

# SLOW FOOD BIBLE STUDIES

## MICAH (28 studies)

Micah belongs to the second part of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC/BCE and is a contemporary of Isaiah in the southern kingdom and of Amos and Hosea in the north. 'These four men represent the essence of Hebrew prophecy' (Prior). It was a time of material prosperity, religious apostasy, social injustice and growing international insecurity. In 722 the Assyrians invaded and occupied the northern kingdom of Israel. Micah's prophecies are undated and may not follow a chronological sequence. The book is structured in three cycles (chapters 1-2, 3-5 and 6-7), each warning of judgment then promising hope. 'The light of God's revelation through Micah exposes the darkness in the city and the nation, but then points out the way back to God and forward into all that he has planned for his people' (Prior). In recent times the Micah Challenge was launched in 2004 to unite Christians in calling upon governments across the world to honour their commitment to justice for the poor and the eradication of poverty by 2015. Commentary: David Prior *The Message of Joel, Micah and Habakkuk* (The Bible Speaks Today, IVP 1988).

- 1:1** Who is Micah and why is he writing this book? Gather as much information as you can from commentaries, Bible dictionaries etc. *Exod 3:7-8; Jer 26:18-19.*
- 1:2** Who is God? Has he changed since Micah's day? *Isa 45:5; Mal 3:6; Jn 1:18.*
- 1:3-5** Jerusalem and Samaria were the faith centres of the nation. What kind of God might I have to deal with if my faith centre is anything or anyone other than him?  
*Isa 1:10-20; Heb 12:25-29.*
- 1:6-9** If present-day society has abandoned faith in a living God, am I just going to write it off? *Mt 8:16-17; 9:35-36; 1 Jn 3:16-18.*
- 1:10-16** Are we teaching our children to trust in modern technology rather than in God? *Ps 20:7; Zech 3:6; 1 Cor 1:26-31.* Note. Micah selects towns near Jerusalem whose names suggest their judgment from God, in particular Lachish which had the latest military technology but was destined to be besieged by Sennacherib in 701 BC (2 Chron 32:9).
- 2:1-5** If I wake at night, do my thoughts dwell on anything that (if put into practice) would be unfaithful to God's word? *1 Ki 21:1-16; Ps 16:7-8; Jas 1:14-15.*
- 2:6-9** How are we to reconcile the Bible's teaching about final judgment with God's love and patience? *1 Ki 21:29; Ps 103:8-10; Lk 13:6-9; 1 Pet 4:17-18; 2 Pet 3:9-10.*
- 2:10-11** If I find I am living in a largely hedonistic culture, how can I avoid being contaminated by it? *Dt 12:8-9; Jn 17:13-17; 2 Cor 6:16-7:1; Heb 13:13-16.*
- 2:12-13** So do we just huddle together and hope that the Lord will intervene one day soon?  
*2 Chr 15:1-7; sMt 5:13-16; Jn 10:16, 17:20.*
- 3:1-4** If I hold a position of leadership, or hope to do so, how much do I really value 'justice'?  
*Ps 97:10; Prov 8:13-16; Rom 12:9; 1 Pet 3:10-12.*
- 3:5-8** If I am entrusted with speaking God's word, do I secretly serve my own agenda?  
*Ps 141:3-4; Isa 50:4; Jer 15:19 (KJV); 2 Cor 10:4-5.*
- 3:9-12** When Micah speaks of the financial corruption and religious and moral complacency at the heart of Jerusalem's leadership, how wide of the mark is he as far as my life and work are concerned?  
*Jer 17:9-10; Lk 16:14-15; 1 Jn 1:8-9.*

- 4:1-5** How does this wonderful vision of world harmony affect how I will 'walk' today? *Mic 6:8; Zech 3:7; Mal 2:5-6*. M's vision of a peaceful earth centred upon 'the Lord's temple' may not be a geographical one: the NT envisages that Christ's people are God's temple wherever they are, and there may also be an eschatological reference to the 'new heavens and new earth' of *Isa 65:17* and *Rev 21:1, 22*.
- 4:6-8** What do I learn here about God's 'remnant' people? How do I qualify for membership? *Mic 2:12, 5:3, 7, 8, 7:18; Lk 13:23-30; Rom 11:5*.
- 4:9-10** 'Babylon' is the place of exile for the Lord's people. In what sense, if any, am I there? *Ps 137:1-6; Heb 11:13-16; 12:22; 1 Pet 5:13; 1 Jn 2:15-17*.
- 4:11-5:1** If I sometimes feel humiliated or even threatened because of my faith, do I get depressed? *Isa 41:10; 2 Cor 1:8-11; 10:1-6; 2 Tim 1:7*.
- 5:2-4** Consider Christ's obscurity and greatness. Have I grown so familiar with him that I fail to appreciate these truths? *Isa 9:6-7; Jn 7:41-42, 52; 2 Cor 13:4; Rev 5:5-6*.
- 5:5-6** Is Christ my peace? *Eph 2:14-17; Col 3:15; 2 Th 3:16*.
- 5:7-9** How are Christians meant to interact with the society in which they find themselves? *Jer 29:7; 2 Cor 2:14-16; Eph 5:8-11; Phil 2:14-16a*.
- 5:10-15** What can I learn about God's hatred of sin from this passage? *Ps 5:4-6; Hab 1:13; Heb 10:31; 1 Jn 2:1-2*.
- 6:1-5** Do I secretly find the Christian faith a bit of a burden? *Isa 43:22-26; Mt 11:28-30; 1 Jn 5:3*. Whether 'your case' or 'my case' is the right translation in v1, the Lord is calling the mountains (whose memory is longer than that of his people) to witness to what he has done for Israel.
- 6:6-8** Am I trying too hard? *1 Sam 15:22; Ps 49:7-15; Jn 15:5; 1 Cor 15:10*.
- 6:9-16** If our society today lacks 'wisdom', what consequences can we expect? *Ps 111:10; 1 Tim 6:6-10, 17-19; 2 Tim 4:3-4*.
- 7:1-7** If our society is irredeemably corrupt, what can we do about it? *Lam 3:19-51; Lk 13:33-35, 19:41-42*.
- 7:8-10** If I have let the Lord down, can I hope for restoration? *Ps 37:23-24; Prov 24:16; Lk 22:31-32*. 'She' (v10) may be a powerful opponent or critic of M's; or a personification of Nineveh (in which case 'me' is Jerusalem); or a symbol of opposition to the true faith (like 'Jezebel', *Rev 2:20*).
- 7:11-14** Some are 'builders', some are 'extenders', some are 'shepherds'. What encouragements can I find for the work the Lord has given me? *Ezek 34:11-16; Eph 4:7-16*.
- 7:15-17** What kind of victories can I expect if I am faithful to Christ? *1 Ki 20:26-29; Jer 1:19; Rom 8:36-37; 1 Cor 15:57; Rev 12:10, 11*.
- 7:18-20** In what ways has God been showing me his compassion and faithfulness? *Ps 86:15-16; 1 Th 5:23-24; Heb 4:14-16; 1 Pet 4:19*.

#### **Micah 1-7 (revision)**

Have I caught anything of the passion of Micah (a) for the world into which he has been sent to witness (b) for the God he has been called to serve?