

# MICAH

**1**<sup>1</sup>THIS IS THE WORD OF THE LORD which came to Micah of Moresheth during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah; which he received in visions concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

## The rulers of Israel and Judah denounced

<sup>2</sup>Listen, you peoples, all together;  
attend, O earth and all who are in it,  
that the Lord GOD, the Lord from his holy temple,  
may bear witness against you.

<sup>3</sup>For look, the LORD is leaving his dwelling-place;  
down he comes and walks on the heights of the earth.

<sup>4</sup>Beneath him mountains dissolve  
like wax before the fire,  
valleys are torn open,  
as when torrents pour down the hill-side –

<sup>5</sup>and all for the crime of Jacob and the sin of Israel.  
What is the crime of Jacob? Is it not Samaria?  
What is the hill-shrine of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem?

<sup>6</sup>So I will make Samaria  
a heap of ruins in open country,  
a place for planting vines;  
I will pour her stones down into the valley  
and lay her foundations bare.

<sup>7</sup>All her carved figures shall be shattered,  
her images burnt one and all;  
I will make a waste heap of all her idols.  
She amassed them out of fees for harlotry,  
and a harlot's fee shall they become once more.

<sup>8</sup>Therefore I must howl and wail,  
go naked and distraught;  
I must howl like a wolf, mourn like a desert-owl.

<sup>9</sup>Her wound cannot be healed;  
for the stroke has bitten deep into Judah,  
it has fallen on the gate of my people,  
upon Jerusalem itself.

<sup>10</sup>Will you not weep your fill, weep your eyes out in Gath?  
In Beth-aphrah sprinkle yourselves with dust;

<sup>11</sup>take the road, you that dwell in Shaphir;  
have not the people of Zaanan gone out in shame from their city?  
Beth-ezel is a place of lamentation,  
she can lend you support no longer.

<sup>12</sup>The people of Maroth are greatly alarmed,  
for disaster has come down from the LORD

to the very gate of Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup>Harness the steeds to the chariot, O people of Lachish,  
for you first led the daughter of Zion into sin;  
to you must the crimes of Israel be traced.

<sup>14</sup>Let Moresheth-gath be given her dismissal.

Beth-achzib has [Beth-achzib has: *prob. rdg, Heb* The houses of Achzib  
have] disappointed [*Heb achzab*] the kings of Israel.

<sup>15</sup>And you too, O people of Mareshah,  
I will send others to take your place;  
and the glory of Israel shall hide in the cave of Adullam.

<sup>16</sup>Shave the hair from your head in mourning  
for the children of your delight;  
make yourself bald as a vulture,  
for they have left you and gone into exile.

**2**<sup>1</sup>Shame on those who lie in bed planning evil and wicked deeds  
and rise at daybreak to do them,  
knowing that they have the power!

<sup>2</sup>They covet land and take it by force;  
if they want a house they seize it;  
they rob a man of his home  
and steal every man's inheritance.

<sup>3</sup>Therefore these are the words of the LORD:

Listen, for this whole brood I am planning disaster,  
whose yoke you cannot shake from your necks  
and walk upright; it shall be your hour of disaster.

<sup>4</sup>On that day

they shall take up a poem about you  
and raise a lament thrice told,  
saying, 'We are utterly despoiled:

the land of the LORD's [the LORD's: *prob. rdg, Heb my*] people changes  
hands.

How shall a man have power [have power: *prob. rdg, Heb remove from me*]  
to restore our fields, now parcelled out [now parcelled out: *prob. rdg, Heb*  
he will parcel out]?'

<sup>5</sup>Therefore there shall be no one to assign to you  
any portion by lot in the LORD's assembly.

<sup>6</sup>How they rant! They may say, 'Do not rant';  
but this ranting is all their own,  
these insults are their [*prob. rdg, Heb his*] own invention.

<sup>7</sup>Can one ask, O house of Jacob,  
'Is the LORD's patience truly at an end?  
Are these his deeds?

Does not good come of the LORD's words?  
He is the upright man's best friend.'

<sup>8</sup>But you are no [But ... no: *prob. rdg, Heb But yesterday*] people for me,  
rising up as my enemy to my [*my: prob. rdg, Heb omitted*] face,

to strip the cloak from him that was safe [the cloak ... safe: *prob. rdg, Heb mantle, cloak*]

and take away the confidence of returning warriors,

<sup>9</sup>to drive the women of my people from their pleasant homes  
and rob the children of my glory for ever.

<sup>10</sup>Up and be gone; this is no resting-place for you,  
you that to defile yourselves would commit any mischief,  
mischief however cruel.

<sup>11</sup>If anyone had gone about in a spirit of falsehood and lies, saying, 'I will rant to you of wine and strong drink', his ranting would be what this people like.

<sup>12</sup>I will assemble you, the whole house of Jacob;  
I will gather together those that are left in Israel.

I will herd them like sheep in a fold,  
like a grazing flock which stampedes at the sight of a man.

<sup>13</sup>So their leader breaks out before them,  
and they all break through the gate and escape,  
and their king goes before them,  
and the LORD leads the way.

**3**<sup>1</sup>And I said:

Listen, you leaders of Jacob, rulers of Israel,  
should you not know what is right?

<sup>2</sup>You hate good and love evil,  
you flay men alive and tear the very flesh from their bones;

<sup>3</sup>you devour the flesh of my people,  
strip off their skin,  
splinter their bones;  
you shred them like flesh into a pot,  
like meat into a cauldron.

<sup>4</sup>Then they will call to the LORD, and he will give them no answer;  
when that time comes he will hide his face from them,  
so wicked are their deeds.

<sup>5</sup>These are the words of the LORD concerning the prophets who lead my people astray,  
who promise prosperity in return for a morsel of food, who proclaim a holy war against  
them if they put nothing into their mouths:

<sup>6</sup>Therefore night shall bring you no vision,  
darkness no divination;  
the sun shall go down on the prophets,  
the day itself shall be black above them.

<sup>7</sup>Seers and diviners alike shall blush for shame;  
they shall all put their hands over their mouths,  
because there is no answer from God.

<sup>8</sup>But I am full of strength [*prob. rdg, Heb adds the spirit of the LORD*], of  
justice and power,  
to denounce his crime to Jacob  
and his sin to Israel.

<sup>9</sup>Listen to this, leaders of Jacob,  
rulers of Israel,  
you who make justice hateful  
and wrest it from its straight course,  
<sup>10</sup>building Zion in bloodshed  
and Jerusalem in iniquity.  
<sup>11</sup>Her rulers sell justice,  
her priests give direction in return for a bribe,  
her prophets take money for their divination,  
and yet men rely on the LORD.  
'Is not the LORD among us?' they say;  
'then no disaster can befall us.'  
<sup>12</sup>Therefore, on your account  
Zion shall become a ploughed field, '  
Jerusalem a heap of ruins,  
and the temple hill rough heath.

## **A remnant restored in an age of peace**

<sup>4</sup><sup>1</sup>[*vv1-3: cp Isa. 2.2-4*] In days to come  
the mountain of the LORD's house  
shall be set over all other mountains,  
lifted high above the hills.  
Peoples shall come streaming to it,  
<sup>2</sup>and many nations shall come and say,  
'Come, let us climb up on to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob,  
that he may teach us his ways  
and we may walk in his paths.'  
For instruction issues from Zion,  
and out of Jerusalem comes the word of the LORD;  
<sup>3</sup>he will be judge between many peoples  
and arbiter among mighty nations afar.  
They shall beat their swords into mattocks  
and their spears into pruning-knives;  
nation shall not lift sword against nation  
nor ever again be trained for war,  
<sup>4</sup>and each man shall dwell under his own vine,  
under his own fig-tree, undisturbed.  
For the LORD of Hosts himself has spoken.

<sup>5</sup>All peoples may walk, each in the name of his god,  
but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God  
for ever and ever.

<sup>6</sup>On that day, says the LORD,  
I will gather those who are lost;  
I will assemble the exiles and I will strengthen the weaklings.

<sup>7</sup>I will preserve the lost as a remnant  
and turn the derelict into a mighty nation.  
The LORD shall be their king on Mount Zion  
now and for ever.

<sup>8</sup>And you, rocky bastion, hill of Zion's daughter,  
the promises to you shall be fulfilled;  
and your former sovereignty shall come again,  
the dominion of the daughter of Jerusalem.

<sup>9</sup>Why are you now filled with alarm?  
Have you no king?  
Have you no counsellor left,  
that you are seized with writhing like a woman in labour?

<sup>10</sup>Lie writhing on the ground like a woman in childbirth,  
O daughter of Zion;  
for now you must leave the city  
and camp in the open country;  
and so you will come to Babylon.  
There you shall be saved,  
there the LORD will deliver you from your enemies.

<sup>11</sup>But now many nations are massed against you;  
they say, 'Let her suffer outrage,  
let us gloat over Zion.'

<sup>12</sup>But they do not know the LORD's thoughts  
nor understand his purpose;  
for he has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing-floor.

<sup>13</sup>Start your threshing, daughter of Zion;  
for I will make your horns of iron,  
your hooves will I make of bronze,  
and you shall crush many peoples.  
You shall devote their ill-gotten gain to the LORD,  
their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

**5**<sup>1</sup>Get you behind your walls, you people of a walled city;  
the siege is pressed home against you:  
Israel's ruler shall be struck on the cheek with a rod.

<sup>2</sup>But you, Bethlehem in Ephrathah,  
small as you are to be among Judah's clans,  
out of you shall come forth a governor for Israel,  
one whose roots are far back in the past, in days gone by.

<sup>3</sup>Therefore only so long as a woman is in labour  
shall he give up Israel;  
and then those that survive of his race  
shall rejoin their brethren.

<sup>4</sup>He shall appear and be their shepherd  
in the strength of the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.  
And they shall continue, for now his greatness shall reach  
to the ends of the earth;

<sup>5</sup>and he shall be a man of peace.

When the Assyrian comes into our land,  
when he tramples our castles,  
we will raise against him seven men or eight  
to be shepherds and princes.

<sup>6</sup>They shall shepherd Assyria with the sword  
and the land of Nimrod with bare blades;  
they shall deliver us from the Assyrians  
when they come into our land,  
when they trample our frontiers.

<sup>7</sup>All that are left of Jacob, surrounded by many peoples,  
shall be like dew from the LORD,  
like copious showers on the grass,  
which do not wait for man's command  
or linger for any man's bidding.

<sup>8</sup>All that are left of Jacob among the nations,  
surrounded by many peoples,  
shall be like a lion among the beasts of the forest,  
like a young lion loose in a flock of sheep;  
as he prowls he will trample and tear them,  
with no rescuer in sight.

<sup>9</sup>Your hand shall be raised high over your foes,  
and all who hate you shall be destroyed.

<sup>10</sup>On that day, says the LORD,  
I will destroy all your horses among you  
and make away with your chariots.

<sup>11</sup>I will destroy the cities of your land  
and raze your fortresses.

<sup>12</sup>I will destroy all your sorcerers,  
and there shall be no more soothsayers among you.

<sup>13</sup>I will destroy your images and all the sacred pillars in your land;  
you shall no longer bow in reverence before things your own hands made.

<sup>14</sup>I will pull down the sacred poles in your land,  
and demolish your blood-spattered altars.

<sup>15</sup>In anger and fury will I take vengeance  
on all nations who disobey me.

## **Israel denounced for her people's sins**

**6**<sup>1</sup>Hear now what the LORD is saying:

Up, state your case to the mountains;  
let the hills hear your plea.

<sup>2</sup>Hear the LORD's case, you mountains,  
you everlasting pillars that bear up the earth;  
for the LORD has a case against his people,  
and will argue it with Israel.

<sup>3</sup>O my people, what have I done to you?  
Tell me how I have wearied you; answer me this.

<sup>4</sup>I brought you up from Egypt,  
I ransomed you from the land of slavery,  
I sent Moses and Aaron and Miriam to lead you.

<sup>5</sup>Remember, my people,  
what Balak king of Moab schemed against you,  
and how Balaam son of Beor answered him;  
consider the journey [*consider the journey: prob. rdg, Heb omitted*] from  
Shittim to Gilgal,  
in order that you may know the triumph of the LORD.

<sup>6</sup>What shall I bring when I approach the LORD?  
How shall I stoop before God on high?  
Am I to approach him with whole-offerings or yearling calves?

<sup>7</sup>Will the LORD accept thousands of rams  
or ten thousand rivers of oil?  
Shall I offer my eldest son for my own wrongdoing,  
my children for my own sin?

<sup>8</sup>God [*God: prob. rdg, Heb obscure*] has told you what is good;  
and what is it that the LORD asks of you?  
Only to act justly, to love loyalty,  
to walk wisely before your God.

<sup>9</sup>Hark, the LORD, the fear of whose name brings success,  
the LORD calls to the city.  
Listen, O tribe of Judah and citizens in assembly [*citizens in assembly: prob.  
rdg, Heb unintelligible*],

<sup>10</sup>can I overlook [*can I overlook: prob. rdg, Heb obscure*] the infamous false  
measure [*prob. rdg, Heb adds infamous treasures*]  
the accursed short bushel?

<sup>11</sup>Can I connive at false scales or a bag of light weights?

<sup>12</sup>Your rich men are steeped in violence,  
your townsmen are all liars,  
and their tongues frame deceit.

<sup>13</sup>But now I will inflict a signal punishment on you  
to lay you waste for your sins:

<sup>14</sup>you shall eat but not be satisfied,  
your food shall lie heavy on your stomach;  
you shall come to labour but not bring forth,  
and even if you bear a child.

I will give it to the sword;

<sup>15</sup>you shall sow but not reap,  
you shall press the olives but not use the oil,  
you shall tread the grapes but not drink the wine.

<sup>16</sup>You have kept the precepts of Omri;  
what the house of Ahab did, you have done;  
you have followed all their ways.

So I will lay you utterly waste;  
the nations shall jeer at your citizens,  
and their insults you shall bear.

## Disappointment turned to hope

<sup>7</sup>Alas! I am now like the last gatherings of summer fruit,  
the last gleanings of the vintage,  
when there are no grapes left to eat,  
none of those early figs that I love.

<sup>2</sup>Loyal men have vanished from the earth,  
there is not one upright man.  
All lie in wait to do murder,  
each man drives his own kinsman like a hunter into the net.

<sup>3</sup>They are bent eagerly on wrongdoing,  
the officer who presents the requests [*the requests: prob. rdg, Heb omitted*],  
the judge who gives judgement [*who gives judgement: prob. rdg, Heb omitted*] for reward,  
and the nobleman who harps on his desires.

<sup>4</sup>Thus their goodness is twisted [*twisted: prob. rdg, Heb obscure*] like rank weeds  
and their honesty like briars [*their honesty like briars: prob. rdg, Heb obscure*].

As soon as thine eye sees, thy punishment falls;  
at that moment bewilderment seizes them.

<sup>5</sup>Trust no neighbour, put no confidence in your closest friend;  
seal your lips even from the wife of your bosom.

<sup>6</sup>For son maligns father,  
daughter rebels against mother,  
daughter-in-law against mother-in-law,  
and a man's enemies are his own household.

<sup>7</sup>But I will look for the LORD,  
I will wait for God my saviour; my God will hear me.

<sup>8</sup>O my enemies, do not exult over me;  
I have fallen, but shall rise again;  
though I dwell in darkness, the LORD is my light.

<sup>9</sup>I will bear the anger of the LORD, for I have sinned against him,  
until he takes up my cause and gives judgement for me,  
until he brings me out into light, and I see his justice.

<sup>10</sup>Then may my enemies see and be abashed,  
those who said to me, 'Where is he, the LORD your God?'  
Then shall they be trampled like mud in the streets;  
I shall gloat over them;

<sup>11</sup>that will be a day for rebuilding your walls,  
a day when your frontiers will be extended,

<sup>12</sup>a day when men will come seeking you  
from Assyria to Egypt

and from Egypt to the Euphrates,  
from every sea and every mountain;  
<sup>13</sup>and the earth with its inhabitants shall be waste.  
This shall be the fruit of their deeds.

<sup>14</sup>Shepherd thy people with thy crook,  
the flock that is thy very own, I  
that dwells by itself on the heath and in the meadows;  
let them graze in Bashan and Gilead, as in days gone by.

<sup>15</sup>Show us [*prob. rdg, Heb I will show him*] miracles as in the days when  
thou camest out of Egypt;

<sup>16</sup>let the nations see and be taken aback for all their might,  
let them keep their mouths shut,  
make their ears deaf,

<sup>17</sup>let them lick the dust like snakes,  
like creatures that crawl upon the ground.  
Let them come trembling and fearful from their strongholds,  
let them fear thee, O LORD our God.

<sup>18</sup>Who is a god like thee? Thou takest away guilt,  
thou passest over the sin of the remnant of thy own people,  
thou dost not let thy anger rage for ever  
but delightest in love that will not change.

<sup>19</sup>Once more thou wilt show us tender affection  
and wash out our guilt,  
casting all our sins into the depths of the sea.

<sup>20</sup>Thou wilt show good faith to Jacob,  
unchanging love to Abraham,  
as thou didst swear to our fathers in days gone by.