

Timeline / Overview

Micah ministered to Samaria and Jerusalem (1:1) in the 8th century BC during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in Judah (740 to 700 BC). This would have made him a contemporary of Isaiah. He lived in the town of Moresheth (1:1) in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, approximately 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem. Micah is also mentioned by Jeremiah as one who prophesied during the reign of Hezekiah (Jer 26:18).

Micah warned that God would bring Assyria to take out Samaria (1:6) and ravage Jerusalem. He also warned that Babylon would bring an even greater destruction (4:10). During Micah's ministry, the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrian Empire in 722 BC, and the southern kingdom of Judah came close to the same fate in 701 BC (2 Kgs 17–20).

Most of this book explores Micah's accusations and warnings of God's judgment on Israel. But Micah also had a message of hope that countered these warnings about the restoration God would bring on the other side of His judgment.

Accusations and Warnings – Part 1 (Chapters 1-2)

The book opens with a poetic description of God appearing over Israel to bring His judgment on for 500 years of rebellion (1:2-4). Micah predicts the destruction of Samaria (1:6-8) that will extend to the gates of Jerusalem (1:9). Micah goes on to name many towns and cities that are culprits of this rebellion (1:10-15). God's coming for them...but why?

Micah says it's because they have become wealthy through theft and greed and are oppressing the poor (2:1-5; 1 Kgs 21). It's also because Israel's prophets are corrupt (2:6-11).

Promise of Hope (2:12-13) – This section ends with a poem about how God is like a shepherd who's going to rescue and regather His flock, which is the remnant of His people. He's going to bring them back to good pasture and become their king once more.

Accusations and Warnings – Part 2 (Chapters 3-5)

In the second section of accusations, Micah describes even more how Israel's leaders (3:1-4) and prophets (3:5-8) have together committed grave injustice. *Micah even sharply contrasts himself, the true prophet, with the false prophet (3:8)*. They run the land through bribery, they bend justice to favor the wealthy, and the poor are deprived of their land, their security, and their hope.(3:9-11). God's judgment is going to take out Jerusalem and its temple (Zion) which will be reduced to ruins (3:12).

Promise of Hope (4-5) – Again, Micah follows the accusations and warnings with a message of hope. In these chapters the vanquishing of sin and evil, the coming of the Messiah, the establishment of God's kingdom, and the ultimate fate of the wicked are graphically foretold.

In chapter 4, the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ and the going forth of the word of the Lord from the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:1-4) are dramatically described. The future judgment of Israel for their idolatry by Babylon (4:10) is foretold more than a century before the event.

Chapter 5 includes the glorious prophecy of the birth of the Christ in Bethlehem (5:2) and the triumph of the kingdom of heaven over all enemies, concluding with another reference to the vengeance and wrath of God executed upon "the nations that did not obey" (5:15)

Accusations and Warnings – Part 3 (Chapters 6-7)

In Chapter 6, the prophet uses legal language to picture a courtroom scene. In a sense, this chapter represents God's lawsuit against Israel. Here Micah offers his famous words that summarize what it means for Israel to follow their God:

Micah 6:8 (ESV) - *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 exactly what Israel has **not** been doing so they will come to ruin. Micah exposes the unjust economic practices of Israel's leaders and how it's destroying them (6:9-16). The beginning of Chapter 7 present an individual psalm of lament from Micah about Israel (7:1-7).

Promise of Hope (7:8-20) - Israel is personified as an individual who is sitting alone in shame and defeat. It's a clear image of Israel's destruction and exile. This individual is watching for God's mercy and he begs God to listen and forgive. But why? Why should God listen to and forgive this faithless and rebellious people? The prophet offers two reasons:

1. God's Character

Micah 7:18-19 (ESV) - *Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.*

He knows that God's mercy is more powerful than His anger or His judgment.

2. God's Promises

Micah 7:20 (ESV) - *You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.*

These are the final words of the book and they're an allusion to God's covenant promises to Abraham and his family in Genesis 12, 15, 17, that all nations would find God's blessings through Abraham's family. To become a blessing to the nations, Israel must first be faithful to their God. This explains the back and forth between judgment and hope in the book of Micah. If God's going to bless the nations through Israel, then he must confront and judge the evil among His people. His judgment is what leads to hope, because God's covenant love and promises are more powerful than human evil. His ultimate purpose is not to destroy, it's to save and redeem.

Teacher's Notes

Handout notes are adapted from The Bible Project

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFEUEcylwLc>

Text

Micah 1 (ESV)

¹ The word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

² Hear, you peoples, all of you;
pay attention, O earth, and all that is in it,
and let the Lord God be a witness against you,
the Lord from his holy temple.

³ For behold, the LORD is coming out of his place,
and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth.

⁴ And the mountains will melt under him,
and the valleys will split open,
like wax before the fire,
like waters poured down a steep place.

⁵ All this is for the transgression of Jacob
and for the sins of the house of Israel.

What is the transgression of Jacob?

Is it not Samaria?

And what is the high place of Judah?

Is it not Jerusalem?

⁶ Therefore I will make Samaria a heap in the open country,
a place for planting vineyards,
and I will pour down her stones into the valley
and uncover her foundations.

⁷ All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces,
all her wages shall be burned with fire,
and all her idols I will lay waste,
for from the fee of a prostitute she gathered them,
and to the fee of a prostitute they shall return.

⁸ For this I will lament and wail;
I will go stripped and naked;
I will make lamentation like the jackals,
and mourning like the ostriches.

⁹ For her wound is incurable,
and it has come to Judah;

it has reached to the gate of my people,
to Jerusalem.

¹⁰ Tell it not in Gath;
weep not at all;
in Beth-le-aphrah
roll yourselves in the dust.

¹¹ Pass on your way,
inhabitants of Shaphir,
in nakedness and shame;
the inhabitants of Zaanan
do not come out;
the lamentation of Beth-ezel
shall take away from you its standing place.

¹² For the inhabitants of Maroth
wait anxiously for good,
because disaster has come down from the LORD
to the gate of Jerusalem.

¹³ Harness the steeds to the chariots,
inhabitants of Lachish;
it was the beginning of sin
to the daughter of Zion,
for in you were found
the transgressions of Israel.

¹⁴ Therefore you shall give parting gifts
to Moresheth-gath;
the houses of Achzib shall be a deceitful thing
to the kings of Israel.

¹⁵ I will again bring a conqueror to you,
inhabitants of Mareshah;
the glory of Israel
shall come to Adullam.

¹⁶ Make yourselves bald and cut off your hair,
for the children of your delight;
make yourselves as bald as the eagle,
for they shall go from you into exile.

Micah 2 (ESV)

¹ Woe to those who devise wickedness
and work evil on their beds!
When the morning dawns, they perform it,
because it is in the power of their hand.

² They covet fields and seize them,
and houses, and take them away;

they oppress a man and his house,
a man and his inheritance.

³ Therefore thus says the LORD:
behold, against this family I am devising disaster,
from which you cannot remove your necks,
and you shall not walk haughtily,
for it will be a time of disaster.

⁴ In that day they shall take up a taunt song against you
and moan bitterly,
and say, "We are utterly ruined;
he changes the portion of my people;
how he removes it from me!

To an apostate he allots our fields."

⁵ Therefore you will have none to cast the line by lot
in the assembly of the LORD.

⁶ "Do not preach"—thus they preach—
"one should not preach of such things;
disgrace will not overtake us."

⁷ Should this be said, O house of Jacob?
Has the LORD grown impatient?
Are these his deeds?

Do not my words do good
to him who walks uprightly?

⁸ But lately my people have risen up as an enemy;
you strip the rich robe from those who pass by trustingly
with no thought of war.

⁹ The women of my people you drive out
from their delightful houses;
from their young children you take away
my splendor forever.

¹⁰ Arise and go,
for this is no place to rest,
because of uncleanness that destroys
with a grievous destruction.

¹¹ If a man should go about and utter wind and lies,
saying, "I will preach to you of wine and strong drink,"
he would be the preacher for this people!

¹² I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob;
I will gather the remnant of Israel;

I will set them together
like sheep in a fold,
like a flock in its pasture,
a noisy multitude of men.

¹³ He who opens the breach goes up before them;
they break through and pass the gate,
going out by it.
Their king passes on before them,
the LORD at their head.

Micah 3 (ESV)

¹ And I said:

Hear, you heads of Jacob
and rulers of the house of Israel!

Is it not for you to know justice?—

² you who hate the good and love the evil,
who tear the skin from off my people
and their flesh from off their bones,

³ who eat the flesh of my people,
and flay their skin from off them,
and break their bones in pieces
and chop them up like meat in a pot,
like flesh in a cauldron.

⁴ Then they will cry to the LORD,
but he will not answer them;
he will hide his face from them at that time,
because they have made their deeds evil.

⁵ Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets
who lead my people astray,
who cry “Peace”
when they have something to eat,
but declare war against him
who puts nothing into their mouths.

⁶ Therefore it shall be night to you, without vision,
and darkness to you, without divination.
The sun shall go down on the prophets,
and the day shall be black over them;

⁷ the seers shall be disgraced,
and the diviners put to shame;
they shall all cover their lips,
for there is no answer from God.

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.

⁹ Hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob
and rulers of the house of Israel,
who detest justice
and make crooked all that is straight,
¹⁰ who build Zion with blood
and Jerusalem with iniquity.
¹¹ Its heads give judgment for a bribe;
its priests teach for a price;
its prophets practice divination for money;
yet they lean on the LORD and say,
“Is not the LORD in the midst of us?
No disaster shall come upon us.”
¹² Therefore because of you
Zion shall be plowed as a field;
Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins,
and the mountain of the house a wooded height.

Micah 4 (ESV)

¹ It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the LORD
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and it shall be lifted up above the hills;
and peoples shall flow to it,
² and many nations shall come, and say:
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
³ He shall judge between many peoples,
and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore;
⁴ but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree,
and no one shall make them afraid,
for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.
⁵ For all the peoples walk
each in the name of its god,
but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God
forever and ever.
⁶ In that day, declares the LORD,

I will assemble the lame
and gather those who have been driven away
and those whom I have afflicted;
⁷ and the lame I will make the remnant,
and those who were cast off, a strong nation;
and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion
from this time forth and forevermore.

⁸ And you, O tower of the flock,
hill of the daughter of Zion,
to you shall it come,
the former dominion shall come,
kingship for the daughter of Jerusalem.

⁹ Now why do you cry aloud?
Is there no king in you?
Has your counselor perished,
that pain seized you like a woman in labor?

¹⁰ Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion,
like a woman in labor,
for now you shall go out from the city
and dwell in the open country;
you shall go to Babylon.
There you shall be rescued;
there the LORD will redeem you
from the hand of your enemies.

¹¹ Now many nations
are assembled against you,
saying, "Let her be defiled,
and let our eyes gaze upon Zion."

¹² But they do not know
the thoughts of the LORD;
they do not understand his plan,
that he has gathered them as sheaves to the threshing floor.

¹³ Arise and thresh,
O daughter of Zion,
for I will make your horn iron,
and I will make your hoofs bronze;
you shall beat in pieces many peoples;
and shall devote their gain to the LORD,
their wealth to the Lord of the whole earth.

Micah 5 (ESV)

- ¹ Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops;
siege is laid against us;
with a rod they strike the judge of Israel
on the cheek.
- ² But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old,
from ancient days.
- ³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has given birth;
then the rest of his brothers shall return
to the people of Israel.
- ⁴ And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth.
- ⁵ And he shall be their peace.

When the Assyrian comes into our land
and treads in our palaces,
then we will raise against him seven shepherds
and eight princes of men;

⁶ they shall shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword,
and the land of Nimrod at its entrances;
and he shall deliver us from the Assyrian
when he comes into our land
and treads within our border.

⁷ Then the remnant of Jacob shall be
in the midst of many peoples
like dew from the LORD,
like showers on the grass,
which delay not for a man
nor wait for the children of man.

⁸ And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations,
in the midst of many peoples,
like a lion among the beasts of the forest,
like a young lion among the flocks of sheep,
which, when it goes through, treads down
and tears in pieces, and there is none to deliver.

⁹ Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries,
and all your enemies shall be cut off.

- ¹⁰ And in that day, declares the LORD,
I will cut off your horses from among you
and will destroy your chariots;
- ¹¹ and I will cut off the cities of your land
and throw down all your strongholds;
- ¹² and I will cut off sorceries from your hand,
and you shall have no more tellers of fortunes;
- ¹³ and I will cut off your carved images
and your pillars from among you,
and you shall bow down no more
to the work of your hands;
- ¹⁴ and I will root out your Asherah images from among you
and destroy your cities.
- ¹⁵ And in anger and wrath I will execute vengeance
on the nations that did not obey.

Micah 6 (ESV)

- ¹ Hear what the LORD says:
Arise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.
- ² Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the LORD,
and you enduring foundations of the earth,
for the LORD has an indictment against his people,
and he will contend with Israel.
- ³ “O my people, what have I done to you?
How have I wearied you? Answer me!
- ⁴ For I brought you up from the land of Egypt
and redeemed you from the house of slavery,
and I sent before you Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam.
- ⁵ O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised,
and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD.”
- ⁶ “With what shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
- ⁷ Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”
- 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?
⁹ The voice of the LORD cries to the city—
and it is sound wisdom to fear your name:
“Hear of the rod and of him who appointed it!
¹⁰ Can I forget any longer the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked,
and the scant measure that is accursed?
¹¹ Shall I acquit the man with wicked scales
and with a bag of deceitful weights?
¹² Your rich men are full of violence;
your inhabitants speak lies,
and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.
¹³ Therefore I strike you with a grievous blow,
making you desolate because of your sins.
¹⁴ You shall eat, but not be satisfied,
and there shall be hunger within you;
you shall put away, but not preserve,
and what you preserve I will give to the sword.
¹⁵ You shall sow, but not reap;
you shall tread olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil;
you shall tread grapes, but not drink wine.
¹⁶ For you have kept the statutes of Omri,
and all the works of the house of Ahab;
and you have walked in their counsels,
that I may make you a desolation, and your inhabitants a hissing;
so you shall bear the scorn of my people.”

Micah 7 (ESV)

¹ Woe is me! For I have become
as when the summer fruit has been gathered,
as when the grapes have been gleaned:
there is no cluster to eat,
no first-ripe fig that my soul desires.
² The godly has perished from the earth,
and there is no one upright among mankind;
they all lie in wait for blood,
and each hunts the other with a net.
³ Their hands are on what is evil, to do it well;
the prince and the judge ask for a bribe,
and the great man utters the evil desire of his soul;
thus they weave it together.
⁴ The best of them is like a brier,
the most upright of them a thorn hedge.

The day of your watchmen, of your punishment, has come;
now their confusion is at hand.

⁵ Put no trust in a neighbor;
have no confidence in a friend;
guard the doors of your mouth
from her who lies in your arms;

⁶ for the son treats the father with contempt,
the daughter rises up against her mother,
the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
a man's enemies are the men of his own house.

⁷ But as for me, I will look to the LORD;
I will wait for the God of my salvation;
my God will hear me.

⁸ Rejoice not over me, O my enemy;
when I fall, I shall rise;
when I sit in darkness,
the LORD will be a light to me.

⁹ I will bear the indignation of the LORD
because I have sinned against him,
until he pleads my cause
and executes judgment for me.
He will bring me out to the light;
I shall look upon his vindication.

¹⁰ Then my enemy will see,
and shame will cover her who said to me,
"Where is the LORD your God?"
My eyes will look upon her;
now she will be trampled down
like the mire of the streets.

¹¹ A day for the building of your walls!
In that day the boundary shall be far extended.

¹² In that day they will come to you,
from Assyria and the cities of Egypt,
and from Egypt to the River,
from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain.

¹³ But the earth will be desolate
because of its inhabitants,
for the fruit of their deeds.

¹⁴ Shepherd your people with your staff,
the flock of your inheritance,
who dwell alone in a forest

in the midst of a garden land;
let them graze in Bashan and Gilead
as in the days of old.

¹⁵ As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt,
I will show them marvelous things.

¹⁶ The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might;
they shall lay their hands on their mouths;
their ears shall be deaf;

¹⁷ they shall lick the dust like a serpent,
like the crawling things of the earth;
they shall come trembling out of their strongholds;
they shall turn in dread to the LORD our God,
and they shall be in fear of you.

¹⁸ Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity
and passing over transgression
for the remnant of his inheritance?

He does not retain his anger forever,
because he delights in steadfast love.

¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us;
he will tread our iniquities underfoot.

You will cast all our sins
into the depths of the sea.

²⁰ You will show faithfulness to Jacob
and steadfast love to Abraham,
as you have sworn to our fathers
from the days of old.

Timeline / Overview

Jeremiah 26:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ “Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and said to all the people of Judah: ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts,

“ ‘Zion shall be plowed as a field;
Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins,
and the mountain of the house a wooded height.’

2 Kings 17 (ESV)

¹ In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea the son of Elah began to reign in Samaria over Israel, and he reigned nine years. ² And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, yet not as the kings of Israel who were before him. ³ Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria. And Hoshea became his vassal and paid him tribute. ⁴ But the king of Assyria found treachery in Hoshea, for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and offered no tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up and bound him in prison. ⁵ Then the king of Assyria invaded all the land and came to Samaria, and for three years he besieged it.

⁶ In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria, and he carried the Israelites away to Assyria and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

⁷ And this occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods ⁸ and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had practiced. ⁹ And the people of Israel did secretly against the LORD their God things that were not right. They built for themselves high places in all their towns, from watchtower to fortified city. ¹⁰ They set up for themselves pillars and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree, ¹¹ and there they made offerings on all the high places, as the nations did whom the LORD carried away before them. And they did wicked things, provoking the LORD to anger, ¹² and they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, “You shall not do this.” ¹³ Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets.”

¹⁴ But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the LORD their God. ¹⁵ They despised his statutes and his covenant that he made with their fathers and the warnings that he gave them. They went after false idols and became false, and they followed the nations that were around them, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them that they should not do like them. ¹⁶ And they abandoned all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made for themselves metal images of two calves; and they made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. ¹⁷ And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. ¹⁸ Therefore the LORD was

very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight. None was left but the tribe of Judah only.

¹⁹ Judah also did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the customs that Israel had introduced. ²⁰ And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

²¹ When he had torn Israel from the house of David, they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. And Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD and made them commit great sin. ²² The people of Israel walked in all the sins that Jeroboam did. They did not depart from them, ²³ until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had spoken by all his servants the prophets. So Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day.

²⁴ And the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the people of Israel. And they took possession of Samaria and lived in its cities. ²⁵ And at the beginning of their dwelling there, they did not fear the LORD. Therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them. ²⁶ So the king of Assyria was told, “The nations that you have carried away and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the law of the god of the land. Therefore he has sent lions among them, and behold, they are killing them, because they do not know the law of the god of the land.” ²⁷ Then the king of Assyria commanded, “Send there one of the priests whom you carried away from there, and let him go and dwell there and teach them the law of the god of the land.” ²⁸ So one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and lived in Bethel and taught them how they should fear the LORD.

²⁹ But every nation still made gods of its own and put them in the shrines of the high places that the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities in which they lived. ³⁰ The men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, ³¹ and the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. ³² They also feared the LORD and appointed from among themselves all sorts of people as priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. ³³ So they feared the LORD but also served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away.

³⁴ To this day they do according to the former manner. They do not fear the LORD, and they do not follow the statutes or the rules or the law or the commandment that the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel. ³⁵ The LORD made a covenant with them and commanded them, “You shall not fear other gods or bow yourselves to them or serve them or sacrifice to them, ³⁶ but you shall fear the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt with great power and with an outstretched arm. You shall bow yourselves to him, and to him you shall sacrifice. ³⁷ And the statutes and the rules and the law and the commandment that he wrote for you, you shall always be careful to do. You shall not fear other gods, ³⁸ and you shall not forget the covenant that I have made with you. You shall not fear other gods, ³⁹ but you shall fear the LORD your God, and he will deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.” ⁴⁰ However, they would not listen, but they did according to their former manner.

⁴¹ So these nations feared the LORD and also served their carved images. Their children did likewise, and their children’s children—as their fathers did, so they do to this day.

2 Kings 18 (ESV)

¹ In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. ² He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. ³ And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done. ⁴ He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan). ⁵ He trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him. ⁶ For he held fast to the LORD. He did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments that the LORD commanded Moses. ⁷ And the LORD was with him; wherever he went out, he prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not serve him. ⁸ He struck down the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city.

⁹ In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it, ¹⁰ and at the end of three years he took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. ¹¹ The king of Assyria carried the Israelites away to Assyria and put them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, ¹² because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God but transgressed his covenant, even all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. They neither listened nor obeyed.

¹³ In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. ¹⁴ And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; withdraw from me. Whatever you impose on me I will bear." And the king of Assyria required of Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. ¹⁵ And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house. ¹⁶ At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD and from the doorposts that Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid and gave it to the king of Assyria. ¹⁷ And the king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rab-saris, and the Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. When they arrived, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is on the highway to the Washer's Field. ¹⁸ And when they called for the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder.

¹⁹ And the Rabshakeh said to them, "Say to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you rest this trust of yours? ²⁰ Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? In whom do you now trust, that you have rebelled against me? ²¹ Behold, you are trusting now in Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. ²² But if you say to me, "We trust in the LORD our God," is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and to Jerusalem, "You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem"? ²³ Come now, make a wager with my master the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them. ²⁴ How then can you repulse a single captain among the least of my master's servants, when you trust in Egypt for chariots and for

horsemen? ²⁵ Moreover, is it without the LORD that I have come up against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, “Go up against this land and destroy it.” ’ ’ ”

²⁶ Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, and Shebnah, and Joah, said to the Rabshakeh, “Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it. Do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall.” ²⁷ But the Rabshakeh said to them, “Has my master sent me to speak these words to your master and to you, and not to the men sitting on the wall, who are doomed with you to eat their own dung and to drink their own urine?”

²⁸ Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out in a loud voice in the language of Judah: “Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! ²⁹ Thus says the king: ‘Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you out of my hand. ³⁰ Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD by saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.’ ³¹ Do not listen to Hezekiah, for thus says the king of Assyria: ‘Make your peace with me and come out to me. Then each one of you will eat of his own vine, and each one of his own fig tree, and each one of you will drink the water of his own cistern, ³² until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey, that you may live, and not die. And do not listen to Hezekiah when he misleads you by saying, “The LORD will deliver us.” ³³ Has any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? ³⁴ Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? ³⁵ Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?’ ”

³⁶ But the people were silent and answered him not a word, for the king’s command was, “Do not answer him.” ³⁷ Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn and told him the words of the Rabshakeh.

2 Kings 19 (ESV)

¹ As soon as King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of the LORD. ² And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and the senior priests, covered with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz. ³ They said to him, “Thus says Hezekiah, This day is a day of distress, of rebuke, and of disgrace; children have come to the point of birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth. ⁴ It may be that the LORD your God heard all the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke the words that the LORD your God has heard; therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.” ⁵ When the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, ⁶ Isaiah said to them, “Say to your master, ‘Thus says the LORD: Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have reviled me. ⁷ Behold, I will put a spirit in him, so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land, and I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.’ ”

⁸ The Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah, for he heard that the king had left Lachish. ⁹ Now the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Cush, “Behold, he has set out to fight against you.” So he sent messengers again to Hezekiah, saying, ¹⁰ “Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah king of Judah: ‘Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you

by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. ¹¹ Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction. And shall you be delivered? ¹² Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations that my fathers destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezep, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? ¹³ Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?’ ”

¹⁴ Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD and spread it before the LORD. ¹⁵ And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said: “O LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. ¹⁶ Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. ¹⁷ Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands ¹⁸ and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. ¹⁹ So now, O LORD our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O LORD, are God alone.”

²⁰ Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Your prayer to me about Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. ²¹ This is the word that the LORD has spoken concerning him:

“She despises you, she scorns you—
the virgin daughter of Zion;
she wags her head behind you—
the daughter of Jerusalem.

²² “Whom have you mocked and reviled?
Against whom have you raised your voice
and lifted your eyes to the heights?
Against the Holy One of Israel!

²³ By your messengers you have mocked the Lord,
and you have said, ‘With my many chariots
I have gone up the heights of the mountains,
to the far recesses of Lebanon;
I felled its tallest cedars,
its choicest cypresses;
I entered its farthest lodging place,
its most fruitful forest.

²⁴ I dug wells
and drank foreign waters,
and I dried up with the sole of my foot
all the streams of Egypt.’

²⁵ “Have you not heard
that I determined it long ago?

I planned from days of old
 what now I bring to pass,
that you should turn fortified cities
 into heaps of ruins,
²⁶ while their inhabitants, shorn of strength,
 are dismayed and confounded,
and have become like plants of the field
 and like tender grass,
like grass on the housetops,
 blighted before it is grown.

²⁷ “But I know your sitting down
 and your going out and coming in,
 and your raging against me.
²⁸ Because you have raged against me
 and your complacency has come into my ears,
I will put my hook in your nose
 and my bit in your mouth,
and I will turn you back on the way
 by which you came.

²⁹ “And this shall be the sign for you: this year eat what grows of itself, and in the second year what springs of the same. Then in the third year sow and reap and plant vineyards, and eat their fruit. ³⁰ And the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. ³¹ For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the LORD will do this.

³² “Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there, or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. ³³ By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the LORD. ³⁴ For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.”

³⁵ And that night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. ³⁶ Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went home and lived at Nineveh. ³⁷ And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword and escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

2 Kings 20 (ESV)

¹ In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover.’ ” ² Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying, ³ “Now, O LORD, please remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

⁴ And before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him: ⁵ “Turn back, and say to Hezekiah the leader of my people, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD, ⁶ and I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city for my own sake and for my servant David’s sake.” ⁷ And Isaiah said, “Bring a cake of figs. And let them take and lay it on the boil, that he may recover.”

⁸ And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD on the third day?” ⁹ And Isaiah said, “This shall be the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he has promised: shall the shadow go forward ten steps, or go back ten steps?” ¹⁰ And Hezekiah answered, “It is an easy thing for the shadow to lengthen ten steps. Rather let the shadow go back ten steps.” ¹¹ And Isaiah the prophet called to the LORD, and he brought the shadow back ten steps, by which it had gone down on the steps of Ahaz.

¹² At that time Merodach-baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. ¹³ And Hezekiah welcomed them, and he showed them all his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, his armory, all that was found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them. ¹⁴ Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah, and said to him, “What did these men say? And from where did they come to you?” And Hezekiah said, “They have come from a far country, from Babylon.” ¹⁵ He said, “What have they seen in your house?” And Hezekiah answered, “They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them.”

¹⁶ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD: ¹⁷ Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the LORD. ¹⁸ And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.” ¹⁹ Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD that you have spoken is good.” For he thought, “Why not, if there will be peace and security in my days?”

²⁰ The rest of the deeds of Hezekiah and all his might and how he made the pool and the conduit and brought water into the city, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ²¹ And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

Accusations and Warnings – Part 1 (Chapters 1-2)

1 Kings 21 (ESV)

¹ Now Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard in Jezreel, beside the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. ² And after this Ahab said to Naboth, “Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near my house, and I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money.” ³ But Naboth said to Ahab, “The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.” ⁴ And Ahab went into his house vexed and sullen because of what Naboth the Jezreelite had said to him, for he had said, “I will

not give you the inheritance of my fathers.” And he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and would eat no food.

⁵ But Jezebel his wife came to him and said to him, “Why is your spirit so vexed that you eat no food?” ⁶ And he said to her, “Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, ‘Give me your vineyard for money, or else, if it please you, I will give you another vineyard for it.’ And he answered, ‘I will not give you my vineyard.’ ” ⁷ And Jezebel his wife said to him, “Do you now govern Israel? Arise and eat bread and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.”

⁸ So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name and sealed them with his seal, and she sent the letters to the elders and the leaders who lived with Naboth in his city. ⁹ And she wrote in the letters, “Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth at the head of the people. ¹⁰ And set two worthless men opposite him, and let them bring a charge against him, saying, ‘You have cursed God and the king.’ Then take him out and stone him to death.” ¹¹ And the men of his city, the elders and the leaders who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them. As it was written in the letters that she had sent to them, ¹² they proclaimed a fast and set Naboth at the head of the people. ¹³ And the two worthless men came in and sat opposite him. And the worthless men brought a charge against Naboth in the presence of the people, saying, “Naboth cursed God and the king.” So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones. ¹⁴ Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, “Naboth has been stoned; he is dead.”

¹⁵ As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jezebel said to Ahab, “Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money, for Naboth is not alive, but dead.” ¹⁶ And as soon as Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

¹⁷ Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ¹⁸ “Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone to take possession. ¹⁹ And you shall say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Have you killed and also taken possession?” ’ And you shall say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD: “In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your own blood.” ’ ”

²⁰ Ahab said to Elijah, “Have you found me, O my enemy?” He answered, “I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do what is evil in the sight of the LORD. ²¹ Behold, I will bring disaster upon you. I will utterly burn you up, and will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free, in Israel. ²² And I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the anger to which you have provoked me, and because you have made Israel to sin. ²³ And of Jezebel the LORD also said, ‘The dogs shall eat Jezebel within the walls of Jezreel.’ ²⁴ Anyone belonging to Ahab who dies in the city the dogs shall eat, and anyone of his who dies in the open country the birds of the heavens shall eat.”

²⁵ (There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the LORD like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife incited. ²⁶ He acted very abominably in going after idols, as the Amorites had done, whom the LORD cast out before the people of Israel.)

²⁷ And when Ahab heard those words, he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his flesh and fasted and lay in sackcloth and went about dejectedly. ²⁸ And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ²⁹ “Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the disaster in his days; but in his son’s days I will bring the disaster upon his house.”

Accusations and Warnings – Part 2 (Chapters 3-5)

Promise of Hope (4-5)

Revelation 21:1–4 (ESV)

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

Accusations and Warnings – Part 3 (Chapters 6-7)

Promise of Hope (7:8-20)

God’s Promises

Genesis 12 (ESV)

¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸ From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. ⁹ And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

¹⁰ Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹ When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, “I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, ¹² and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife.’ Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. ¹³ Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake.” ¹⁴ When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. ¹⁵ And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house. ¹⁶ And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

¹⁷ But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife. ¹⁸ So Pharaoh called Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? ¹⁹ Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her for my

wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go.”²⁰ And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.

Genesis 15 (ESV)

¹ After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”² But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”³ And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.”⁴ And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.”⁵ And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”⁶ And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

⁷ And he said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.”⁸ But he said, “O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?”⁹ He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”¹⁰ And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half.¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him.¹³ Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.¹⁴ But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age.¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

¹⁷ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.¹⁸ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites,²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.”

Genesis 17 (ESV)

¹ When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless,² that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.”³ Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him,⁴ “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.⁵ No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.⁷ And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.⁸ And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”

⁹ And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰ This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹² He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, ¹³ both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

¹⁵ And God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶ I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before you!” ¹⁹ God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. ²⁰ As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. ²¹ But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year.”

²² When he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. ²³ Then Abraham took Ishmael his son and all those born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham’s house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. ²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁵ And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁶ That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. ²⁷ And all the men of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

Introduction to Micah

Micah has been called a “miniature Isaiah” because of its similarities to that book. Both prophets spoke to the same audience from the same city during roughly the same historical period: Jerusalem in the eighth century BC. During Micah’s ministry, the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrian Empire (722 BC), and the southern kingdom of Judah came close to the same fate in 701 BC (see 2 Kgs 17–20). According to Micah, who prophesied to both kingdoms, the reason for these attacks was the abuse of prosperity by God’s people. He gives both warnings and oracles of hope—looking forward to a day of judgment leading to peace (Mic 4:2–5).

Background

Micah was from Judah and prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Mic 1:1; ca. 740–700 BC). Jeremiah 26:18 also mentions the prophet Micah: About 100 years after Micah, Jeremiah records that Micah of Moresheth prophesied during Hezekiah’s time. It seems that Micah’s hometown, also called Moresheth-Gath, was located about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem—an area through which Assyrian forces often traveled (Mic 1:1, 14). Therefore, Micah may have been an eyewitness to Assyria’s invasion of Judah.

The biblical account of Assyria’s siege of Jerusalem states that Yahweh killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers while they slept just outside the city (2 Kgs 19:35–36; 2 Chr 32:21–21). Consequently, the Assyrian king Sennacherib and his army were forced to retreat. An inscription found in Sennacherib’s palace admits the defeat, saying that Hezekiah “did not submit to my yoke.” By the end of Hezekiah’s reign, Assyria’s successor—the Babylonian Empire—was gaining power (Mic 4:10; 2 Kgs 20:12–21). Micah views Assyria and Babylon as instruments of divine judgment for the unfaithfulness of God’s people. He focuses his prophecies on his own people, condemning their idolatry, oppression of the poor, and greed (Mic 1:7; 2:1–2; 3:11).

Structure

Although Micah predicts the fall of Samaria (the capital of Israel at the time; Mic 1:6) at the beginning of the book and the Babylonian captivity near the end (Mic 7:8–9), most of the material is not arranged chronologically. Instead, the book is organized around three major prophetic oracles, each opening with a call to listen for (or hear) the word of Yahweh (Mic 1:2; 3:1; 6:1). The first oracle (1:2–2:13) announces Yahweh’s judgment on Israel and Judah—particularly on their selfish leaders. The second oracle contrasts the ungodly leaders in Jerusalem (Mic 3:1–12) and the future Messiah (Mic 4:1–5:15). Micah 4–5 offers hope that Yahweh will bring about a time of peace and prosperity. The third oracle begins with an accusation (Mic 6:1–16) and a lament (Mic 7:1–7). Judah is accused of acting in an ungodly way, like Israel, the northern kingdom. The book concludes with a promise of forgiveness and future restoration (Mic 7:8–20).

Outline

- Judgment is coming (Mic 1:1–2:13)
- Restoration follows judgment (Mic 3:1–5:15)
- Charge against Israel and promise of salvation (Mic 6:1–7:20)

Themes

The two main themes of Micah are God's judgment against idolatry and injustice, and hope that God's people will return to Him and be restored. Micah warns the people of Judah that if they behave as the northern kingdom of Israel did, they will face the same kind of divine judgment that befell Israel (Mic 1:5; 3:1; 6:16). But Micah 4–5 speaks of forgiveness and hope. Micah proclaims that this salvation will emerge through a ruler from Bethlehem; Micah boldly claims this ruler will shepherd the people of Israel and judge between people and nations (Mic 5:1–6). This prophecy ultimately points to Jesus (Matt 2:1–12; compare Luke 2:1–20).

The book of Micah is a call to repent and authentically worship Yahweh. Worship is not an activity that can be tacked on a life of self-absorption; it is a total reorienting of our lives around God. Instead of acting like Israel's selfish leaders (Mic 3:1–12), we should model what He truly desires: justice, mercy, and humility (Mic 6:8). Although people continue to walk in the name of their own gods, Micah tells us that we should live differently: We must walk in the name of our God, Yahweh (Mic 4:5).¹

¹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.