

Tuesday Evening Bible Study
Series #8: The Minor Prophets
Session #12: Micah, Chapters 3-5
Tuesday, April 4, 2017

Summary of Micah

Micah is one of the eighth-century prophets—a contemporary of Isaiah and a little later than Hosea and Amos. Like these other prophets, Micah speaks against false worship and for social justice. He proclaims harsh judgments against his own people (the nation of Judah) and is particularly offended by the leaders in business, government, and religion. Micah comes from a small town outside Jerusalem and addresses the centers of power from the perspective of an outsider, particularly as he describes the coming Messiah. He even boldly predicts the destruction of the holy city of Jerusalem. The book also provides words of hope beyond the judgment. Although a native of the Southern Kingdom, Micah did not espouse the David-Zion tradition, with its belief in the inviolability of Jerusalem. Instead, he favored the Moses-Sinai tradition of the Northern Kingdom, with its emphasis on the exodus and Moses.

Major Theological Themes

- 1) Acquiring God's favor.
- 2) Chosen people.
- 3) Context for hope.
- 4) False prophets.
- 5) God's control of all events.
- 6) Justice of God.
- 7) Leaders have special responsibility.

Outline of Micah

- A. Title (1:1)
- B. First Cycle: Judgment and Restoration of Israel and Judah (1:2 – 2:13)
 1. Judgment on Israel and Judah (1:2 – 2:11)
 - a) The predicted destruction (1:2-7)
 - b) Lamentation over the destruction (1:8-16)
 - c) Woe to oppressive land-grabbers (2:1-5)
 - d) Condemnation of the wealthy wicked and their false prophets (2:6-11)
 2. Restoration of a Remnant (2:12-13)
- C. Second Cycle: Indictment of Judah's Leaders, but Future Hope for God's People (Chapters 3-5)
 1. Indictment of Judah's Leaders (Chapter 3)
 - a) Guilty civil leaders (3:1-4)
 - b) False prophets of peace and Micah's response (3:5-8)
 - c) Corrupt leaders and Zion's fall (3:9-12)
 2. Future Hope for God's People (Chapters 4-5)
 - a) The coming kingdom (4:1-5)
 - b) Restoration of a remnant and Zion (4:6-8)

- c) From distress to deliverance (4:9-10)**
- d) From siege to victory (4:11-13)**
- e) From helpless ruler to ideal king (5:1-4)**
- f) The ideal king delivers his people (5:5-6)**
- g) The remnant among the nations (5:7-9)**
- h) Obliteration of military might and pagan worship (5:10-15)**

D. Third Cycle: God's Charges against His People and the Ultimate Triumph of His Kingdom (Chapters 6-7)

1. God's Charges against His People (6:1 – 7:7)
 - a) A divine covenant lawsuit (6:1-8)
 - b) Further charges and the sentence (6:9-16)
 - c) A lament over a decadent society (7:1-7)
2. The Ultimate Triumph of God's Kingdom (7:8-20)
 - a) An expression of trust (7:8-10)
 - b) A promise of restoration (7:11-13)
 - c) A prayer, the Lord's answer, and the response (7:14-17)
 - d) A hymn of praise to God (7:18-20)

Notes for Chapters 3-5

- Cannibals = corrupt judges. Here Micah describes the ruthless injustice of Jerusalem's public officials in rendering legal decisions.
- 3:7 – "Seers...cover their lips" = sign of mourning. Mercenary prophets who tell people what they want to hear.
- Jerusalem and the Temple shall be destroyed because of its corrupt leaders.
- 4:1-8 describes the ideal age, depicted in 3 poems
 - See Isaiah 2:2-4
- "swords into ploughshares" = transition from war to peace as soldiers become farmers.
- 5:2-5a is a messianic poem.
 - See Matthew 2:6 and John 7:40-43
 - Ephrathah refers to both the name of a clan and a region in Judah. The region includes Bethlehem.
- Nimrod = a legendary warrior and king of Assyria
- 5:5-10 – demolition before destruction
- 5:10-15 – As part of the messianic restoration, Israel will be stripped of all those things that have caused alienation from the Lord, including military armament, sorcery, and idolatrous worship.
- 5:14 – "sacred poles" = wooden cult symbols of the Canaanite mother goddess Asherah.

Resources

Notes from The New Oxford Annotated Bible (NRSV), 2010

Notes from HarperCollins Study Bible (NRSV), 1989

Notes from The CEB Women's Bible, 2016

