

MICAH - SHORT VERSION

Historical context. Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah (725-700B.C.), prophesied during the reign of three kings in Judah (Southern Kingdom): Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. He comes from Moresheth, a small rural town southwest of Jerusalem. His concerns are similar to those of Isaiah, Hosea and Amos, social justice and the coming Assyrian invasion. With burning eloquence, he attacks the rich exploiters of the poor, fraudulent merchants and judges, corrupt priests and prophets. Even though he lives in the south, he condemns abuses in both Samaria (capital of the Northern Kingdom) and Jerusalem. In his role as a prophet, he is like Jeremiah. He speaks out against prophets, who only say what the people want to hear and are not concerned about the well-being of the nation. Micah stands out as a lonely figure. Like Jeremiah, he is not successful in reaching the people, but trusts that God will vindicate him (7:1-10).

Theme and division of chapters. The Book of Micah bounces back and forth between threats and promises, doom and salvation. Micah threatens Israel and Judah with punishment and destruction if they do not repent of their sins of injustice. If they do repent, God will be merciful to them and will bless them. Micah sees the Assyrians as God's instrument punishing Israel for her sins. The book has two sets of threats and two sets of promises.

Part 1: Judgment of Israel and Judah (Chapters 1-3)

Part 2: Promises of salvation- A New Israel (Chapters 4-5)

Part 3: Threats (Chapters 6:1 to 7:7)

Part 4: Promises (Chapter 7:8 to 20)

Suggested texts to read

4:1-3- This text is identical to Isaiah 2:2-4, the text that speaks of beating swords into plough shares.

5:1-3 – We hear these verses during the Advent/Christmas season of our church year because they are seen as a reference to the coming of the Messiah.

6:3 – “O my people what have I done to you or how have I wearied you? Answer me” are words we hear as we pray the Stations of the Cross during Lent.