

Micah

Of the 8th Century prophets, Hosea, Amos, Micah and Isaiah it is the prophet Micah who is the best understood but the most underestimated. In recent years, however, much has been done in re-evaluating this prophecy in the light of increased understanding of Assyria and its relationship to the people of Israel and Judah.

The prophecy is declared to have taken place during the reign of Uzziah (767 - 739 BCE). Assyria was on the rise and moving toward the direction of Israel and Judah. Jotham, Uzziah's successor's reign began with the vigorous warfare of Tiglath-pileser III whose warriors took Damascus, Israel (722 BCE) and deported people from the Northern Kingdom. Hezekiah, king of Judah headed an anti-Assyrian coalition and Judah paid a fine to Assyria while also losing some of its territory to the Philistines.

This was a period of economic revolution. It was a time in which there was great importance placed on the possession of property which resulted in a strong materialism, complacency toward religion as well as a disintegration of personal and spiritual values. Even the religious leaders of the day reflected the social attitudes of the time.

Nothing is known of Micah's personal life nor of his call to become a prophet, but he felt himself to be God's spokesman in the social and religious scene. He saw Judah on the brink of disaster because the nation had abandoned the divinely ordained standards in favor of self interest and neglect of those who were needy. Micah is passionate and forthright, an orator who attacks the social evils of the day. It is assumed that he died of natural causes, thus not being numbered among the martyrs.

The book attributes Micah's prophetic ministry to the second half of the 8th Century BCE.

The text of Micah is generally in a good state of preservation, the best of the 8th Century prophets. There had been some rather major questions about the authorship of the book about one and a half centuries ago but serious scholars these days have changed their thinking. These days we understand that the book was written and from time to time interpolations were added by later editors and scholars. In Micah these were relatively few. However, scholars feel that 2:12-13 is an interpolation by a different hand and from a different time. A major question also arises concerning 4:1-4 which also appears in Isaiah 2:2-4 with slight textual changes. There are 4 major possibilities: 1. Isaiah composed the oracle and Micah quoted it. 2. Micah composed it and Isaiah quoted it. 3. Both are quoting from an earlier composition which has not been discovered. 4. It is a later composition inserted into the work of both prophets. Other possible interpolations by a writer(s) other than Micah are found in 4:6 -8; 9:8 - 20. (Consult a good commentary for help in understanding the reasoning of scholars with respect to these interpolations into the text of Micah.)

The fact of possible insertions into the message of Micah does not minimize the message but becomes a fascinating basis for scholarly research by those whose interest follows that direction.

Portions of Micah are found in the Dead Sea Scrolls: 1QpMic and 4QpMic, but these provide little help with the text of the book. The LXX has a more valuable role in the establishment of the text.

Moresbeth, also written Moresbith, is present day Marissa. The location was not a significant one, though it is mentioned in Joshua 15:44 and II Chronicles 14:16 when it is the location of a battle, and the home of a man named Eliezer in II Chronicles 20:37. It is located in the south west part of Palestine as a part of the Shephelah, between the coastal plain and the central highlands. This was the traditional border between Judah and the Philistine country.

Micah was 4th in the line of great prophets in the early manuscripts, with Amos, Hosea and Isaiah. These formed a quartet of major characters who produced the golden age of prophecy during the last half of the 8th Century BCE. Of these Amos raised and sold sheep. Hosea was a prosperous farmer from Israel, Isaiah an aristocrat, reared in the court of Jerusalem and Micah, who was a small town artisan.

The earliest possible dating would be 737 - 687 BCE. Internal evidence is of little help in dating the book. The latest date possible is just prior to 701 BCE. Nothing can be proven.

In the English canon Micah is the 6th among the twelve minor prophets. In the LXX canon it is in the 3rd position. While Micah is included in The Twelve, which has been called the Minor Prophets, there is nothing minor about Micah's prophecy.

Micah

<CHAPTER 1>

I The background to Micah's prophecies 1:1 - 4

A Introductory heading 1:1

¹ The Lord revealed a message to Micah ¹ of Moresheth ² during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. ³ The message was revealed ⁴ to him concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. ⁵

B An eschatological Psalm 1:2 - 4

² Listen, you nations! All of you!

Be attentive, O world and all its population!

Let the Lord God testify against you

from his holy temple!

³ Look! The Lord is leaving his dwelling place,

and is coming down to walk ⁶ on the mountain tops.

⁴ The mountains ⁷ will dissolve beneath him,

and the valleys will split apart (*or, melt away*)

like wax that is too near ⁸ the fire;

like waters pouring down a steep hillside. ⁹

II Discourses on the Assyrian crisis 1:5 - 16

A The wailing prophet 1:5 - 9 ¹⁰

⁵ All this will take place because of the rebellion of Jacob, ¹¹

and for the sinfulness of the people of ¹² Israel. ¹³

What ¹⁴ is the rebellion of Jacob?

Surely it is Samaria itself!

1 The name means "Who is like the Lord?"

2 The city is called Moresheth-gath in 1:14. A town half way between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean coast, now possibly Tel ej-Judaidah (Tel Gaded). The name means "possession of Gath."

3 Jotham reigned ca. 740 - 736 BCE. The name means "The Lord is perfect." Ahaz reigned ca. 736 - 716 BCE. The name means "He has grasped." Hezekiah reigned ca. 716 - 687 BCE. The name means "The Lord strengthens." Judah is a name for the Southern Kingdom. The name means "Let God be praised."

4 The Hebrew word *chtsh*, literally is "see." Thus a revelation or a wider perception of divine revelation.

5 Samaria had become a part of the Northern Kingdom. The name means "watch tower." Jerusalem was the capital of the Southern Kingdom. The name means "possessor of peace."

6 Hebrew: *dm* Omitted by Kittel. LXX, Vulgate & Dead Sea Scrolls have "and tread."

7 Is "the mountains" the subject of 3b and 4a?

8 Literally: "from before" *mppny*, implying a threat.

9 "steep" *nwrđ* Some scholars read "as a drinking trough" based on an Arabic root word which is very similar.

10 Some scholars feel that the rest of chapter 1 should be in prose. Others feel only a portion of the chapter is prose. In this translation it is looked upon entirely as poetry.

11 The name Jacob means "supplanter."

12 Literally: "house of."

13 The name means: "God strives."

14 Hebrew: *mi* "who."

What is the sinfulness of the nation ¹⁵
Surely it is Jerusalem!

6 "Because of this Samaria will be a pile of ruins ¹⁶ in the open country; ¹⁷
a place for planting vineyards,
and I will cause her stones to roll down into the valley
and expose ¹⁸ her foundations.

7 All of her idols will be smashed to pieces ¹⁹
and the proceeds of her temple prostitutes ²⁰ will be destroyed by fire,
for they were amassed ²¹ from the earnings of the temple prostitutes,
and these earnings will again be used for the same purpose.
(*or, these were obtained through the fees paid to temple prostitutes,
and they will again be used as fees for temple prostitutes.*)" ²²

8 For this reason ²³ I will moan and wail;
I will go about barefoot and naked;
I will howl like jackals,
and screech as shrilly as the ostriches. ²⁴
9 The nation (*of Samaria*) will not recover (*or, be healed*) from its wound, ²⁵
and a similar thing will occur in Judah
(*or, and it will also extend to Judah*).
It has reached the gate ²⁶ of my people;
namely Jerusalem.

B The alarm 1:10 - 16 ²⁷

Gath

10 Do not tell ²⁸ the enemies in Gath, ²⁹

15 Literally: "houses." So: LXX: (καὶ δια ἀμαρτιαν), & Targums. Syriac & Hebrew have "what are the high places" twmB apparently a gloss which appears in the KJV and MT.

16 Literally: "a field." LXX: εἰς οὐροφυλακτον.

17 Some scholars would translate "the field" and consider the last half of the line, "the city." Hebrew: hdfh which would be difficult to translate as "the city."

18 Hebrew: *anllh*.

19 There is a play on words here since Samaria and the Hebrew word for "to be smashed" are virtually the same.

20 So: G. R. Driver.

21 So: MT & LXX.

22 Temple prostitutes received fees from the men who used their services. These were not necessarily coins but material goods, to aid their lives. After all: coins would not burn. Some scholars feel this verse is an interpolation on idolatry, coming from post-exilic times.

23 Which reason? The destruction of Samaria or the coming destruction of Judah and Jerusalem?

24 Hebrew unclear. The KJV has "dragons." "Owls" has no justification. S. R. Driver affirms: "eagle owl."

25 MT: plural. So: LXX, Syriac & Vulgate.

26 So: literally. The market place was just inside the gate, as the hub of the community. As a result some scholars translate: "market place."

27 Some scholars feel the remainder of the chapter should be prose. Note the names of the cities mentioned in verses 10 - 15 are in the left margin. There are puns in the verses 10 - 15. An attempt is made to convey this, though in English this is difficult. Some times the pun results from similar pronunciation in Hebrew. The meaning of verses 10 - 15 is unclear. Apparently the reference is directed to cities surrounding Micah's home territory.

28 Gath sounds like the Hebrew word for "tell." Syriac misread the word *hhgydw*, translating "rejoice." LXX & Dead Sea Scrolls translate: "boast."

29 The name means "wine press."

<u>Bethel-apphrah</u> ³¹	Do not let them know that your tears flow (<i>like wine</i>). ³⁰
<u>Shaphir</u> ³³	Bethel-apphrah: you will grovel in the dust! ³²
	11 Go into exile, ³⁴
	naked and humiliated,
	O population of Shaphir.
<u>Zaanan</u> ³⁵	Population of Zaanan,
	do not come out of the city. ³⁶
<u>Bathezel</u> ³⁷	Bethezel is wailing,
	for it will be taken far away from its supporters. ³⁸
<u>Maroth</u> ³⁹	12 The population of Maroth
	is in anguish as it awaits its good fortune
	because misfortune ⁴⁰ has been personally ⁴¹ sent down by the Lord,
	even as far as the gate of Jerusalem.
<u>Lachish</u> ⁴²	13 Harness ⁴³ the war horses to their chariots,
	O population of Lachish, ⁴⁴
	you were the one who started ⁴⁵ the sins of the daughter of Zion,
	for Israel's rebellious ways are found in you.
<u>Moresbeth-gath</u> ⁴⁶	14 Because of your actions a dowry ⁴⁷ must be bestowed on Moresbeth-gath.
<u>Beth-achzib</u> ⁴⁸	The houses of Beth-achzib will be a disappointment ⁴⁹
	to the kings of Israel.
<u>Mareshah</u> ⁵⁰	15 I will cause you to be re-conquered, ⁵¹
	O population of Mareshah.

30 So your enemies do not gloat.

31 Or: Beth-leapphrah. So: BHS. The Vulgate, Targums & Theodotian read Beth-apphrah. The "l" is omitted. The name means "town of dust."

32 A sign of despair. LXX: "weep not in Acco." Acco is modern Acre, a sea port 8 miles north of Mount Carmel. Acco seems too distant from Micah's territory to be a suitable translation. These communities are all in the general vicinity of Micah's home. Cf. note 27, pg. 80. "Grovel" in Hebrew sounds like "Philistines" in Hebrew.

33 The name means "beautiful" or "pleasant." The site location is unknown.

34 "for yourselves" is an odd addition by the MT.

35 The name means "rich in flocks." Cf. Joshua 15:3

36 Zaanan sounds in Hebrew like "come out." Two Hebrew consonants in the name Zaanan (*there are generally three consonants in a Hebrew root word*) are also in the Hebrew word for "come out."

37 The name means "a place near." The location of the site is unknown.

38 Hebrew uncertain. It could possibly mean "standing." Possibly the reference is to a protective wall that will be taken from it.

39 The name means "bitter fountains." It is possibly the same place as in Joshua 15:59.

40 The sense is that of "calamity" in Hebrew.

41 Hebrew: *mat*.

42 The name means "height."

43 A hapax legomenon.

44 The play on words is with the words "Lachish" and "chariots."

45 Possibly it could be translated: "the main."

46 The name means: "possession of Gath." Possibly a town near Philistine Gath.

47 Possibly "parting gifts." Hebrew: *mat*.

48 The name means "a lie" or "a deception."

49 Literally: "a deceitful thing." The Hebrew word has one vowel that is different from the word Achzib.

50 The name means "summit."

51 The word "conquer" sounds like Mareshah in Hebrew.

Adullam⁵²

The nobility of Israel
will hide in the cave of Adullam.⁵³
16 Make yourselves bold. Go! Shave off your hair,⁵⁴
(*as you mourn*) for the children you dote on;
make yourselves as bald as a vulture (*or, eagle*);⁵⁵
since they will be deported from you into exile.⁵⁶

<CHAPTER 2>⁵⁷

III Prophecies of ethical concern 2:1 - 3:12

A The Jerusalem men of wealth 2:1 - 10

Micah

1 "Alas⁵⁸ for those who lie awake to devise wickedness
and plot⁵⁹ evil while lying in bed,⁶⁰
and then carry it out at daybreak,⁶¹
using the strength of their hands.
2 They covet (*or, desire*) cultivated land and seize it;
along with houses, just demanding them.
They defraud⁶² a man and his family (*or, in his home*),
as well as swindling people out of their inheritance."⁶³

Lord

5 Because of this: this is what the Lord declares:
"Recognize this! I am planning disaster against this gang,⁶⁴
from which you are unable to escape.⁶⁵
You will no longer walk proudly,
for it will be a time of trouble.
4 When that time comes⁶⁶ people will take up a song
of ridicule⁶⁷ on your behalf,⁶⁸
and wail about you with a bitter dirge,
saying: ' We are completely ruined!
Our right to possess land has been taken from us

52 The name means "refuge."

53 Cf. I Samuel 22:1 - 7; II Samuel 23:13. Here no pun is evident. Micah saw the people of Judah face their Adullam in 711 BCE. For them he saw no escape.

54 A commonly accepted sign of mourning.

55 Hebrew: *knshr.*

56 A normal rite of mourning. Cf. Jeremiah 7:29.

57 In this chapter Micah presents a form of dialog, the speakers being: Micah, the Lord and the people. This is noted in the column on the extreme left side of the page. Some scholars feel 5 to 6 years elapsed between chapters 1 & 2.

58 The Hebrew word expresses great sorrow.

59 The word generally conveys the idea of "practice" but that would not be suitable here. It is also often translated as "work."

60 Traditionally a place and time for private thoughts.

61 Literally: "in the light of the morning."

62 Literally: "oppress."

63 Literally: "family land." The 8th century BCE was somewhat similar to the Roman period with the Italian "latifundis" when the small farmers were squeezed out.

64 The Hebrew word is *hmshpchl*, which can be translated as "gang, crowd, brood, clique."

65 Literally: "free your necks."

66 I. e. the time of divine intervention.

67 Hebrew: *mshl* meaning "a byword, a word of reproach." Some prefer to interpret this as a proverb.

68 Hebrew: *ayl*, "on behalf of you" or "against you."

(*or, he has taken our property from us*)
It will never again be ours.
He divides our fields among our captors."⁶⁹

Micah "So then: you⁷⁰ will have no opportunity to mark out (*or, designate*)
the family property lines⁷¹
among the gathered people of the Lord."⁷²

People 6 The false prophets preach, saying "Don't preach (*or prophesy*) to us!
Certainly not about such things;
for surely God will not humiliate nor overwhelm⁷³ us.
7 Are the people of the house of Jacob under a curse?⁷⁴
Is the spirit of the Lord to be restricted?
Would God really act that way?
Aren't his⁷⁵ words effective
toward anyone who walks uprightly?"⁷⁶

Lord 8 "However:⁷⁷ you attack my people⁷⁸ like an enemy;
to strip the clothing⁷⁹ from the peaceful;⁸⁰
from those who pass by innocently,
with no warlike intentions.⁸¹
9 You evict the women among my people
from the homes they love;⁸²
from their babies, depriving them forever
of the glorious heritage I have given them.⁸³
10 Get up! Go!
There is no safe place to rest,⁸⁴
because of the destructive evil
that can completely destroy."⁸⁵
B Love for false prophets 2:11

69 Hebrew uncertain. So: emended. Hebrew: "the rebellious." This verse in Hebrew contains mockery and despair.

70 The Hebrew word is singular.

71 Cf. Joshua 18:6; Psalm 16:6.

72 Hebrew: *qhl yhwt*. Often translated "congregation." "The gathered people of the Lord."

73 Literally: "depart." *yshg*. Probably; as suggested by BHS: *yshgnw*, "to overwhelm."

74 Hebrew uncertain.

75 So: LXX. Hebrew: "my."

76 Grammatically it would be acceptable to translate: "who walks with him uprightly." Micah is reporting what he feels to be the reaction of the people. He is also making sure that his message is conveyed. Let no aspersions be cast on the compassionate character of God.

77 Literally: "and yesterday."

78 The Hebrew in this entire verse is uncertain. So: emended. Hebrew: "yesterday my people rose."

79 Possibly: "ornaments."

80 So: emended. Hebrew: "from before a garment."

81 Literally: "even those returning from war." Cf. Exodus 22:26f.

82 So: LXX, Vulgate & Targums.

83 Micah declares that false prophets are unfit to qualify for God's blessing.

84 Hebrew: *mhwchh*. "resting place." The word is also used for "promised land."

85 Hebrew unclear.

11 "If anyone speaks in a windy⁸⁶ fashion
and lies, saying, 'I will preach⁸⁷ to you⁸⁸
promising unlimited amounts of wine and strong drink,'
he would be the spokesman⁸⁹ of these people."⁹⁰

C Dreams of restoration 2:12 - 13

12 "I promise to gather all of you, O Jacob,
I will gather together the remnant (*or, survivors*) of Israel;
I will bring them together
like sheep in a pen (*or, corral*);⁹¹
like a flock in its meadow.⁹²
The land will again be filled with people.⁹³
13 Whoever breaks through the breach (*or, opens the way*)
will lead⁹⁴ them;
They will break out⁹⁵ and pass through the gate,
going out of it.⁹⁶
Their king⁹⁷ will lead them on,
for the Lord is ahead of them."⁹⁸

<CHAPTER 3>

D Appeal to the leaders of Judah 3:1 - 12⁹⁹

1 Therefore I say:
"Listen, you leaders of Jacob
and rulers of the community of Israel;
Aren't you supposed to be the guardians of justice?
(*or, You ought to know what is right.*)¹⁰⁰
2 You who hate what is good and love what is evil
(*or, You who hate what is right and love what is wrong.*)
You deal with my people like animals who tear the skin off their prey,

86 The Hebrew word is *rwch* which is also used in Genesis 1:2. JBP translates: "a windbag."

87 Literally: "I will drip out to you."

88 The Hebrew word is singular.

89 Literally: "one who drips."

90 Some scholars feel verse 11 should be written as prose. Cf. NEB. It is a rather derisive reference to the false prophets. Some feel the verse should follow verse 7.

91 So: repointed. MT: "Bozrah." This was an area famed for its sheep.

92 The Hebrew word is *hrrbr*.

93 Hebrew unclear. Literally: MT: "They will be noise with men." BDB translate the word "men" as "fear." Others translate "...multitude of men." NEB: "which stampede at the sight of men." JB: "They will fear no man." There is hope for these refugees who are gathered from somewhat remote areas.

94 Literally: "go up." *aylh*. A military term.

95 The grammar hints at an ongoing break out.

96 God is the one who opens the breach. Presumably this took place after the Persian conquest of Babylon in ca. 538 BCE.

97 The parallelism suggests that God is meant.

98 This oracle promises salvation. This is quite different from the previous oracles delivered by Micah. Micah has seen Judah invaded and overwhelmed, town after town. Yet he has hope!

99 Some scholars feel that all or at least a portion of this chapter should be written in prose.

100 So: TAN.

and their flesh off their bones;¹⁰¹
 3 eating my people's flesh,
 flaying the skin off them;
 splintering their bones
 and shredding them like meat¹⁰² in a kettle;¹⁰³
 like meat in a stew pot.¹⁰⁴

4 "Soon the time will come when you cry (*or, pray*) to the Lord,
 but he will not answer you;
 for then he will reject you¹⁰⁵ you at that time
 because of your continual evil behavior.

5 "This is what the Lord declares as the message
 to those (*false*) prophets,
 who have deceived my people (*or, led my people astray*).
 'You promise peace
 to those who can provide you with food,
 but declare a crusade (*or, holy war*) against those
 who are unable to supply you with provisions.¹⁰⁶

6 As a result you will not receive visions¹⁰⁷
 but rather, absolute darkness¹⁰⁸ without the benefit of divination.
 The sun will set on the prophets,
 and the day will be as night on them.'

7 "The ones who presume to see visions will be disregarded
 and those who pretend to have special insight (*or, divination*)
 will be blush (*or, put to shame, confounded*).
 They will cover their upper lip,¹⁰⁹
 for God does not answer.¹¹⁰

6 "But as for me, through the Lord I am filled with power
 and with justice and might,
 resulting from the work of his spirit.¹¹¹
 I am ready to disclose the sinfulness of Jacob

101 The syntax of verse 2 is uncertain.

102 So: LXX. Hebrew: . *kashr*, "as."

103 Hebrew: *syr*. A large two handled round cooking pot.

104 Hebrew: *qlcht*. No one knows the size or shape of such a stew pot. The word is also used in I Samuel 2:14. The expression is a common one. Cf. Psalm 14:4; 27:2; Proverbs 30:14 and a century later: Zephaniah 3:3.

105 Literally: hide his face from."

106 NEB: verse 5 is prose. Cf. note 14, pg. 84.

107 Hebrew is difficult. *chzwn*. Literally: "of one" with the supernatural ability to have information about the future as over against divination, i.e. the act of foretelling the future by physical means. Micah challenges both.

108 Hebrew: *hkvxw*. "it will become dark." LXX & Vulgate used a repointed text which is more acceptable.

109 Literally: "mustache." This is a sign of shame or mourning. In this instance, shame.

110 Literally: "no answer of God."

111 Not in the LXX. It does not fit the poetry syntactically and is metrically superfluous.

and also of Israel. ¹¹²

9 "Listen! You leaders of the community of Jacob
and rulers of the community of Israel,
you loath (*or, abhor*) justice
and distort (*or, disregard*) all that is right
(*or, twist everything that is proper*);
10 who through murder build ¹¹³ Zion
and establish Jerusalem with injustice! ¹¹⁴

11 "Its rulers are bribed ¹¹⁵ to give a verdict,
its priests are suborned to interpret the law for a payment,
its prophets give their revelation according to the money they

receive,

yet they claim they speak for the Lord and say:
"The Lord is in our midst, isn't he?
Nothing can harm us.?"

12 "And so: because of you
Zion will become like a field;
Jerusalem will be turned into a pile of rubble,
and the temple mount will become covered with brush (*or, a
thicket*)."¹¹⁶

<CHAPTER 4>

IV Vision of a glorious future 4:1 - 5:15

A Universal religion and perpetual peace 4:1 - 8

1 It will happen in the future ¹¹⁷
that the temple mountain, where the Lord's temple is,
will be much higher than the other mountains,
and become elevated above the hills,
and nations will flock (*or, stream*) to it.
2 The people of those nations will say,
"Come along, let us go to the Lord's mountain ¹¹⁸
to the temple of Jacob's God; ¹¹⁹
for he will teach us what he wants us to do
(*or, how he wants us to believe and live*)

112 The oracle mongers congratulate themselves on being able to do as much good by means of their prophetic placebos.
Micah declares their work to be ineffective and evil.

113 Hebrew singular. LXX, Syriac, Vulgate & Targums: plural.

114 Micah declares that this is the way of life for the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

115 Hebrew: *shchd*. "the largest bribe."

116 These are shockingly severe charges Micah makes against the prophets, seers and leaders.

117 Usually translated "in the later days." *kachryt hymym* βεχαμε α τεχηνιχαλ τερμ φορ τη ενδ οφ τη εξιλε.

118 I. e. Zion or Jerusalem. Jerusalem is 2,400 feet above sea level.

119 In this first of three couplets the exhortation is to make a pilgrimage to Palestine and worship.

and we may live our lives in accordance with his will;¹²⁰
for God's teaching will issue from Zion,
and the revelation of God's law from Jerusalem."¹²¹

3 The Lord will settle the disputes among the nations,
and will arbitrate for foreign powers (*or, nations*);
and they will hammer their swords into hoes (*or, mattocks*)¹²²
and their spears into pruning tools.

Nations will never again engage in war against one another,
nor will they again train militarily.

4 All people will live peaceably sitting beneath their own vine
or beneath their own fig tree
and there will be no reason to fear;
for the Lord of hosts has declared this!

5 For¹²³ all the nations will be obedient (*or, devoted*),
each to their various gods,
but we, for our part, will worship the name
of the Lord our God eternally.¹²⁴

6 At that time ---

the Lord declares:

I will assemble the handicapped
and gather those who have been rejected,
and those who have been afflicted (*or, injured*);
7 and the handicapped I will make the remnant;
and those who were rejected¹²⁵ to be a powerful nation;
and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion
from this time on and forever.¹²⁶

8 As for you, as the lookout tower¹²⁷ for the flock,
the citadel (*or, stronghold*)¹²⁸ of Jerusalem,¹²⁹
this will happen to you:
you will again regain the sovereignty of¹³⁰

120 In this second couplet the nations tell how Jerusalem would be the center of divine teaching.

121 This third couplet deals with the reign of peace that is to come.

122 Cf. footnote Joel 3:10.

123 The Hebrew word *ky perhapso shoulad be translataed vbut v here.*

124 Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

125 Hebrew uncertain. *hnblah* ισ α νιπηαλ παρτιχιπλε οφ αη μεανινγ vψονδερ.v Σομε εμενδ τηισ το ρεαδ
vδισεασεδv ορ vχονφυσεδ.v

126 Divine intervention will turn the present sense of despair into hope.

127 A likely reference to the south end of the temple area in Jerusalem sometimes called the acropolis. Some simply transliterate the Hebrew words: *mwddl aidr*, as in NAB & TAN.

128 The Hebrew word is *aipl* vηιλλ.v Σομε συμπλψ τρανσλιτερατε. Xφ. θB.

129 Literally: "the daughter of Zion."

130 The Hebrew word order seems somewhat odd but the sense of the verse is clear.

the kingdom of Jerusalem.¹³¹

B The way of monarchy, militarism and vengeance 4:9 - 5:6

9 Why are you crying (*or, shouting*) so loudly?

Is there no king among you?

Is your counselor dead?

Why does agony seize you like a woman in labor?

10 Writhe and groan¹³² O Jerusalem,¹³³

like a woman in labor;

for soon you must leave the city

and live (*or, camp out*) in the open country;

you must go to Babylon.

From there you will be rescued

for the Lord will reclaim (*or, rescue*) you

from the clutches of your foes.¹³⁴

11 Now: many nations

have massed against you, saying:

"Let Jerusalem be destroyed (*or, desecrated*).

Let us gloat over the ruins of Zion."¹³⁵

12 But these nations are ignorant

of the Lord's designs (*or, thoughts*).

They do not understand his intention

to gather them like sheaves of grain on the threshing floor.

13 "Arise and thresh,

O, Jerusalem,¹³⁶

for I will cause you to be like a bull with iron horns,

and your hooves will become like bronze.

You will crush many nations to pieces."

You¹³⁷ will¹³⁸ present¹³⁹ their ill-gotten wealth (*or, looted property*)
to the Lord

who is the master over the entire earth.¹⁴⁰

<CHAPTER 5>

131 Cf. footnote 44. Hebrew unclear. With a stirring promise like this the Hebrew people were to be sustained!

132 Hebrew unclear. The Hebrew word *gchy* possibly means: "bring forth" or "strain." Some scholars translate: "shriek."

133 Cf. footnote 44 on pg. 87.

134 Catastrophe has apparently overwhelmed Jerusalem. No immediate alleviation of the distress is promised. Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. Micah, however, is saying that there is light at the end of the long dark tunnel.

135 Hebrew uncertain. TAN: "obscenely gaze on Zion." In this passage the seeds of hubris find expression by some scholars who would translate: "or we will lift your skirt to expose your nakedness."

136 Cf. footnote 44 on pg. 87.

137 A 2nd person singular feminine form in Hebrew.

138 So: LXX, Syriac & Targums.

139 Hebrew: *whchamty* Τραδιτιοναλλψ τρανσλατεδ ασ √δεποτε.√ Ρεχεντ σχηολαρσηιπ ηασ λεαρνεδ τηε ωορδ μεανσ √το πρεσεντ.√

140 Note the irony. The nations had marched to destroy Judah but instead marched to their destruction or annihilation.

1[H4"14] Now you are surrounded ¹⁴¹ by a wall
for a siege has been laid ¹⁴² against us;
with a rod they strike the cheek
of the ruler (*or, judge*) of Israel. ¹⁴³

2[H5:1] But you, O Bethlehem Ephratha ¹⁴⁴
who are smallest among the clans of Judah, ¹⁴⁵
out of you will emerge for me
one who is to be sovereign over Israel;
whose family line goes back
to ancient days.

3 [H2] Therefore ¹⁴⁶ he will abandon them until the time arrives
when the woman who is pregnant will give birth to a son; ¹⁴⁷
then the rest of his fellow countrymen ¹⁴⁸ will be rescued (*or, restored*)
to the people of Israel. ¹⁴⁹

4 [H3] He will be installed as shepherd of his flock
through the strength of the Lord,
with the majestic authority of the Lord his God.
They will reside undisturbed (*or, in safety*),
because now their greatness
will extend to the farthest limits of the earth.

5 [H4] This will be the one who brings peace! ¹⁵⁰

If ¹⁵¹ (*or, when*) the Assyrian invaders enter the country;
if they set foot on the soil ¹⁵² (*or, in our mansions*),
we will appoint seven ruling shepherds against them
and eight generals (*or, many strong men*). ¹⁵³

141 Hebrew uncertain. So: emended by LXX. The Vulgate seems to prefer simply transliterating the Hebrew word. *br nbwr* literally: "daughter of a raid" which would imply, "lady under attack." The problem is the Hebrew word *grd* which $\eta\epsilon \Lambda\Xi\Xi \rho\epsilon\alpha\delta\sigma$ as *gdr*. Note there is a similarity of the Hebrew *d* & *p* which gives sense to the confusion. Other emendations have been accepted by translators. Several emend to translate: "gash yourself in grief." Others emend to translate: "get yourself behind your walls, you people of a walled city." Yet another emends to read: "marshal your troops, strengthen your walls."

142 Hebrew: *maiwr* literally: "one has laid."

143 Scholars are divided in their thoughts about this verse. Does it belong to the preceding verses or the following verses. In Hebrew, as noted, it is deemed to be the concluding verse of the previous chapter. Hence in Hebrew it is 4:14.

144 Bethlehem is located about 6 miles south of Jerusalem. Ephratha is the name of a clan in the tribe of Judah. Cf. Ruth 1:2. David's family were members of this clan. I Samuel 17:13. Bethlehem means "house of bread." Ephrath means "fruitfulness."

145 I. e. small in respect of being one of Israel's clans. Metonymy.

146 Hebrew uncertain. Possibly "Assuredly."

147 Cf. Isaiah 7:14; 9:6.

148 Literally: "brothers."

149 The Hebrew of verse 3 is uncertain. Some scholars feel that verses 3 & 4 are an interpolation.

150 In these verses Micah is presenting a twofold problem. 1. The presence of enemies in the land. 2. The absence of so many to oppose the invading forces.

151 Hebrew: *ki*. BDB: "in that case."

152 So: LXX. Hebrew: "in our palaces."

153 I. e. ample military leadership. Possibly a prophecy of the conquest of Palestine by Antiochus III 218 - 198 BCE.

6 [H5] They will rule in (*or, crush*) the land of Assyria by force
and Nimrod's country with the sword blade. ¹⁵⁴
These ¹⁵⁵ will free (*or rid*) us of the Assyrians,
when they ¹⁵⁶ enter the land
and trample within our border. ¹⁵⁷

C A world of poetry, blessing and benediction 5:7 - 15 ¹⁵⁸

7 [H6] All of the remnant (*or, survivors*) of Jacob will be
surrounded by many nations,
becoming like dew sent by the Lord;
like showers on the grass,
which neither await the bidding of people
nor wait for any individual. ¹⁵⁹
8 [H7] All the survivors of Jacob will be among the nations,
surrounded by many people,
like a lion among the beasts of the field,
like a young lion ¹⁶⁰
which, when it prowls it tramples
and mauls and there is no rescuer in sight. ¹⁶¹
9 [H8] Your hand will be raised above your enemies
and all your foes will be destroyed.

10 [H9] "In that day"
declares the Lord,
"I will destroy ¹⁶² your horses from your midst
and will also destroy your instruments of warfare."
11 [H10] And I will destroy the cities of your land,
and destroy (*or, raze*) all our strong defenses.
12 [H11] I will destroy all the magic charms you use
and no fortune tellers will remain.
13 [H12] I will destroy your idols
and your sacred pillars from your midst,
and you will no longer bow down
to the figures you yourselves have made;

154 So emended. Hebrew: "in its entrances." Nimrod means "strong" and is a description of the land of Assyria. Cf. Genesis 10:8-12.

155 Hebrew: "he."

156 Hebrew unclear. Cf. footnote 70.

157 National and royal humiliation prove to be the matrix of promises of royal and national exaltation.

158 Cf.. MFT for a revision of the order of the verses in this chapter. There is no manuscript support.

159 The problem with this verse is that the last two lines are parallel relative clauses. To what noun do they refer? "survivors," "grass" or "dew?" There is a measure of grammatical ambiguity in any translation.

160 There are a number of Hebrew words for lion. Here *kpir* is used. It is deemed that this word describes a young lion. Note the parallel structure in stichs 3 & 4.

161 Hebrew uncertain.

162 In verse 10 and at the beginning of verses 11-13 the same Hebrew word: *wlbt* "to destroy" or "cut off" appear.

14 [H13] And I will destroy your images of Asherah ¹⁶³
and destroy your cities. ¹⁶⁴
15 [H14] And in anger and wrath I will execute vengeance
on those nations ¹⁶⁵ that did not obey me." ¹⁶⁶

<CHAPTER 6>

V Adversity that triumphs in hope 6:1 -:20

A God's controversy with his wayward people 6:1 - 5

1 Listen to what the Lord declares:¹⁶⁷

"Stand! ¹⁶⁸ Present your case ¹⁶⁹ in the presence of ¹⁷⁰ the mountains;
let the hills hear what you have to say (*or, be your witness*).

2 You mountains, ¹⁷¹ listen to the accusation ¹⁷² of the Lord,
as well as you everlasting foundations ¹⁷³ of the earth;
for the Lord has a case against his people,
and he will bring an accusation against (*or, indict*) Israel.

3 "O my people, what have I done to you?
How have I become a burden to you? Answer me! ¹⁷⁴

4 After all, it was I who brought you up from Egypt,
and redeemed (*or, rescued*) you from slavery;
(*or, I brought you out of Egypt, rescuing you from enslavement;*) ¹⁷⁵

and I sent Moses ¹⁷⁶ to lead you
along with Aaron and Miriam. ¹⁷⁷

5 O my people, remember the plot of Balak, king of Moab
and the answer given by Balaam the son of Beor, ¹⁷⁸

163 A Canaanite fertility goddess. The name possibly means: "goddess of joy."

164 The Hebrew word for "cities" does not seem to belong here. Possible it is a corruption of a similar Hebrew word \$ybc[meaning "your idols."

165 Some emend to read "arrogant."

166 Some scholars feel verse 15 is a later interpolation. All those things that would draw Israel away from the Lord will be removed in the Messianic restoration. Yet there is an infusion of hope.

167 LXX: "Λογος κυριου, κυριος ειπεν. √ √Τηε ωορδ οφ τηε Λορδ, τηε Λορδ σαιδ. √ Ποσσιβλψ α παραπηρασε οφ τηε οριγιναλ.

168 A singular word in Hebrew used as a figurative way of addressing the entire group, namely the people who are to state their case. Some scholars feel the singular word is addressed to the prophet, calling him to speak as an advocate on behalf of the Lord.

169 Legal terminology.

170 The Hebrew word *at* μυστ μεαν √βεφορε √ ιν τηισ χασε. Χφ. Γενεσις 20:16 & Ισαιαη 30:8 ωηερε τηε σαμε ωορδ ισ υσεδ.

171 Wellhausen emends to read: *whzygw*, √ανδ λιστεν. √ Χφ. ΒΗΣ. Σ. Ρ. Δριϖερ: √παψ φιρμ αττεντιον. √

172 Hebrew: *dybis* α λεγαλ ωορδ: √το βρινγ α σιιτ αγαινστ. √

173 Hebrew: *syntahw*.

174 The German equivalent of TEV translates: "Why do you not answer me?"

175 The French equivalent of TEV translates: "Did I trouble you by bringing you up from the Land of Egypt and from slavery?" The word "trouble" in Hebrew sounds much like the Hebrew word for "bring you" in verse 4.

176 The name means "drawn out." Moses was a Hebrew statesman, law giver and leader.

177 Aaron means "bright." He was the brother of Moses and the first head of the Hebrew priesthood. Miriam means "obstinacy" or "stubbornness." She was the sister of Moses and Aaron.

178 Cf. Numbers 22-24. Balak means "empty." Balaam means "destroyer of the people." He was a soothsayer. Beor means "a burning." Moab means "seed." It was a portion of present day Jordan, east of the Dead Sea.

and remember the things that happened (*as you traveled from*)
 from Acacia to Gilgal.¹⁷⁹
 If you remember these things you also recall the saving acts¹⁸⁰ of the
 Lord."

*B Incidentals or fundamentals in religion 6:6 - 8*¹⁸¹

6 What shall I bring to the Lord's presence
 when I bow myself before (*or, to worship*) God, the exalted one?
 Should I come before him with burn offerings
 or with yearling calves?¹⁸²
 7 Will the Lord be pleased¹⁸³ with thousands of sheep,
 or with endless streams of oil?¹⁸⁴
 Should I offer him my first-born (*as a child sacrifice*)
 to pay for my sins (*or, transgressions*);
 my own child for my personal sin?¹⁸⁵
 8 The Lord has shown¹⁸⁶ you, O man,¹⁸⁷ what is good;
 and what is it that the Lord requires (*or, expects*) of you?
 It is to practice justice, to show steadfast love (*or, loyalty*)
 and to walk carefully¹⁸⁸ with your (*or, our*) God
 (*or, to live humbly in fellowship with your (or, our) God.*)

C The Deity's final plea to Jerusalem 6:9 - 16

9 The voice of the Lord is calling to the city ---
 (It is wise for a person to revere¹⁸⁹ your name!)¹⁹⁰
 "Listen, all you who assemble in the city (*or, all the city council*)!"¹⁹¹
 10 Can I overlook¹⁹² the treasures of the house of the wicked,¹⁹³
 and the dishonest measure¹⁹⁴ that I hate?

179 Cf. Numbers 22-26. Acacia literally is "Shittim" and means Acacia. It is possibly Tell el-Hammam, located on the high plains of Moab, opposite Jericho. It was the site of the last encampment prior to crossing the Jordan into the promised land. Gilgal means "a circle," perhaps the site of a circle of stones which were used in sacred ceremonies. It was where the Israelites camped while Jericho was being destroyed.

180 Hebrew: *tsrqwt* ωηιχη ποσιβλψ χουλδ βε εμενδεδ το ρεαδ *τρωθωτψ* "acts of vindication." Some scholars feel that there is a gap in the last two lines of this verse in the Hebrew manuscript. Cf. JB.

181 This passage could be called "The five questions." The people are challenged to give evidence on their own behalf.

182 These two lines denote the same offering, not different offerings. Cf. Leviticus 1:7, 13. Calves could be sacrificed from the age of 7 days to yearlings which would be the very best. Cf. Leviticus 9:3; 22:27.

183 The Hebrew word *artsn* ισ α τεχηνιχαλ τερμ φορ τηε αχχεπτανχε οφ α σαχριφιχε.

184 Is this a rhetorical exaggeration or possibly a reference to a ceremony provided by the king?

185 Tophet (a burning place) was the location to the south of Jerusalem where the god Molech was worshipped. Cf. II Kings 16:3; 21:7. Ahaz and Manassah sacrificed their sons. The practice was not widespread in Israel and Judah. This, however, implied the giving of their all on the part of worshipers of Molech.

186 The subject of the verb "shown" is not entirely clear in Hebrew. Various translations will make this evident.

187 The Hebrew word: *ars* ηασ α χολλεχτιπε σενσε οφ νηυμαν βεινγσ.∇

188 Hebrew: *hatana* ισ υσναλλψ τρανσλατεδ ασ ∇ηυμβλψ.∇ Τηε ροοτ ωορδ has the meaning of "to be careful."

189 So: LXX, Vulgate & Syriac.

190 LXX adds: και σωσει φορουμενουσ το ονομα ουτου.

191 Hebrew unclear. So: emended to conform with LXX, Syriac and Targums. Literally: "and who has appointed it yet."

192 So: emended. Hebrew uncertain. Wellhausen emends to read "can I forget?"

193 Some scholars emend to read: "bath of the wicked." MT: "treasures of the wicked."

194 Hebrew unclear. Merchants cheating by giving less than was paid for.

11 How can I condone ¹⁹⁵ the person with dishonest scales
and with a bag of fraudulent weights?
12 Your rich are violently exploiting the poor;
your citizens are liars,
and their speech is filled with deceit.
13 Therefore I have begun ¹⁹⁶ to beat you,
devastating you because of your sins.
14 You will eat, but not be satisfied,
for there will still be a gnawing within you. ¹⁹⁷
You will store crops, but be unable to save them,
and what you save will be carried off because of war.
(*or, Your child in your womb will try to be born
but be unable to do so,
You will hardly be able to save any of these things
and the things you do save, I will destroy in war.*) ¹⁹⁸
15 You will sow but not reap,
you will press olives but not use the oil.
You will make new wine but not drink it,
16 yet you have carefully followed ¹⁹⁹ the statutes of Omri ²⁰⁰
and all the practices of the house of Ahab; ²⁰¹
and you have continued following in their policies!
Therefore I must bring you to ruin and you will be despised.
People will treat you with contempt
(*or, As my people you will everywhere be treated with contempt.*)"

<CHAPTER 7>

D The pessimism of despair 7:1 - 6 ²⁰²

1 Woe is me ! ²⁰³ I am like
a person who, when summer fruit has been gathered,
and the vines have been gleaned,
and I have not even one cluster of grapes to eat,
nor a ripe early fig which I crave.
2 So also all the honest persons (*or, those loyal to God*)
have perished from the earth, ²⁰⁴
and there is no one left who does what God wants.
People lurk in ambush to commit murder,

195 Literally: "shall I be pure with."

196 So: LXX, Syriac & Vulgate. Literally: "have made sick to smite you." ALL translates: "dealt you a crippling blow."

197 Hebrew unclear.

198 Hebrew uncertain. A possible emendation.

199 So: LXX, Vulgate, Syriac & Targums.

200 The 6th king of Israel, ruling ca. 885 - 874 or 876 - 869 BCE. The name means "The Lord apportions."

201 The son of Omri. The name means: "father's brother." He ruled ca 874 - 853 or 869 - 850 BCE.

202 A community lament as over against an individual lament.

203118 TEV: "It is hopeless." The Hebrew words are a standard exclamation of despair. ALL translates: "What a sorry plight I'm in."

204 The Hebrew word: *aryg* χουλδ βε τρανσλατεδ ασ ∇τηε ωηολε χουντρψ.∇

hunting each other down, with net in hand.²⁰⁵
 3 They are expert, with both hands,²⁰⁶ at doing what is evil,²⁰⁷
 and those in important positions²⁰⁸ accept bribes.
 Those who are influential plot evil (*or, make demands*)
 about which they all conspire together.²⁰⁹
 4 Even the best of them is of no more value than a brier,
 and the most honest of them is as twisted as a thorn hedge.²¹⁰
 The time has come when God will punish their²¹¹ watchmen
 and their priests.
 It is about to become a time of confusion (*or, havoc*).²¹²

 5 Do not put your trust in your neighbor (*or, a companion*).
 Place no confidence in a friend.
 Be careful what you say,
 even when you speak to your wife;
 6 for during these days sons despise their fathers;
 daughters defy their mothers,
 daughters-in-law defy their mothers-in law;
 and a person's worst enemies are family members.²¹³

E Faith and confidence are declared 7:7

7 But I, for my part, will anticipate the Lord.
 I will confidently await the God of my salvation,²¹⁴
 for my God will listen to me!²¹⁵

F The invincible triumph of faith 7:8 - 20

8 My enemy: do not gloat about me,²¹⁶
 for when I have fallen I will raise again;
 though I sit in darkness,
 the Lord will give me light.
 9 I must endure the indignation of the Lord's wrath,
 because I have sinned against him.
 Until he defends my cause

205 Literally: "his brother with a net." Often hunters would drive game into a net or corral to capture it.

206 BHS reads: *bbpym*. LXX, Syriac & Vulgate read: *bbpyhn*.

207 Literally: "upon evil (are) both hands to do (it) well." Many scholars emend to read, "their hands."

208 I. e. royal officials & judges.

209 Hebrew unclear. JB suggests that there is a possible omission of a stich. NEB has an interesting emendation.

210 So: emended. Thorns and briars are quick burning fuel. The word for "thorn" in Hebrew is like the Hebrew word for "confusion" or "havoc" thus making a play on words.

211 Hebrew: "your."

212 This Hebrew word for "confusion" or "havoc" is used in Isaiah 22:5 to describe military defeat.

213 A classic description of the disintegration of family life!

214 Grammatically it could be translated: "my Savior God."

215 Anticipating, awaiting and listening are all Hebrew "faith words." Thus this becomes a timeless way of expressing faith and hope. Some scholars feel this is the end of the prophecy of Micah. The additional verses are a hymn of praise dating from the exilic or post-exilic period.

216 In Hebrew the speaker is in the singular. Without a doubt it is to be understood as a collective meaning.

and he will win my case for (*or, vindicate*) me.
 He will bring me out of darkness into light.
 I will see his deliverance (*or, his righteousness*).²¹⁷

10 Then my enemy will see this
 and she²¹⁸ will, herself, be disgraced
 (*or, chagrined*) for continually taunting me, saying:
 "Where is the Lord your God?"
 I will gloat over she who taunted,
 for now she will lie trampled²¹⁹
 like mud in the streets.

11 The day will come for rebuilding your walls,
 and at that time your territory will be greatly expanded.

12 When that day comes people will return to you,
 coming from Assyria and Egypt;²²⁰
 and from Egypt to the Euphrates,²²¹
 from distant seas and from remote mountains
 (*or, from every sea and every mountain*).²²²

13 But the earth will become barren
 because of²²³ the wickedness of its inhabitants
 who will bear the fruit of their actions.

14 O Lord, shepherd your people with your crook (*or, staff*):
 the flock that belongs to you²²⁴ because of your choosing,
 who live apart²²⁵ (*or, those who are lonely*) in a forest (*or, scrubland*)
 surrounded by garden (*or, lush*) land;²²⁶
 (*or, regardless of the circumstances in which they live.*)
 as in the past.

15 "As in the days when you came out of the country of Egypt
 I will cause²²⁷ marvelous (*or, miraculous*) things to occur."

16 May nations see and be frustrated by all their power.²²⁸
 May they close their mouths,
 and cover their ears;

17 May they crawl in dust like a snake,

217 TEV translates: "I will live to see him save us."

218 Some scholars feel this feminine pronoun is a veiled reference to Damascus.

219 Literally: "become a trampled place."

220 So: emended.

221 Literally: "the river" which was the title of the Euphrates among the Hebrews.

222 Literally: "from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain."

223 LXX: "along with."

224 Literally: "of your inheritance."

225 JB: "confined."

226 This could also be translated "in the midst of Carmel."

227 Literally: "I will cause him to see."

228 I. e. it will not help them.

like a creeping thing (*or, worm*) of the earth;
may they leave their protective fortresses
for they will be filled with trembling.
They will turn in dread to the Lord our God,
and they will be afraid because of you.

18 There is no god like you: forgiving sins,
dismissing transgressions,
for the survivors of your inheritance!
For God does not retain his anger forever,
but delights in constant love.²²⁹
19 He will again show his compassion toward us,
he will vanquish²³⁰ our iniquities.
You will hurl all our²³¹ sins
into the depths of the sea.²³²
20 You will keep faith with your people²³³
and show constant love to Abraham's descendants
as you have promised in an oath to our ancestors
long ago.

229 NRSV aptly translates: "showing clemency."

230 Some scholars translate: "wash away."

231 So: LXX, Syriac, Vulgate & Targums. Hebrew: "their."

232 In Hebrew in the 2nd half of verse 18 and the first half of verse 19 the pronouns are 3rd person singular. The beginning of verse 18 and the last portion of verse 19 they are second person singular.

233 Literally: "Jacob."