

Bible studies on the Minor Prophets

Lesson #1 Micah 1:1–16

Vivienne Stacey, Paphos, 1 May 2003

Reading: Read the whole book of Micah and Micah 1:1–16 in particular

Questions

1. What have you learned about the prophet Micah from reading his book?

Micah 1:1–2 – Introduction

2. How do we know that Isaiah started prophesying before Micah?
3. Why does Micah not mention the kings of the northern kingdom of Israel? See Hosea 8:4.
4. What other prophets start their prophecies with the same words: 'The word of the Lord came to...? See Micah 3:8.
5. How does Micah make clear that God is the Lord of the world?

Micah 1:3–7 – Judgment against Samaria and Judaea.

6. What do Samaria and Jerusalem signify?

Micah 1:8–16 – Micah's lament over the fall of Judah.

7. Identify 7 towns known today under other names. They form a circle with a radius of 14 km around Micah's home town.
8. Name Micah's home town.
9. Give 3 examples of word-plays of the names of the towns and their predicted doom.
10. What proof is there that Micah preached judgment with love?
11. What echoes are there of the experiences of David? See 2 Samuel 1:20, 1 Samuel 22:1; 2 Samuel 23:13. Is there a Messianic reference in Micah 1:15?

Bible studies on the Minor Prophets, Lesson #2, Micah 2:1-14

Vivienne Stacey, Paphos, 8 May 2003

Reading: Micah 2:1-14

Questions

Micah 2:1-5 – Corrupt land barons sentenced to exile

1. Augustine divided mankind into two cities 'formed by two loves: the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God, the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self'. (St. Augustine, *The City of God*, 14.28). How similar was the corruption of Micah's day to the corruption of our day? Give examples.
2. What were the results of divine judgment in Micah's time? In what ways do we see the Lord, the righteous judge, working in our times? What is the connection between land grabbing and Matthew 26:52?

Micah 2:6-11 – Polemic against false prophets

3. What kind of prophet did the people want to hear? What are the marks of the false prophets? How did corrupt leaders manipulate gullible people and unsuitable religious leaders? What sins are evident today in the use of propaganda and spin doctors?
4. What were the marks of the true prophets like Amos, Isaiah and Micah? Isaiah 8:16. Note how God called each of these prophets individually. Read 2 Peter 1:19-21. Who calls for turning back to God and repentance in our day?

Micah 2:12-14 – A remnant survives in Zion

5. What are the 3 stages of the release from Jerusalem?

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Lesson #3 Micah 3:1–5:15

Vivienne Stacey, Paphos, 15 May 2003

Reading: Micah 3:1–12 Leaders and prophets rebuked

The following 3 oracles of judgment are of equal length (4 verses) and share a common form: an address, on to which is grated an accusation introduced by 'who' (verses 2,5 and 9) and a concluding sentence introduced by 'then' (verse 4) or 'therefore' (verses 6 and 12).

Questions

1. What 4 groups are accused?
2. How do these groups justify themselves theologically and thus feel immune from divine retribution?
3. What progression can we trace in verses 4, 6–7 and 12?

Micah 3:1–4 – Shepherds turned cannibals

4. What is so shocking about these leaders?

Micah 3:5–8 – Prophets who preach for profit

5. What makes 'This is what the Lord says' (verse 5) together with Micah's autobiography (verse 8) such a powerful combination?
6. In what ways is the disciple like his Master?

Micah 3:9–12 – Jerusalem to be leveled

7. 'Instead of being a theocracy under God's law, Israel has become an oligarchy under tyrants.' (David W Baker, T Desmond Alexander, Bruce K Waltke, *Obadiah, Jonah and Micah* – Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1988, p. 165) Who were the tyrants? Which of the ten commandments did they break?
8. Why was the judgment on Jerusalem postponed? How? When was the judgment fulfilled? Read Jeremiah 26:7–19. Micah 3:12 is the only quotation verbatim from one OT by another.

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Lesson #4 Micah 4:1–13

Vivienne Stacey, Paphos, 22 May 2003

Reading: Micah 4:1–13

Questions:

Micah 4:1–5 – Zion to be exalted

1. List contrasts between the old Jerusalem and the New Jerusalem.
2. What did the prophet see, hear and reflect upon?

Micah 4:6–7 – The lame become strong

3. What are the 3 things the Lord will do for afflicted Israel.
4. Discuss how, by reason of their nature they (the remnant) are a supernatural and invincible reality within world history (see Micah 5:7–9). Note 1 Peter 2:9–10 – the remnant of the Old Testament and the Church of the New Testament.

Micah 4:8 – Jerusalem's dominion restored

5. In what ways is this oracle a hinge between Micah 4:6–7 and 9–13?

Micah 4:9–13 – God's secret strategy

6. 'For the remnant, as with all God's children, the punishment is not penal but remedial. For them, suffering in the "already" is part of the salvation in the "not yet". By contrast, God has so arranged history that what appears to the enemy as victory in battle leads to defeat in the war.' (Baker, Alexander, Waltke on Micah, p. 178). Discuss this.
7. Micah 4:10. Why must the old Israel pass through trial to become the new Israel?
8. Micah 4:12. How does this verse make clear that the one 'wonderful in counsel' (Isaiah 28:29; Jeremiah 32:19) has a plan of salvation even in calamity? (Matthew 16:18).

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Lesson #5 Micah 5:1–15

Vivienne Stacey, Paphos, 5 June 2003

Reading: Micah 5:1–15

Questions:

Micah 5:1–6 – The unique and future king

1. Micah 5:1 should start with 'now' indicating the present. To what siege and to what ruler does Micah probably refer?
2. Micah 5:2. Where in the New Testament is this prophecy quoted? From where will the Lord launch the Messianic age – 'a new beginning out of a famous heritage'?
3. Micah 5:3. What is the meaning of this verse?
4. Micah 5:4–5a. What qualities of the Messiah are listed here?
5. Micah 5:5b–6. How will Messiah conquer through his people?

Micah 5:7–9 – A fragrance of life, a smell of death

6. This passage moves on from the Messiah to the Remnant. In what way is the remnant a source of salvation to some and an instrument of destruction to others? Read 2 Corinthians 2:14–16.
7. Is Matthew 28:17–20 as relevant to the church today as it was to the early church?
8. Is the church the remnant?

Micah 5:10–15 – The Lord protects his kingdom

9. In what 2 main ways will the Lord protect his kingdom?
10. What is the difference between remedial and penal punishment?

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Lesson #6 Micah 6:1–16

Vivienne Stacey, Paphos, 12 June 2003

Reading: Micah 6:1–16

Questions:

Micah 6:1–8 – The Lord's case against Israel

1. In this trial who was the plaintiff, the messenger on behalf of the plaintiff, the witnesses and the defendant?
2. What is the significance of the 2 questions that the Lord asks?
3. What past events demonstrated the love and mercy of the Lord?
4. How has Israel turned a covenant into a contract?
5. What is the relationship of the moral law and ritual?

Micah 6:9–16 – Curses fulfilled

6. What links this verse with Micah 6:1 with 6:9?
7. What are the sins of the city and market-place?
8. What are the punishments?
9. What were some of the statutes of Omri and the practices of Ahab's house?
10. What were the results of these statutes and practices? In what way is Romans 6:23 relevant?

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Lesson #7 Micah 7:1–20

Vivienne Stacey, Paphos, 19 June 2003

Reading: Micah 7:1–20

Questions:

Micah 7:1–7 – The ship of state breaks apart

1. Discuss the meaning of the vineyard; see also Isaiah 5:1–7 and John 15:1–16.
2. Who were the watchmen mentioned in Micah 7:4?
3. For Micah 7:6, see Matthew 10:35–36 and discuss.
4. For Micah 7:7, 'watch' see verse 4: 'watchmen'. What are believers to do in evil times? See Luke 21:28. Why are they not depressed?

Micah 7:8–13 – Israel will rise

5. What 2 views of history are contained in Micah 7:8–10?
6. In what 3 successive steps was the 'eschatological day' fulfilled?
7. Some people of all nations will come. What does this signify? See John 17:2 and Acts 3:25.

Micah 7:14–20 – Prayer and praise

8. How is the picture of God as the shepherd king developed in these verses?
9. What does the name Micah mean?
10. Why will there always be a remnant?
11. What impression has the book of Micah made on you?