

## Micah

1. Introduction – Micah, one of the minor prophets, and a contemporary of Isaiah, ministered during the tumultuous times prior to the Babylonian exile. He announced God’s judgment on injustice and made God’s demands clear. He provided a glimpse of hope by prophesying a remnant and the reign of a king to come out of Bethlehem. The structure of Micah is difficult to follow. The book of Micah is best understood as an anthology of Micah’s oracles, not necessarily arranged chronologically. However, he predicts the overthrow of Samaria and Sennacherib’s invasion in the early part of the book and foresees the exile in Babylon and the restoration to the land near the conclusion.
2. Author and date – The book is clearly attributed to Micah of Moresheth. He is mentioned in Jeremiah (26:18-19) as having prophesied the same thing that Jeremiah was prophesying in his day. This reference indicates that Micah’s ministry was prominent enough to be known and was probably therefore already written down by Jeremiah’s time. It is fashionable among critical scholars to attribute only the first three chapters to Micah and the remainder to a later author/editor. However, there is no compelling reason to deny Micah full authorship if one accepts the possibility of predictive prophecy. Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah (latter half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.). He is said to have ministered during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (1:1).
3. Background and purpose – The military success of Uzziah had begun a period of economic development that had created a distinct merchant class. This class had begun to exercise economic and political power over the agrarian class. In addition, the Assyrians had risen to power and had already destroyed and deported the northern kingdom of Israel. They also invaded Judah multiple times. In this context, Micah delivered a message of God’s judgment against injustice and superficial religion. He states his purpose in 3:8: “But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.”
4. Major themes and ideas:
  - a. The judgment: God was angry with his people because of their sin. Their sin concerned both their worship as well as their social interaction and injustice. God would bring the Assyrians and the Babylonians to destroy them because they had broken covenant with their God.
  - b. The deliverer: In two places (2:13 and 5:2-9) Micah speaks of a king who would deliver his people. He would come out of Bethlehem, which indicates a king from the line of David but distinct from the line of kings of that day, who ruled from Jerusalem. Micah’s prophecy anticipates the coming of the Messiah, the ideal Davidic king, who delivers, rules over, and protects his people.
  - c. What the Lord requires: Probably the most well known passage from Micah is 6:8:

*He has told you, O man, what is good;  
and what does the LORD require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God?*

This is a beautiful call to God’s people, directing them how to repent of their sins and renew their covenant relationship with the Lord. Obedience is better than sacrifice. Humility is better than prideful independence.

### Reference:

*An Introduction to the Old Testament*, R. B. Dillard and T. Longman III, Zondervan, 1994.  
*A Survey of the Old Testament*, Hill and Walton, Zondervan, 2000.