

Introduction to Micah

Where is it in the Bible?

Micah is the thirty-third book in the Christian Old Testament and is found between Jonah and Nahum. It is the sixth book of the Minor Prophets; the term “minor” refers to the length of the books, not to their importance. In the Hebrew Bible, the minor prophets follow Ezekiel at the end of the Prophets section and are grouped together in the Book of the Twelve in the same order as found in Christian Bibles

Who wrote it?

This book is attributed to Micah, an eighth-century prophet from Moresheth, a small town about twenty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem. Although this prophet was probably the source of most of the material in this book, it is likely that there were later additions. For example, Micah 4:10 seems to have been updated by a postexilic scribe to include the Babylonian exile and restoration. Scholars cannot agree on how much material was added, but it is probable that many of the messages of hope come from a later time.

When was it written?

The earliest parts of the book date to a time just prior to the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C. Other parts were added during or after the Babylonian exile.

What is it about?

Micah's first oracle is directed to Israel; the rest focus on Judah. Words about coming judgment are mixed with promises of forgiveness and restoration afterwards.

How is it structured?

- I. Superscription (1:1)
- II. Judgment on Israel and Judah (1:2-2:13)
 - a. Judgment Against Israel (1:2-7)
 - b. Judgment Against Judah (1:8-16)
 - c. Future Punishment (2:1-5)
 - d. Preachers of False Hope (2:6-10)
 - e. A Word of Hope (2:12-13)
- III. The Present and the Future in Jerusalem (3:1-5:15)
 - a. Wicked Rulers and Prophets Denounced (3:1-12)
 - b. Restoration Promised (4:1-7)
 - c. Restoration Completed (4:8-5:15)

- IV. From Judgment to Hope (6:1-7:20)
 - a. The Case Against Israel (6:1-8)
 - b. Coming Judgment (6:9-16)
 - c. Lament Over Society (7:1-7)
 - d. Psalm of Hope (7:8-20)

What are some things to look for?

- **Familiar Passages:** Although the New Testament alludes to Micah over ten times, the book would be almost forgotten if it were not for its three most famous passages:
 - The picture of restoration in Micah 4:1-4;
 - The promise of a savior to be born in Bethlehem in Micah 5:2-5a;
 - The description of what it means to be faithful to God in Micah 6:6-8.
- **Responsibilities of Leaders:** Micah condemns the wealthy politicians, priests, and merchants for false worship and for their unjust treatment of the poor and disadvantaged and advocates for economic justice. The book asserts that the behavior of the leaders affects the entire nation.