

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
2-21-18

Micah Chapter 1

Samaria and Israel to Be Punished - Verses 1-7

The word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah—the vision he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. ² Hear, you peoples, all of you, listen, earth and all who live in it, that the Sovereign LORD may bear witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple. Judgment Against Samaria and Jerusalem ³ Look! The LORD is coming from his dwelling place; he comes down and treads on the heights of the earth. ⁴ The mountains melt beneath him and the valleys split apart, like wax before the fire, like water rushing down a slope. ⁵ All this is because of Jacob's transgression, because of the sins of the people of Israel. What is Jacob's transgression? Is it not Samaria? What is Judah's high place? Is it not Jerusalem? ⁶ "Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of rubble, a place for planting vineyards. I will pour her stones into the valley and lay bare her foundations. ⁷ All her idols will be broken to pieces; all her temple gifts will be burned with fire; I will destroy all her images. Since she gathered her gifts from the wages of prostitutes, as the wages of prostitutes they will again be used."

1:1 Micah and Isaiah lived at the same time, about 750-680 B.C., and undoubtedly knew of each other. Micah directed his message mainly to Judah, the southern kingdom, but he also had some words for Israel, the northern kingdom. Judah was enjoying great prosperity at this time. Of the three kings mentioned, Jotham (750-732) and Hezekiah (715-686) had tried to follow God (2 Kings 15:32-38; 18-20), but Ahaz (735-715) was one of the most evil kings ever to reign in Judah (2 Kings 16). Micah's hometown, Moresheth, was a Judean village near Gath, on the border with Philistia.

1:3 "The heights of the earth" could simply mean "mountaintops," or it may refer to the pagan altars dedicated to idols (often called "high places"), usually located in elevated places (see also 1:5).

Although the 12 tribes of Israel had been united under David and Solomon, after Solomon's death, the kingdom had divided into two parts. Two of the tribes, Judah and Benjamin, stayed loyal to David's line and accepted Solomon's son as their king. They became the southern kingdom, also called Judah, with Jerusalem as their

capital city. The other 10 tribes became the northern kingdom, also called Israel, with Samaria as their capital city. The destruction of Samaria was literally fulfilled during Micah's lifetime, in 722 B.C. (2 Kings 17:1-18), just as he had predicted.

1:5 Two sins are identified in Micah's message—the perversion of worship (1:7; 3:5-7, 11; 5:12-13) and injustice toward others (2:1-2, 8-9; 3:2-3, 9-11; 7:2-6). Rampant in the capital cities, these sins infiltrated and infected the entire country.

Micah's Great Sadness - Verses 8-16

⁸ Because of this I will weep and wail; I will go about barefoot and naked. I will howl like a jackal and moan like an owl. ⁹ For Samaria's plague is incurable; it has spread to Judah. It has reached the very gate of my people, even to Jerusalem itself. ¹⁰ Tell it not in Gath; weep not at all. In Beth Ophrah roll in the dust. ¹¹ Pass by naked and in shame, you who live in Shaphir. Those who live in Zaanan will not come out. Beth Ezel is in mourning; it no longer protects you. ¹² Those who live in Maroth writhe in pain, waiting for relief, because disaster has come from the LORD, even to the gate of Jerusalem. ¹³ You who live in Lachish, harness fast horses to the chariot. You are where the sin of Daughter Zion began, for the transgressions of Israel were found in you. ¹⁴ Therefore you will give parting gifts to Moresheth Gath. The town of Akzib will prove deceptive to the kings of Israel. ¹⁵ I will bring a conqueror against you who live in Mareshah. The nobles of Israel will flee to Adullam. ¹⁶ Shave your head in mourning for the children in whom you delight; make yourself as bald as the vulture, for they will go from you into exile.

1:9 Samaria's sins were incurable, and God's judgment on the city had already begun. This sin was not like a gash in the skin, but more like a stab wound in a vital organ, causing an injury that would soon prove fatal. (Samaria was, in fact, destroyed early in Micah's ministry.) Tragically, Samaria's sin had influenced Jerusalem, and judgment would come to its very gates. This probably refers to Sennacherib's siege in 701 B.C. (see 2 Kings 18-19).

1:10-16 Micah declared God's judgment on city after city because of the people's sins. The Hebrew of 1:10-13 includes a number of clever wordplays. (See the text notes for additional details.) Micah bitterly denounced each town by using puns. For example, Shaphir sounds like the Hebrew word for "pleasant"; but Micah warned that things would soon become very unpleasant there. Zaanan sounds like the verb meaning "come out"; but with the arrival of besieging armies, they would soon not dare to come out at all. Maroth sounds like a word for "bitter"; Micah warns them that only bitterness awaits them. Read 1:11-12 aloud, substituting the word-play meaning for each city's name, and you will realize the effect of Micah's word choices. Not all

these cities can be identified now, but Lachish was on the border with Philistia and took the brunt of the Assyrian invasion.

1:13 The people of Lachish had influenced many to follow their evil example. They were "where the sin of Daughter Zion began." We often do the same when we sin. Regardless of whether you consider yourself a leader, your daily actions and words are observed by others who may choose to follow your example, whether you know it or not.

1:15 The terrain surrounding Adullam had numerous caves. Micah was warning that when the enemy approached, Judah's proud leaders would be forced to flee and hide in these caves. **1:16** Micah pictured the devastating sorrow of parents seeing their children taken away to be slaves in a distant land. This happened frequently in both Israel and Judah, most horribly when each nation was completely conquered—Israel in 722 B.C. and Judah in 586 B.C.