

XXXIII

MICAH

WHO WROTE IT?

The author of the book of Micah was the Prophet Micah (Micah 1:1).

WHEN(ISH) WAS IT WRITTEN?

Micah was likely written between 735 and 700 BC.

WHY WAS IT WRITTEN?

The message of Micah is a complex mixture of judgment and hope. On the one hand, the prophecies announce judgment upon Israel for social evils, corrupt leadership, and idolatry. This judgment was expected to culminate in the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem. On the other hand, the book proclaims not merely the restoration of the nation, but the transformation and exaltation of Israel and Jerusalem. The messages of hope and doom are not necessarily contradictory, however, since restoration and transformation take place only after judgment.

SOME KEY VERSES

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.

MICAH 1:2

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.

MICAH 5:2

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?

MICAH 6:8

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.

MICAH 7:18-19

A QUICK SUMMARY

The prophet condemns the rulers, priests, and prophets of Israel who exploit and mislead the people. It is because of their deeds that Jerusalem will be destroyed. The prophet Micah proclaims the deliverance of the people who will go from Jerusalem to Babylon and concludes with an exhortation for Jerusalem to destroy the nations who have gathered against her. The ideal ruler would come from Bethlehem to defend the nation, and the prophet proclaims the triumph of the remnant of Jacob and foresees a day when Yahweh will purge the nation of idolatry and reliance on military might. The prophet sets forth a powerful and concise summary of Yahweh's requirement for justice and loyalty and announces judgment upon those who have followed the ways of Omri and Ahab. The book closes with a prophetic liturgy comprising elements of a lament. Israel confesses its sin and is assured of deliverance through Yahweh's mighty acts.

FORESHADOWINGS

Micah 5:2 is a messianic prophecy quoted when the magi were searching for the king born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:6). These kings from the East were told that from the tiny village of Bethlehem would come forth the Prince of Peace, the Light of the world. Micah's message of sin, repentance, and restoration finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ who is the propitiation (or payment) for our sins (Romans 3:24-25) and the only way to God (John 14:6).

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

God gives warnings so we will not have to suffer His wrath. Judgment is certain if God's warnings are not heeded and His provision for sin in the sacrifice of His Son is rejected. For the believer in Christ, God will discipline us—not from hate—but because He loves us. He knows that sin destroys and He wants us to be whole. This wholeness—which is the promise of restoration—awaits those who choose Him.

MY NOTES

