them
They will prophesy incorrectly

Contrast 3:8
Contrast with the true prophet

Leaders in general 3:9-12

Cause 3:9-11 *Why?* 3:9a, 9b, 10a, 10b, 11a, 11b
Injustice and bribes

Judgment 3:12 *What will He do to them?*
Destruction

Establishment of the kingdom 4-5

Having referred to their sin, he promises a future regathering, the establishment of a kingdom, and the coming of a righteous ruler who will first be rejected, but then return and reign forever.

When will it happen? 4:1a, 10-11

Conditions in the kingdom 4:1-8

What will it be like? 4:1, 2, 3a, 3b, 4, 5, 6, 7

Elevation of Israel 4:1 -over the nations

Education by Israel 4:2 -to the nations

International peace 4:3

Prosperity and peace 4:4 -symbolic meaning

Faithfulness to God 4:5

Regathering of the scattered 4:6-8 People reunited with Yahweh

Preparation of the nations 4:9-5:1

Mistreatment of Israel given 4:9-11
God uses them to judge His people

Mistreatment of Israel judged 4:12-5:1
They don't understand God's plan to use them
God judges them for abusing His people

Coming of Messiah 5:2-15

His coming 5:2 *Where does He come from? When?*

His rejection 5:3 *What will he do after He comes?*

His rule 5:4-15 –Participation in the kingdom
What will it be like? 5:4a, 4b, 5, 13

THIRD MESSAGE: GOD'S CASE AGAINST ISRAEL 6-7 – "*Hear now*"

The third message is addressed to all the earth and contains Yahweh's legal case against Israel.

Legal proceedings 6:1-16 – **God's accusation**

Yahweh challenges His people, before the whole earth as witnesses, to show what wrong He has done which has caused them to reject Him. 6:1-4

Call for witnesses 6:1-2 *Who does He call? Why?*

Invitation to accuse God 6:3-4 *What does He ask Israel?*

God's requirements 6:5-8
What does their worship look like? 6:6-7
What does God require of them? 6:8

He then calls them, offering pardon.
He reminds them of what He has wanted from them, . . .

Israel's failure 6:9-12 *Did they do it?*
Then He shows them how they have failed, . . .

Coming judgment 6:13-16 *What is God going to do about it? 6:16*
He promises to judge them.

Resultant lament 7:1-10

Lament over Israel's condition 7:1-6

What was their moral condition like? 7:4

The prophet laments the evil condition of the people.

Expression of confidence in Yahweh 7:7-10

What's his confidence? 7:7

He is patient and trusts God for deliverance and salvation.

Promise of restoration 7:11-20

He promises a day in which Israel will be delivered from gentile dominion and be restored.

God will pardon them and reestablish them in the land and in fellowship with Himself.

Liberty from foreign domination 7:11-17

Forgiveness and mercy 7:18-20

How does he describe God? 18-20

God's punishment is always followed by His mercy.

In spite of God's continual demonstration of love, His people respond with injustice and unfaithfulness.

Therefore, He must judge His unfaithful and ungrateful people.

APPLICATION:

What does God want from His people today?

How do we demonstrate God's kind of justice?

What should our worship be like?