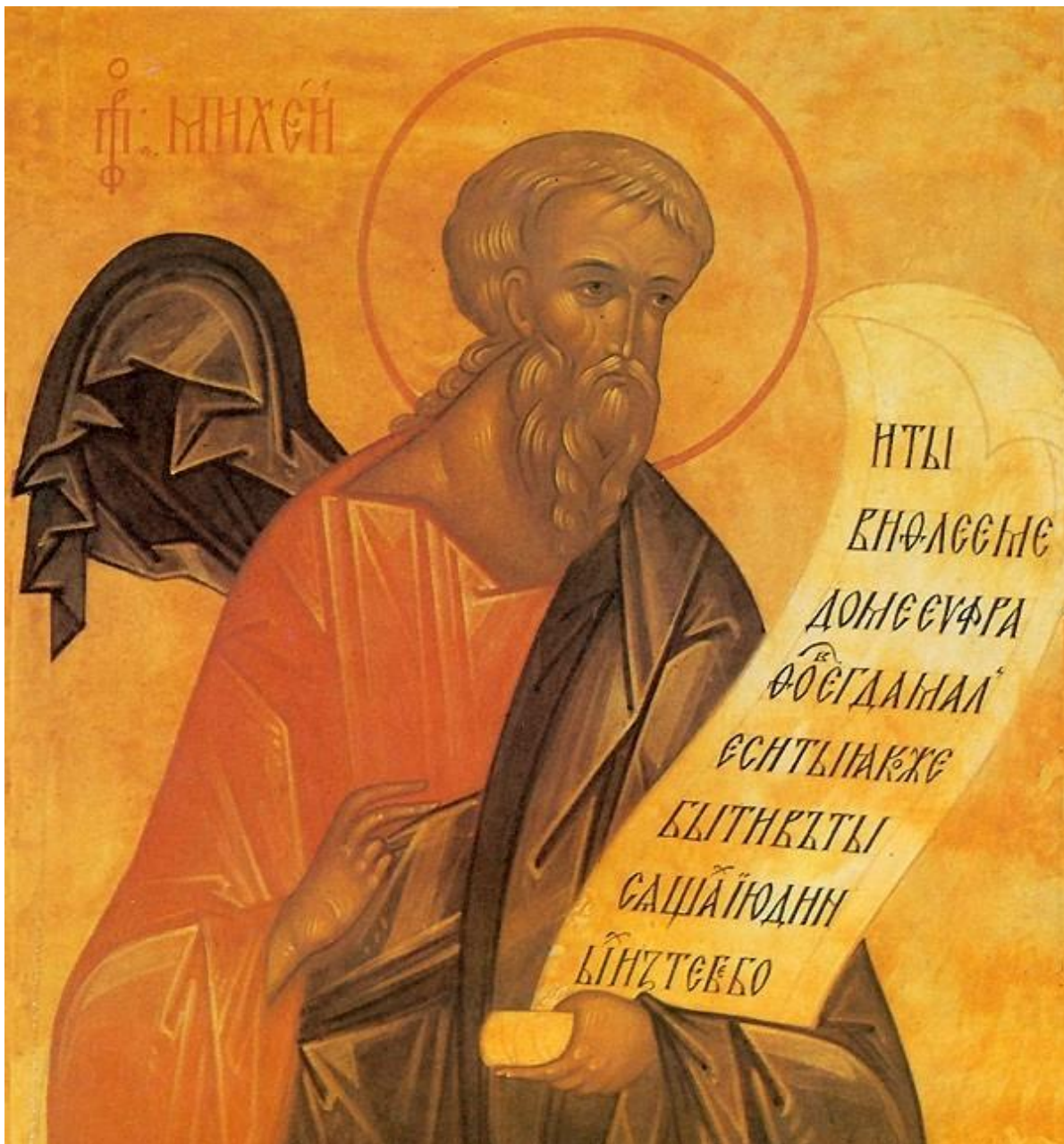


LIVING GODS WILL

Prophet of God

MICAH



The Prophet Micah

Born: 740 BC, Moresheth-Gath

Died: 670 BC, Judah

Micah was a **prophet** of **God** from **737 – 696 BC**.

Micah authored the **Book of Micah** in the Old Testament .

Micah prophesied the **destruction of Jerusalem** by Assyria.

Micah preached **injustice of the poor and unfortunate** in Jerusalem.

The prophet **Micah** was a contemporary of **Isaiah**. He lived in a small village named **Moresheth**, not far from the city of **Gath**, which was destroyed by the **Assyrians** when they invaded Judah.

Living in this village, **Micah** came into daily contact with the people who suffered most from the system of land tenure against which Isaiah protested. When **Micah** began his ministry, the northern kingdom still existed, and **Micah's** earliest messages were addressed to the people of Israel, as well as to those living in Judah.

Micah lived among the poor people and sympathized with them because of their hard lot. In many respects, his work was similar to that of the prophet **Amos**, especially regarding what he said about social and economic conditions. Although little if anything is new in his criticism of the ruling classes, the manner in which he spoke caused his name to be remembered and honored among the prophets and teachers of later generations.

No writer in the entire Old Testament was ever more indignant than **Micah** over the ways in which the rich and powerful use every opportunity to exploit the poor and the weak. In deep earnestness he cries out,

"Woe to those who plan iniquity [wickedness], to those who plot evil on their beds! At morning's light they carry it out because it is in their power to do it."

He bitterly denounces the wealthy landowners because they **"covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them. They defraud a man of his house, a fellowman of his inheritance."**

He characterizes the way in which the poor and the unfortunate are treated as no better than that which is accorded to animals. Using the most forceful language, he denounces leaders who **"tear the skin from my people and break their bones in pieces; who chop them up like meat for the pan."**

Because of these evil conditions, **Micah** tells his hearers that **Yahweh** will surely bring punishment on the land. The Assyrians' captivity of the northern kingdom is the punishment visited upon them due to their iniquities, and the prophet now sees a similar fate in store for Judah.

Unlike Isaiah, who boldly proclaimed that Jerusalem was Zion's city and for that reason could never fall, **Micah** sees no justice in having it spared.

As the capital of the nation and the home of those persons most responsible for the corrupt practices that prevail throughout the land, it deserves punishment even more than the country villages, in which the victims of these unfair practices live.

Micah proclaims in bold words, "**Hear this, you leaders of the house of Jacob, who build Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with wickedness. Therefore because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble.**"

Micah's warnings were resented on the part of those who preferred to hear that all was well and that no evil would fall upon the land. **Micah** knew that his messages were not the kind that would gain popular approval, but true to his calling as a prophet, he declares,

"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, to Israel his sin."

We do not know if **Micah** believed that the judgments on Israel and Judah would be the final end of these nations — as Amos had taught — or that the judgments would be preparatory to a redeemed society — as **Hosea** had taught.

Hope for the future is expressed in the messianic prophecy recorded in **Chapter 5**, but whether this prophecy is **Micah's** or an addition to the book made by a later writer is uncertain.

What is unique about this prophecy is that it names **Bethlehem** as the place where the **Messiah** will be born. This prediction indicates that the coming **Messiah** will be a representative of the poorer classes of people; understanding their situation, the **Messiah** will champion their cause.

Analysis

Although there are seven chapters in the Book of **Micah**, only the first three can be attributed to the prophet **Micah** with certainty. **Micah** is usually classified with the minor prophets, but his work was evidently held in high esteem by later prophets and teachers.

References to him were made on several occasions, and his writings are some of the choicest materials to be found in the entire Old Testament. For example, the prophecy concerning the coming of a warless world, found toward the beginning of Chapter 4, is quoted more frequently than any other portion of the book and is identical to one found in Chapter 2 of the **Book of Isaiah**.

The original author is not known, but the editors of each of these two books valued the warless-world prophecy so highly that they included it in each collection of writings.

Another notable passage in the Book of **Micah** is found in **6:6–8**. Here, we find a clear statement of prophetic religion at its best:

"And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

The writer of these words understands that **Yahweh** desires moral qualities on the part of his worshipers rather than sacrifices and burnt offerings.

It is doubtful if one could find in the religious literature of any people a more exalted conception of the nature of true religion and the moral qualities that religion is designed to promote.

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

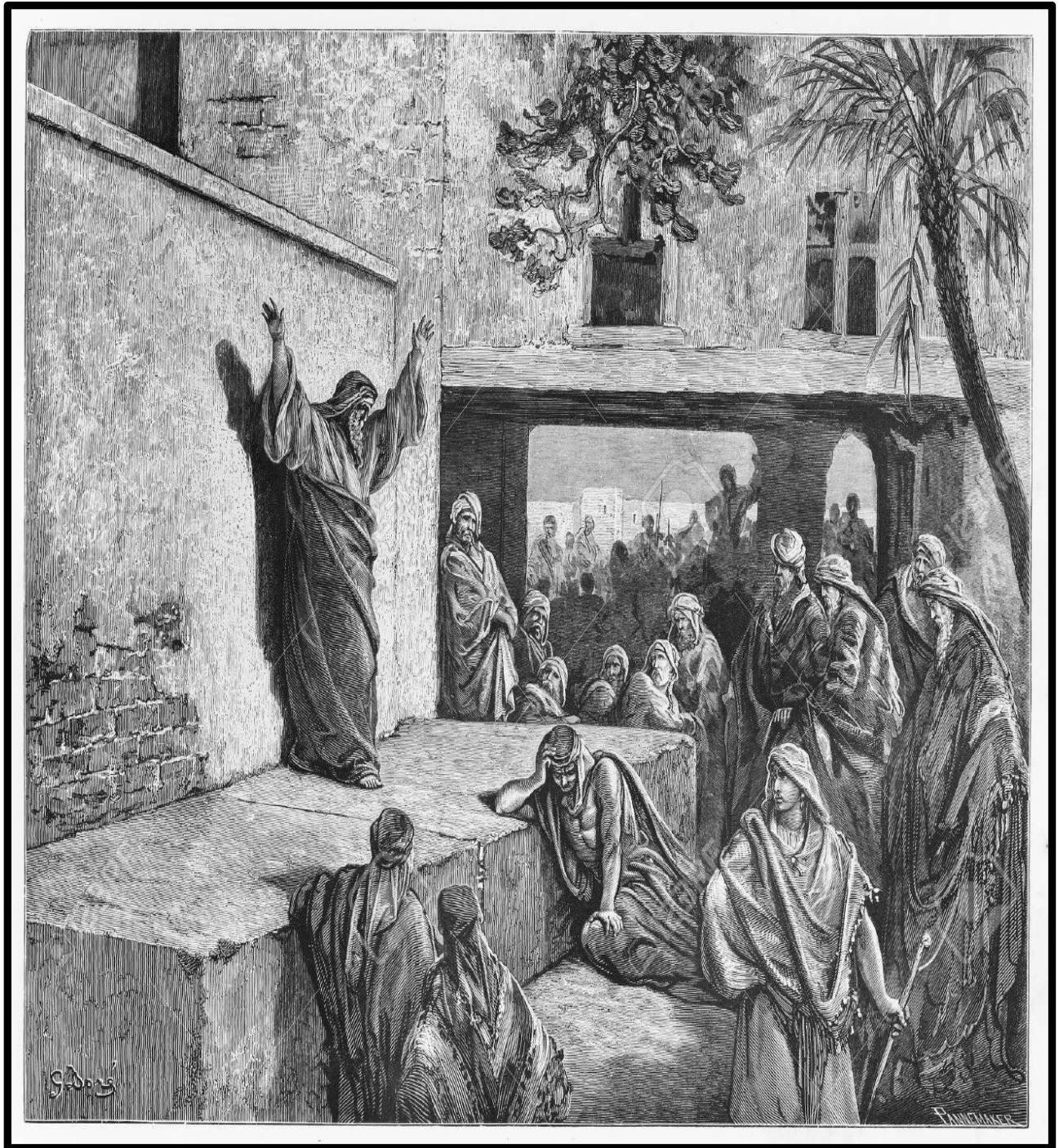
Micah 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting." **3** Therefore He shall give them up, Until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; Then the remnant of His brethren Shall return to the children of Israel. **4** And He shall stand and feed His flock In the strength of the Lord, In the majesty of the name of the Lord His God; And they shall abide, For now He shall be great To the ends of the earth;

Micah 5:10 "And it shall be in that day," says the Lord, "That I will cut off your horses from your midst And destroy your chariots. **11** I will cut off the cities of your land And throw down all your strongholds. **12** I will cut off sorceries from your hand, And you shall have no soothsayers. **13** Your carved images I will also cut off, And your sacred pillars from your midst; You shall no more worship the work of your hands; **14** I will pluck your wooden images from your midst; Thus I will destroy your cities. **15** And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury On the nations that have not heard."

Micah 7:1 Woe is me! For I am like those who gather summer fruits, Like those who glean vintage grapes; There is no cluster to eat Of the first-ripe fruit which my soul desires. **2** The faithful man has perished from the earth, And there is no one upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood; Every man hunts his brother with a net. **3** That they may successfully do evil with both hands-- The prince asks for gifts, The judge seeks a bribe, And the great man utters his evil desire; So they scheme together.

Micah 3:1 And I said: "Hear now, O heads of Jacob, And you rulers of the house of Israel: Is it not for you to know justice? **2** You who hate good and love evil; Who strip the skin from My people, And the flesh from their bones; **3** Who also eat the flesh of My people, Flay their skin from them, Break their bones, And chop them in pieces Like meat for the pot, Like flesh in the caldron." **4** Then they will cry to the Lord, But He will not hear them; He will even hide His face from them at that time, Because they have been evil in their deeds.

Micah 3:9 Now hear this, You heads of the house of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel, Who abhor justice And pervert all equity, **10** Who build up Zion with bloodshed And Jerusalem with iniquity: **11** Her heads judge for a bribe, Her priests teach for pay, And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord, and say, "Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us." **12** Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, And the mountain of the temple Like the bare hills of the forest.



Prophet Micah exhorting the Israelites to Repentance