

Micah
Fall 2008 Adult Bible Classes, Sunday Morning

prepared by Bob Young

Introduction

Living messages of the OT prophets

Background of text, social setting, and prophet provides parallels in our day

Points of interest

Micah is shortened form of Micaiah, “Who is like Yahweh?” Compare our modern name, Michael.

He lived about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem, in an area of good farming country.

He does not recount his call, and we know little about him (cf. 3:8 for a description of his spirit ready to prophesy).

Historical setting

He prophesied in the southern kingdom.

His ministry is dated during the reigns of Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, giving a minimum span of 20 years and a maximum span of 55 years.

This time is described in 2 Kings 15:32 - 20:21 and 2 Chronicles 27:1 - 32:22.

He prophesied at about the same time as Isaiah.

Textual considerations

The book is difficult to analyze. Chapters 1, 3, and 6 begin with “hear....” Each of the sections (according to this division) ends with a promise.

The book is likely not chronologically arranged. Perhaps no better division and parallelism is possible than the following:

Cycle 1 (chs. 1-2)

Judgment (1:1-2:11)

Hope (2:12-13)

Cycle 2 (chs. 3-5)

Judgment (3:1-12)

Hope (4:1-5:15)

Cycle 3 (chs. 6-7)

Judgment (6:1—7:7)

Hope (7:8-20)

Contemporary lessons

The disappearance of the righteous man, 7:2.

Evildoers come in many shapes and sizes: land-grabbers (2:1-2, cf. 1 Kings 21:4 and Micah 6:16), rulers who hate good and love evil (3:1-4), false prophets (3:11), priests for hire (3:11).

Micah speaks against idolatry, 5:12-15; cf. 3:7.

False security, Micah 3:11.

Buying God’s favor with sacrifices (or actions), 6:5-7.

True religion (court scene), 6:1-8.

Micah and the New Testament

Remnant, 2:12, 5:7-8.

New Exodus, 2:12-13; 7:14-17.

Law goes forth from Zion, 4:1ff.

Messiah born in Bethlehem, 5:2.

Mercy after judgment, 7:18-20.

Questions

What kinds of activities or motives made a person a false prophet in Micah's day? How do these apply in our contemporary world?

What is the task of the true prophet, according to Micah?

Which of the true religion aspects appeals to you the most? Why?

Evaluate the completeness of Micah's description of true religion?

What parts of Micah's message have moral or religious relevance today?