

10. _____ is also called _____.
11. Ahaz entered into an alliance with _____ of Assyria.
12. This resulted in the southern kingdom becoming a _____.
13. Hezekiah, the third king mentioned by Micah, was the _____ king of Judah. He was the son of Ahaz, but he did not worship _____.
14. Hezekiah's contemporaries in Israel were _____ and _____.
15. Due to Hezekiah's dedication to Jehovah, _____ was stopped just short of Jerusalem and turned back.
16. Micah is described as a younger _____ of Isaiah.
17. To Micah, social injustice was a symptom of _____.
18. How did Micah understand his mission? (*Micah 3:8*)
19. Micah does not preach a "middle class morality" but _____.
20. The overthrow of the northern kingdom was accomplished by the _____ empire while Judah was conquered later by _____ who were in turn defeated by _____ who released the captive remnant.

CHAPTER VI

FIRST CYCLE

A CALL TO HARKEN . . . Micah 1:2-4

RV . . . Hear, ye peoples, all of you; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is: and let the Lord Jehovah be witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple. For, behold, Jehovah cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be melted under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, as waters that are poured down a steep place.

LXX . . . Hear these words, ye people; and let the earth give heed, and all that are in it: and the Lord God shall be among you for a testimony, the Lord out of his holy habitation. For, behold, the Lord comes forth out of his place, and will come down, and will go upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be shaken under him, and the valleys shall melt like wax before the fire, and as water rushing down a declivity.

COMMENTS

A CALL TO HEAR AND HARKEN . . .
EVIDENCE OF UNIVERSAL CONCERN . . . 1:2(a)

At the outset of Micah's recorded prophecy there is evidence of God's universal concern for all men. The prophet's call is to both "ye *peoples*, all of you," and to "(hearken) *earth*, and *all* therein is."

The term "people" is frequently used in Scripture to designate the covenant people of God. It is a term used to delineate between Israel and "the nations." (eg. *Psalms* 50:7)

In verse 2, Micah calls to "ye people, *all of you*." His message is intended for *all* those to whom the expression "the people" may rightly be applied, both in the northern and southern kingdom.

By his use of ". . . earth and all that therein is," Micah calls the whole world to listen to God's indictment of His covenant people. The use of "earth and all that therein is" to describe the non-covenant nations (*ie.* the Gentiles) was one of longstanding precedent.

Moses, in *Deuteronomy* 32:1, uses this expression to declare to all mankind the name and greatness of Jehovah.

Micah's contemporary, Isaiah, used the same phrase to tell all mankind that God's people have rebelled against Him. (*Isaiah* 1:2)

Two reasons are apparent for God's concern that the "earth and all that is in it" hear His charges against both Samaria and Jerusalem; *ie.* against both branches of the covenant people: (1) All men have a vital interest in the fulfillment of the covenant through the people. The more nationalistic the people became, and the more their religious practices became polluted with Baalism, the less aware they became of God's promise to bless, through them, all the nations of the earth. But God never forgot. (2) The time was fast approaching when God would cast off His rebellious people. When this happened, neither the world nor the people themselves would have any reason to say that God was unfaithful. None could say that He had not warned the people of the dire consequence of their failure to keep His covenant and obey His law. (Cf. *Romans* 11:1-4)

A vital lesson is to be learned from this verse by today's "people," the church, namely that he who will not learn from God's past dealings with His people can blame only himself and not God for his own suffering. When the Jews were finally cast off by God it was after they had ignored not only the warning of the prophets but the meaning of the captivity which they endured as a result of not heeding that warning.

THE LORD IS TO BE WITNESS . . . 1:2(b)

The condemnation of God is never arbitrary. The people are to have a "fair trial." The "star witness" for the prosecution is to be the Lord Jehovah Himself.

Moses had issued a similar warning of impending judgment, "And the generation to come, your children that shall rise up after you, and the foreigner that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they shall see the plagues of the land, the sickness wherewith Jehovah hath made it sick; and that the whole land thereof is brimstone and salt, and a burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zebion, which Jehovah overthrew in His anger, and in His wrath: even all the nations shall say, whereof hath Jehovah done this unto this land? Then men shall say, because they forsook the *covenant* of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods that they knew not, and that He had not given them: therefore the anger of Jehovah was kindled against this land, to bring down upon it all the curse that is written in this book; and Jehovah rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as at this day." (*Deuteronomy 29:22-28*)

Anyone who has visited present day Palestine has been amazed that this land was once called "a land flowing with milk and honey." Excepting those sections that have felt the improvements of modern technology and agricultural reclamation, it is a barren rocky wasteland. Such a visitor finds himself asking, "Wherefore hath Jehovah done this to this land?"

The answer of both Moses and the prophets is ". . . because they (God's people) forsook, the covenant of Jehovah . . ." What is true of the land is equally true of the people who once inhabited it. Micah presents the Lord Himself as the chief witness to the justice of God's wrath against His rebellious people.

Nor is the Lord the only witness. The defense of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was essentially the same testimony against the people as that made by the Lord in the prophetic writings. The burden of Stephen's defense is that God's dealing with the people had always been progressive, toward the accomplishment of His eternal purpose to bless all men rather than static and prejudiced toward the commonwealth of the Jews. This purpose Stephen saw as universal rather than local. Underlying his entire argument is Stephen's insist-

ence that God's treatment of Israel has always been ethical, rather than erratic. His actions are governed by the same morality He demands of them. Stephen closes with the classic accusation that the people have always been "stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears" to the point of murdering the prophets whom God sent to call them back to the covenant. (Cf. *Acts, chapter seven*)

THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE . . . 1:2(c)-3(a)

The temple here is not necessarily, nor even probably the temple at Jerusalem. *Psalms 11:4* speaks of "Jehovah in His holy temple." The eleventh Psalm is generally recognized as a Psalm of David, and was therefore written *before* there was a temple in Jerusalem.

The temple, or holy dwelling place out of which the Lord comes to testify against His people is His real dwelling place. The sanctuary of Solomon's temple (or its reconstructed post-Babylonian counterpart) was never more than a type of the real habitation of God.

We have this on the word of no less an author than the writer of the New Testament epistle to the Hebrews. *Hebrews 8:5(a)* informs us that the tabernacle (which was given permanence in the building of the temple) was ". . . a copy and shadow of the heavenly things."

God is not an absentee God. He does not "dwell in temples made by hand," (*Acts 17:24*) it is true, but the fact that He is invisible is not to be misunderstood. His judgements in history are evidence that the "Lord of Lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen, nor can see . . ." (*I Timothy 6:15(b)-16*) does indeed "come forth out of His place, and will come down . . ." (*Micah 1:3*)

There is no need to read the second advent of Christ into these verses. God has always come out of His holy place to chastise His people. Perhaps these historic comings, such as this one spoken by Micah, are a foretaste, a warning, of the final coming of Christ in judgement, but the words of Micah were fulfilled in the judgements of God against the northern and southern kingdoms at the hands of Sargon and Nebuchadnezzar.

TREAD UPON THE HIGH PLACES . . . 1:3(b) +

The "high places" refer to Baal worship. They were generally any natural or man-made projection which stood above their surroundings. (Cf. *I Kings 13:32* and *II Kings 23:15*)

High places were forbidden by the law (*Deuteronomy 12:11-14*) and when Israel entered the promised land they were instructed to destroy them as monuments to Canaanite idolatry. (Cf. *Leviticus 26:30*, *Numbers 33:52*, *Deuteronomy 33:29*) These commandments were so completely ignored by the people that they became practically unknown.

By divine command, Gideon built altars in the high places, as did also Manoah. (*Judges 6:25-26*, *13:16-23*) Samuel also appears to have violated the commandment against high places in building the altar at Mizpah, (*I Samuel 7:10*) and again at Bethlehem. (*I Samuel 16:5*) Saul transgressed this command at Gilgal and Ajalon. (Compare *I Samuel 13:9* and *14:35*) David ignored the divine ordinance against high places on the threshing floor at Ornan, (*I Chronicles 21:26*) as did Elijah on Mount Carmel (*I Kings 18:30*) and other prophets. (*I Samuel 10:5*)

Some of the above named men violated this command in obedience to directive from God for a special purpose (eg. Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal.)

Rehoboam instituted definite worship in the high places. (*II Chronicles 11:15*, *II Kings 23:9*)

Hezekiah's reforms included the systematic elimination of these shrines to paganism. (*II Kings 18:4,22*, *II Chronicles 31:1*) This task was completed under Josiah. *II Kings 23*, *II Chronicles 34:3*)

After this systematic destruction, there is no further mention of the worship of Jehovah in high places in the Old Testament. However, the "worship in these hills" mentioned by the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (*John, chapter four*) was probably a vestige of this despicable practice of mixing Jehovah worship with Baal worship. Baalbek, the last surviving center of sun god worship, continued to flourish under the Roman domination of the New Testament period and well into the third century A.D.

The working of God in history has long since trodden down the "high places" of Baal worship and of polluted Jehovah worship, but the influence of Baal among God's people is apparent yet today as Christians continue the observance of the same holy days by the use of many of the same devices and customs.

The more one learns of the abominable practice of Baal worship and of its devastating effect upon the covenant people, the more one questions the wisdom of promoting such days and customs in the church. The history of virtually every major "Christian holiday" is traceable directly to the worship of the sun god in one form or another.

MOUNTAINS TO MELT, VALLEYS TO MELT LIKE WAX . . .

1:4

Fire is the traditional symbol of God's purifying judgement. Moses, exhorting Israel against covenant breaking, warned; "Take heed to yourselves lest ye forget the covenant of Jehovah your God, which He made with you, and make you a graven image in the form of anything which Jehovah thy God hath forbidden thee. For Jehovah thy God is a devouring fire, a jealous God. (*Deuteronomy 4:23-24*)

It is fitting that Micah, and other prophets (*e.g. Isaiah 66:15*) in their attempt to call the people back to the covenant through obedience to the law, should remind them of this symbol. The heat of God's wrath is depicted as melting the mountains and turning the valleys to wax. The symbolism is obvious, both the high and the low, the great and the small will be devoured by God's fiery wrath. God is no respecter of persons. As the song writer has put it:

*"The great man was there, but his greatness
When death came was left far behind.
The angel who opened the records
Not a trace of his greatness could find."*

No matter how high or low the station, hearts hard as stone against the pleading of God's prophets become like wax in the presence of His wrath. One of the primary warnings of the prophets is that human greatness does not bring preferential treatment from God.

THE OCCASION OF THE WRATH . . . Micah 1:5

RV . . . For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem?

LXX . . . All these calamities are for the transgression of Jacob, and for the sin of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what is the sin of the house of Jacob? is it not Jerusalem?

COMMENTS

The purifying wrath of God against "the people" is, in this case, occasioned by "the sins of Jacob . . . and for the transgression of the

house of Israel." Here in the "indictment" Micah uses the covenant names which treat both the kingdoms as one people.

Many times the covenant name for God is "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." The shorter form of reference to the covenant people is simply "Jacob," as used here by Micah. Jacob, as the last of the patriarchs and the father of the twelve tribes, is best representative of the covenant people as a whole.

Indeed, it is his new name, Israel, given to him upon his realization that Jehovah is the universal God rather than a local deity, which came to represent the people as well as the man.

"Israel" was first the name of the man, Jacob. Following his dream on the way to Haran from Beersheba, Jacob awoke to the realization that "surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." (*Genesis* 28:16) It was during the dream that God reaffirmed to him the everlasting covenant which He had made with Abraham and confirmed previously with Jacob's father, Isaac.

As with them, so with Jacob, the heart of the covenant was: "in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (*Genesis* 28:14) Some fourteen years later, following his marriage to the daughters of Laban, Jacob turned in prayer to God because of his fear that his brother Esau would seek revenge against him. Subsequently, God granted him the experience of wrestling with an angel. When he prevailed in the combat the angel said to him, "thy name shall be no more called Jacob but Israel (Prince of God) for as a prince thou hast power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." (*Genesis* 32:28)

To understand the meaning of the name Israel in any given passage, one must keep in mind the various uses of it throughout the Old and New Testaments. The exact meaning must be determined by the specific context in which it appears.

As we have seen, *Israel* was first the covenant name given to Jacob upon his realization of the universal nature of God. It next came to apply to the whole family descended from this man, then to the twelve tribes into which the family grew, *ie.* the direct descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob.

Israel next came to apply to the nation formed of Jacob's descendants by the giving of the Law through Moses. This is significant, since Israel was the *covenant* name. The attachment of it to the nation points up the truth written by Paul, "a covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect."

(*Galatians 3:18*) The purpose of God in Israel was not changed by the passing of time and development of a political commonwealth. The very name worn by the nation under the Law was intended to emphasize their covenant relationship to God, and to signify the life, character and mission that was to be theirs as His called-out people.

First the family, then the federation of tribes wore this name. In the beginning the people were held together by a sense of kinship growing out of a common ancestry and a common covenant God.

In the giving of the Law a third factor united them. The Law was, in effect, a national constitution. During the time of the judges, when the Law was applied directly by God through the judges, there was an acute awareness of the nation's covenant relationship to God. Under the reign of Saul, David and Solomon, the covenant awareness waned as the people struggled for national identity among the nations of the world. By the time the kingdom was divided, the term *Israel* expressed almost entirely a nationalistic concept which was nearly devoid of any covenant awareness.

The ideal which runs through both the pre-exilic and post-exilic prophets is the restoration of covenant awareness through obedient faith in God.

Micah's prophecy is addressed to pre-exilic *Israel*. The outlook of the people at this time was strongly nationalistic. Covenant awareness was at perhaps its lowest ebb, yet the prophet uses the ancient covenant name *Israel* in such a way as to remind his readers of its real meaning.

The name *Israel* was taken by the *southern* kingdom during the post-exilic period (following the return from Babylon). (*Ezra 6:16, Nehemiah 11:3*) In the inter-Biblical period, from Malachi to Matthew, the term fell into disuse. In its place the nation and the people were called *Jews* to distinguish them from Greek, Roman, Persian, etc.

In the New Testament, *Israel* is used to emphasize relationship to God as a covenant people. (*Matthew 9:33, Luke 2:32, John 3:10, Acts 4:10*) When the *nation*, or race, is intended in the New Testament, the term is "*Jews*." This is obviously a distinction vital to the understanding of the relationship of New Testament *Israel* to the Old Covenant and God's people under it.

Before singling out first the northern and then the southern kingdoms to warn each of its particular punishment, Micah calls to them both in terms calculated to remind them wherein they have failed. They will be punished for more than specific sins. The punishment for these sins will be brought about by their failure to keep the cove-

nant. Such had been the warning of Jehovah against His people at the time of the giving of the Law, and earlier at the institution of circumcision.

In both Israel and Judah, Micah equates the sins of the nation with the nature of its capital. The transgression of Jacob (Israel) is Samaria. The sin of Judah is Jerusalem.

JUDAH . . . 1:5(b)

Following the rebellion of the ten northern tribes and the division of the kingdoms, the northern kingdom became known as Israel and the southern as Judah. While the rebellious northern tribes seem to have usurped the "family name" of God's people, it was the southern kingdom through whom the fulfillment of the covenant finally came.

Originally, the name *Judah* designated the fourth son of Jacob and Leah, born in Mesopotamia during the time when his father served his uncle Laban. Judah, the great-grandson of Abraham, became the head of and gave his name to the most powerful of the twelve tribes. In the blessing of Judah, Jacob promised that, ". . . the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shilo come; and unto him shall be the obedience of the people." (*Genesis 49:10*)

The significance of this, as well as the rest of the blessing, (*Genesis 49:8-12*) is seen in the increasing strength of Judah throughout the history of the people. (See *Numbers 2:3, Joshua 9:1, Judges 1:1-2, Isaiah 29:1*, etc.) The capital city, Jerusalem, became the capital of the southern kingdom, with Judah as the predominant tribe, (the southern kingdom also included Benjamin and Simeon) and remained so until the coming of the Christ to the Roman province of Judea. Judea was the first century vestige of Judah, and its capital also was Jerusalem. The scepter had not passed from Judah until He came!

In the occupation of the land of Canaan under Joshua, Judah, the tribe, had occupied the southern section from the Jordan to the Mediterranean as far north as the southern boundaries of Dan and Benjamin. (*Joshua 15*) With the division of the kingdom, it was this territory, along with the greater part of that of Benjamin to the north and Simeon to the south, that formed the southern kingdom.

Samaria . . . transgression of Jacob . . . Micah 1:5(b)

The capital of the northern kingdom of Israel was Samaria. Micah singles out this capital in the north as the personification of the "transgression of Jacob."

Samaria was situated south of the Plain of Esdralon in the vicinity where Abraham had stayed for a while on the plains of Moreh. (*Genesis* 12:6) It was in the territory possessed, in the days of Joshua, by Ephraim and Manasseh. The name, Samaria, came to be applied to that general area following the time of Solomon.

The city from which the territory of Samaria took its name was situated on a hill some forty miles north of Jerusalem. In 880 B.C., Omri moved his capital there from Tirzah. The hill upon which it sits is located adjacent to the fertile *wady esh-Shair*, and towers some 300 feet above the valley which extends from Shechem (Sychar) westward to the coast. The Mediterranean is clearly visible from this vantage point.

Under Ahab, due in a large part to the influence of Jezebel, Baal worship came to dominate both the religion and the general culture of Samaria. (*II Kings* 3:2) Idolatry, sensuality and oppression become the order of the day. (See chapter III, BAAL WORSHIP.)

Modern archeological excavations at Samaria reveal seven Israelite levels. The first and second, or lowest, levels date from the time of Omri and Ahab. The seventh, or highest, level marks the destruction of Samaria by the Assyrians following the three year siege begun by Shalmaneser in the seventh year of Hoshea's reign. The siege was concluded under Sargon II in 722.

It was this destruction of which Micah warns in our text. Sargon claims to have carried away only 27,290 from the entire nation of Samaria (Israel). No doubt, as with Judah later, these were the most powerful and influential citizens.

The sin with which Samaria is particularly identified, when Micah calls her "the transgression of Jacob," is idolatry, particularly the worship of Baal. As Halley puts it, "God had sent Elijah, Elisha and Amos to turn them (the Samaritans) back from idols. But in vain. They were about ripe for the death blow."

JERUSALEM . . . SIN OF JUDAH . . . 1:5(c)

Manuscript evidence here seems to indicate as the correct reading, ". . . what are the high places of Judah . . ." rather than "what is the sin of Judah."

If this be true, the sin of Judah is but a variation of the idolatry of Samaria. However, the "high place" of Jerusalem would be the temple and its immediate surroundings as the center of worship. The worship conducted there, rather than being out and out Baal worship, was, during this period, Jehovah worship polluted with Baalism.

It is interesting to note that both *Je* (in Jehovah) and *Baal* literally mean Lord. It is often difficult to tell, in some passages, whether the prophets are denouncing Baal worship *per se* or a corruption of Jehovah worship.

The Bible reader is first introduced to the *site* of Jerusalem some one thousand years before the time of David. We are told (*Genesis 14*) that Abraham stopped there shortly after the slaughter of the kings. (*Hebrews 7*) The ancient name of the place was Salem, an abbreviated form of yeru-Shalem foundation, or city, of peace.

It was here that Abraham met and paid tithes to Melchizedek. The name means literally "my king is Zedek." He was priest to the God *El-Elyon*, "God of Peace," whom Abraham identified with *Yaweh* (Jehovah). (*Genesis 14:18-20*)

It is probable that this also marks the site of the sacrifice of Isaac by his father, Abraham. "The land of Moriah," (*Genesis 22:2*) has not been positively identified. The Septuagint reads, "the highland," while the Syriac has "land of the Amorites." Local tradition, however, identifies Moriah with the mountain on which the temple was built. (*II Chronicles 3:1*)

The Scriptures do not identify the exact location of Isaac's sacrifice, but both Jewish and Arab (Moslem) tradition locate it at the present site of the "Dome of the Rock." This second most sacred shrine in Islam stands where the Biblical temple once stood.

(Incidentally, it is the possession of this sacred site which furnishes much of the fuel for the present inferno in the Middle East.)

At the time of Joshua, Jerusalem was the domain of Adom-Zedek, the Amorite who, in alliance with four other kings, attempted to prevent the Israelite conquest of southern Canaan. (*Joshua 10*) It was then the home of the Jebusites. (*Genesis 10:15* and *Numbers 13:29*) The city was on the border between the lands assigned to Benjamin, on the north, and Judah, on the south (*Joshua 15:7-8* and *18:10*) It was never occupied by the Israelites until the time of David, by which time it was at least a thousand years old!

The most historic transaction ever to take place in this ancient city took place when David made it his capital. Following the death of Saul at Gilboa, David reigned over Judah from Hebron (*II Samuel 2:1-4*) When the death of Ishbosheth opened the way for David to unite the northern and southern tribes, Jerusalem was a more appealing location for two primary reasons.

First, Jerusalem was more centrally located than Hebron, and hence more accessible from both north and south.

Second, and perhaps more significant, the city belonged to no tribe. Being situated on the line between Benjamin to the north and Judah to the south, it could be made the seat of government for the federation without disturbing the *status quo* of any tribe, in much the same way that Washington D.C. was made our national capital without being part of any state.

Jerusalem is one of two cities called, in Scripture, "city of David." The other is Bethlehem. (*Luke 2:11*) The latter was his "home town" by birth, (*I Samuel 1:16*) the former became his city by force of arms. (*II Samuel 5*)

After making Jerusalem his political capital, David determined to make it the religious capital also. He brought the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh to Jerusalem and placed it with careful preparation. (*II Samuel 6:12-14*) He also purchased the threshing floor of Araunah as the site upon which a permanent housing for the Ark would be built and later erected an altar of burnt offerings upon the site. (*II Samuel 24:25*)

The traditional tomb of David may be seen today on the southwestern slopes of the hill upon which Jerusalem sits. Most scholarship discounts the authenticity of the site, however.

Evidence of early pagan influence in Jerusalem, capital of Jehovah worship, is seen in such activity as the sacrifice offered by Adonijah "by the stone of Zohemoth, which is beside En-rogel." (*I Kings 1:9*) Zohemoth is associated with Baal worship.

(Readers of the English Bible are frequently misled concerning Adonijah by the unfortunate King James translation of *I Kings 1:6*, "he was a very goodly man." Rotherham more accurately renders this passage, "he was of exceedingly handsome appearance.")

A part of the sun worship during the festivities of the winter solstice (December 24-25) centered around the burning of a log. (See Chapter III Baal Worship) The log represented the sun god cut down in the midst of his strength. Around the stump of the tree was pictured a serpent, symbol of his reviving life. After the burning of the log on the evening of December 24, the evergreen fir appeared next morning in its place symbolizing the reviving of the slain god. The serpent which twined around the stump was also worshipped as a minor deity. It was at an altar to this pagan god that Adonijah offered sacrifices.

Since Adonijah offered his sacrifices on the eve of an abortive attempt to seize the throne of his father, David, he could scarcely do so in the proper place. It is highly probable that he was attempt-

ing to sacrifice to Jehovah. If so, his worship of God at a pagan altar is a good example of the pollution of Jehovah worship by Baalism in Jerusalem.

This pollution was multiplied several-fold by Solomon's compromise with paganism. (*I Kings 11:4-8*) Ashtoreth, Chemosh and Moloch, named in connection with Solomon's unfaithfulness are names associated with the unholy trinity of the sun god. (See again Chapter III BAAL WORSHIP).

During the first hundred years following the division of the kingdom, Jerusalem was in a state of decline. At this time, Baalism increased.

After a period of restoration, from Jehosaphat to Joash (B.C. 871-789), Jerusalem was humiliated again by Jehoash (B.C. 798-789). It was during this period that Ahab and Jezebel, of the Omri dynasty in the northern kingdom, seized the throne of Judah. The temple was laid waste and the priesthood of Baal was supported from the royal treasury.

Jerusalem was revived again under Uzziah, but the worship of Jehovah was never quite completely purified of the influence of Baalism prior to the Babylonian captivity.

It is quite obvious that the sinfulness of both Samaria and Jerusalem and their subsequent destruction are directly related to the insidious influence of Baal. Babylon, "the mother of harlots," (*Revelation 17:5*) had succeeded, through her daughter, the religion of Baal, in seducing Israel the "prince of God."

It was this spiritual immorality between the people of God and the religion of men that was the object of God's warning to them through the prophets, and the target of His wrath when they refused to repent.

POLLUTED AND FALSE RELIGION OF SAMARIA AND JERUSALEM RESULT IN MORAL AND SOCIAL EVILS . . .

The peculiar sins of Israel were personified in Samaria. The moral and social abuses against which Micah prophesied are the same as those listed by Amos, who preached and wrote during the same period. Amos speaks of God's faithful being sold into slavery. (*Amos 2:6-7*) The poor were oppressed. (*Amos 5:7*) Graft in high places was the order of the day (*Amos 5:12*) as was dishonesty in business dealings.

The insatiable drive for status symbols (*Amos 4:1, 3:15, 6:4*) coupled with an intense pre-occupation with entertainment (*Amos 6*) left the people unconcerned for their national welfare.

False confidence in a false god produced a false sense of security from divine judgement. (*Amos 5:14, 9:10*)

As might be expected, the moral fiber of the people was totally rotten. Amos speaks of father and son committing fornication with the same girl. (*Amos 2:7*)

The peculiar sins of Judah were personified in Jerusalem. Micah lists the peculiar sins of the southern kingdom. They vary slightly from those of the north, and the variation may be due in part to the degree of Baal influence. Nevertheless, Judah's sins are heinous and the prophet's warning is sharp just as against Israel. The absence of righteousness noted by Micah (*Micah 7:2*) is reminiscent of Abraham's futile search for one righteous man in Sodom. (*Genesis 18:23-ff*)

In denouncing this unrighteousness, Micah focuses on four principal kinds of evil-doers: (1) There were the land grabbers whom the prophet pictures as lying awake at night and scheming how they may do the small farmer out of his holdings. (2:1) Their concern was not for the moral right or wrong of what they were doing, but only for whether or not they would be found out. (2:9) This avarice was practiced even at the expenes of one's own relatives. (7:5-7)

(2) There were lovers of evil in high office. (3:1-4) In their activities, bribery rather than justice decided civil cases (7:3) so that the "little man" had no effective recourse against the grabbing of the rich and powerful.

(3) False preachers, who were more concerned with their income than with the truth or with right and wrong, preached what their wealthy listeners wanted to hear.

(4) Hireling priests added to the practice of the false prophets. (3:11) Idolatry was allowed to pollute the worship of the people. (5:11-2 and 3:7) As a result of such unholy "clergy," the people believed that their national identity as "God's People" insured them against destruction (3:11) and that God's favor could be bought with sacrifice. (6:5-7) They could have profited greatly by reading their own Bible. (eg. *Psalm 50*)

No thinking American Christian can read the minor prophets and fail to sense the parallels between Israel and Judah just prior to their downfall and America in the second half of the twentieth century. The sins are the same . . . their causes are the same . . . the public apathy is the same . . . the false sense of security is the same . . . and, because God deals with men in every age on the basis of the same eternal ethic, the danger of destruction is the same. If our nation should fall due to this moral dry rot resulting from polluted and false

religion, it would be no strange thing when viewed in the light of history. And if God should use a godless power to bring about this destruction, this also would be in keeping with the lessons of history. God is still on His throne exercising authority over nations!

SAMARIA TO BE DESTROYED . . . Micah 1:6-11

RV . . . Therefore I will make Samaria as a heap of the field, and as places for planting vineyards; and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will uncover the foundations thereof. And all her graven images shall be beaten to pieces, and all her hires shall be burned with fire, and all her idols will I lay desolate; for of the hire of a harlot hath she gathered them, and unto the hire of a harlot shall they return.. For this will I lament and wail; I will go stripped and naked; I will make a wailing like the jackals, and a lamentation like the ostriches. For her wounds are incurable; for it is come even unto Judah; it reacheth unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem. Tell it not in Gath, weep not at all: at Bethleaphrah have I rolled myself in the dust. Pass away, O inhabitant of Shaphir, in nakedness and shame: the inhabitant of Zaanan is not come forth; the wailing of Bethazel shall take from you the stay thereof.

LXX . . . Therefore I will make Samaria as a store-house of the fruits of the field, and as a planting of a vineyard: and I will utterly demolish her stones, and I will expose her foundations. And they shall cut in pieces all the graven images, and all that she has hired they shall burn with fire, and I will utterly destroy all her idols: because she has gathered of the hires of fornication, and of the hires of fornication has she amassed wealth. Therefore shall she lament and wail, she shall go barefooted, and being naked she shall make lamentation as that of serpents, and mourning as of the daughters of sirens. For her plague has become grievous; for it has come even to Juda, and has reached to the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem. Ye that are in Geth, exalt not yourselves, and ye Enakim, do not rebuild from the ruins of the house in derision: sprinkle dust in the place of your laughter. The inhabitant of Sennaar, fairly inhabiting her cities, came not forth to mourn for the house next to her: she shall receive of you the stroke of grief.

COMMENTS

SAMARIA . . . SCENE OF DESOLATION . . . Micah 1:6-7

Samaria had been first to succumb to Baal worship. Before Jerusalem, Samaria had first become shot through with sin as a result of

false gods. Samaria had chosen to break with the government in God's chosen city, Jerusalem. Samaria would be first to feel the wrath of God against a rebellious people.

Micah had actually seen this destruction in the vision by which the word of God came to him. (Cf. 1:1) *His* description of it bears the vivid stamp of eyewitness testimony. It is as though his eyes smarted from the dust of falling buildings and the stench of death after battle burned his nostrils. He would live to experience the same terrible desolation again in reality. The land would be overrun in 734 B.C. and the city itself wiped out in 721 B.C. by the armies of Shalmaneser and Sargon II.

Micah's God is not a petty national deity committed unconditionally to support the nation of Israel. He is the transcendent God who has called a man and through him created a people to bless all men. He will not brook flagrant disobedience and turning to strange gods. Indeed He cannot, if His eternal grand design for man is to be redeemed in the Seed of Abraham and fulfilled in a called-out family with Him as head.

Nor is He simply a petulant overlord who is in a rage because He has not had His own way. His wrath springs from much deeper wells. His wrath is His love reacting to that which threatens to thwart His blessing all the nations of the world. If He is to bring this redemption about, what He is about to do to Israel, must be done to preserve the covenant by which the blessing is to come to all.

Samaria, *capital* of the northern nation and center of her religion has become also the *capital* of her sin and the center of guilt. So Samaria will become "as a heap of the field . . . as places for planting vineyards . . ."

In the rock-strewn fields of Palestine, such a heap is a common sight, as the farmer gathers the stones into a heap in preparation for planting. The stones of which the once proud *city* of Samaria was built will be cast into the valley below and piled in heaps. This prophecy of desolation was fulfilled so completely that even these heaps of stones have all but vanished today.

Before the building of Samaria by Omri, the three hundred foot hill on which it stood was a vineyard. Because the *city* had turned to strange gods and led its people into *sin*, the site would be returned to its original use.

The hill is surrounded today by terraces, one a narrow wooded mound of earth raised slightly from the hillside. Above it are the

marks of smaller terraces which may well be the vestiges of the streets of the city. In place of streets the terraces now support terraced fields.

God will "discover the foundations" of the city. The foundations are the unseen part of any structure. To find or discover them, it is necessary first to destroy the buildings which rest upon them. One who has walked among the ruins of ancient civilizations knows the familiar sight of such foundations . . . they are the last remaining ruin of any overthrown city. God will discover them in Samaria by wiping out this capital of idolatry.

All her graven images are to be beaten to pieces. To borrow a phrase from Abraham Lincoln, we have come to "the nub of the matter." It is Israel's unfaithfulness to her covenant vow with Jehovah in worshipping these images which was to bring about the ruination of Samaria.

The word "hires" (*v.* 7) refers to all that the worshippers of Baal sought to gain from worshipping him, along with the gifts offered to him as acts of worship. The motive in false worship is always personal gain of one type or another, just as true worship is always the abandonment of self to the purpose and service of God.

In laying waste the idols of Israel, God will be destroying the hires of a harlot. In her overthrow, her wealth, gained from spiritual fornication with idols, would go to another harlot . . . the Assyrian capital of Nineveh.

Micah is not the first to call false religion harlotry, especially when indulged in by the covenant people. (False worship is called harlotry throughout the Bible from its inception in old Babylon.) The allegory is an apt one. The covenant with Israel is treated as a marriage vow; Israel's incessant affairs with Baal as adultery.

Hosea 2:2-13 develops this allegory in the actual marital stress of the prophet's own life. *Ezekiel 16* contains two separate versions of the allegory.

In the first, the foundling child becomes the faithless wife of her benefactor. There the emphasis is upon Judah, but the principle is the same, since all of the people flirted with idolatry. The girlchild is left exposed to die. Jehovah passes by and bids her live and flourish. Later, in womanhood, He solemnly marries her and provides her with wealth and status far above her neighbors. She owes all to Him.

In return His bride plays the harlot (*Ezekiel 16:15*) by offering her children, the children of Jehovah, to idols!

Ezekiel 16's second allegory centers in Jerusalem. Her sin is said to be worse than Sodom or Samaria, since after all, they were not wives

of Jehovah as was she. (Micah, however, does not hesitate to use the same allegory against Samaria since the people in the north as well as those in the south stood under the same divine covenant.)

Similar accusations of unfaithfulness are directed against the covenant people in such passages as *Hosea 4:13-14*, *Amos 2:7-8*, *Isaiah 30:6*, *Jeremiah 2 & 3*, etc.

The law required that an unfaithful wife and her lover be put to death. (*Deuteronomy 22:22*) Israel's unfaithfulness is worse than that of a common prostitute who is paid for her services. She invites her lovers and pays them. (*Isaiah 30:6*, etc.) Therefore God, Who is righteous in that He always conducts Himself by the same standards which He sets for His people, will punish His faithless wife. (*Ezekiel 16:35-43*)

The punishment will not be by death. He will expose her to the world and give her over to her lovers, but He will do it to stop her harlotry and save the marriage, *ie.* the covenant. This is carefully spelled out by the prophets. The forthcoming downfall of Israel and the captivity of Judah will be followed by a reconciliation. The covenant will once again become the basis of a happy marriage. The temple will be rebuilt, following the captivity, and the *remnant* of Israel will yet be the means of blessing all the nations of the world through the Seed of Abraham.

THE HUSBAND'S LAMENT . . . 1:8

God does not enjoy punishing His people. Even though He has no choice but to cast off His faithless bride for a time in order to preserve the marriage, He now says, in effect, "*this is going to hurt me worse than it does you!*" Such lamentation ought to put the lie to the theology current in some modern circles which separates the God of the Old Testament from the God of the New Testament on the ridiculous assumption that the God of the Old Testament was not a "God of love." There is no pain equal to the pain suffered when love punishes to preserve!

The deep anguish of God over the state of Israel and the necessity to punish her so violently is spelled out in terms of the public mourning customary at the time. In time of deep distress, the bereaved stripped off his sandals (the Septuagint so translates "stripped" here) and his upper garments (the meaning of "naked" in these verses). Such barefoot, naked condition was a common sign of mourning. (*II Samuel 15:30*)

To lament was to beat the breast in despair to the accompaniment of a loud mournful howl. The sound is here compared to that of the jackals, (rather wild dogs) which howl when deserted like a human cub when left alone and unloved. It is also compared here with the sound of the ostrich which in distress utters a long shrill sighing cry as though in deep hurt. Another similitude may also be intended by the reference to the ostrich: an ostrich hen will occasionally forget her nest, leaving her eggs to be trampled. So has Israel deserted Jehovah. (Cf. *Hebrews 10:29* where unfaithfulness to Christ is pictured as trampling under foot the Son of God.)

Micah pictures Jehovah as utterly tormented by the plight of His people and with grief for having to punish them so severely. Although He has been deeply wounded by the unfaithfulness of His bride, He still loves her very much. Yet the purpose for which the marriage had been contracted demands her faithfulness to Him and to bring this about she must be punished. He does not glory in her impending suffering . . . He is more torn by it than she!

It would be difficult to find a more vivid example of what it means to hate sin and love sinners. The old cliché of the wife deserting her husband for his best friend is exceeded here when Israel deserts God for His worst enemy . . . Baal. Yet he does not hate her . . . He despises her sin. Even in the punishment there are overtones of forgiveness!

How much more we would appreciate our relationship to God if we could but understand how very much He loves us! How much more we would be like Him . . . and worthy to be called His children . . . if we could learn to so love in spite of sin.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PUNISHMENT . . . 1:9

Leaving the allegory of the faithless wife and the injured husband, the Lord, through Micah, now reveals His ultimate concern. The infection of Samaria is spreading like a deadly contagion to Judah . . . to the Chosen City itself. If the Covenant of Promise is to be redeemed, the infection must be stopped. Since it is already incurable, it must be destroyed.

Moral decay resulting from false religion bears the seed of its own destruction. In the case of Samaria it was time for surgery. The northern kingdom was wiped out, its people scattered, and there was never to be a return.

There is the hope that, seeing the destruction of Samaria, Judah would repent. As the infection, so the therapeutic destruction reached

as far as the capital gates when the armies of Sennacherib camped outside the walls. (*Isaiah 36:1, 37:33-37*) God's punishment came step by step, leaving time for repentance. The defeat of Samaria and the scattering of her people, the halting of Sennacherib short of a conquest of Jerusalem were designed to call Jerusalem to her knees in contrition, to turn her away from the idolatry and insuing abandonment of morality which had become incurable in the north.

But Jerusalem would not repent. She was taken captive to Babylon so that God, through suffering, might force the remnant back to Himself that the covenant might be fulfilled through them.

PUNISHMENT EXTENDED TO GATE OF JERUSALEM . . .

1:10-12

The punishment of God against the northern kingdom is not to stop at Samaria. It will rather roll like a relentless tide until it dashes against the very walls of Jerusalem. This is depicted dramatically by Micah as he lists one village after another, each one slightly nearer Jerusalem.

He begins with Gath, one of the five cities of the Philistines, on the northern borders of Judah and proceeds through Bethle-aphrah, Shaphir, Zaanan, Bethzel and Maroth. The coming invasion by Sennacherib is presented in all its terror as one village after another falls before him, the refugees from one finding no succor in the next.

"*Tell it not in Gath!*" Gath, the city of the Philistines . . . how the Philistines would delight to hear of the destruction of the Hebrews. The prophet's words are an echo of David's lament over the death of Saul and Jonathan. (*II Samuel 1:20*) "*Weep not at all.*" Do not reveal to the enemies of God's people your inner feelings . . . lest they rejoice!

From Gath the invaders would sweep south. "*At Bethle-aphrah have I rolled myself in the dust.*" This is the only mention of Bethle-aphrah in the Bible. Its name is a play on words . . . meaning literally "city of dust." (An appropriate name for many Judean villages!) Rolling in the dust was one of many customary forms of mourning, similar to another such practice . . . that of sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

From Bethle-aphrah the disaster mounts to Shaphir, a village of Judah which lay between Eleutheropolis and Ashkelon. The name means "fair." "*Pass away, O inhabitants of Shaphir, in nakedness and shame.*" Nakedness again is to be understood as the removal of the upper gar-

ment as a sign of mourning. That which was once fair would stand naked and ashamed in the judgement of the Lord!

"The inhabitant of Zaanan is not come forth." Zaanan has not been definitely identified by archeologists. It is probably the same as Zenan, located east of Ashkelon. (*Joshua 18:22*) Its people cannot come forth to console the refugees from the north because they are themselves in the path of Sennacharib. This is reminiscent of Jeremiah's warning, "Thus saith Jehovah, Behold a people cometh from the north country; and a great nation shall be stirred up from the uttermost parts of the earth. They lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea, and they ride upon horses, every one set in array, as a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Zion. We have heard the report thereof; our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, and pangs as of a woman in travail. Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy, and terror, are on every side. O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth and wallow thyself in ashes; make thee mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentation; for the destroyer shall suddenly come upon us." (*Jeremiah 6:22-26*)

"The wailing of Bethazel shall take from you the stay thereof." Bethazel may be the same as Azal. (*Zechariah 14:5*) "The stay thereof" is taken away. That is to say, Bethazel, itself smitten, cannot sustain those who flee from the destruction on the plains. There is no more security near Jerusalem. The rout is complete.

WARNINGS TO JUDAH . . . Micah 1:12(b)-16

RV . . . For the inhabitant of Maroth waiteth anxiously for good, because evil is come down from Jehovah unto the gate of Jerusalem. Bind the chariot to the swift steed, O inhabitant of Lachish: she was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion: for the transgressions of Israel were found in thee. Therefore shalt thou give a parting gift to Moreshethgath; the houses of Achzib shall be a deceitful thing unto the kings of Israel. I will yet bring unto thee, O inhabitant of Mare-shah, him that shall possess thee: the glory of Israel shall come even unto Adullam. Make thee bold, and cut off thy hair for the children of thy delight: enlarge thy baldness as the eagle; for they are gone into captivity from thee.

LXX . . . Who has begun to act for good to her that dwells in sorrow? for calamities have come down from the Lord upon the gates of Jerusalem, even a sound of chariots and horsemen: the inhabitants of Lachis,

she is the leader of sin to the daughter of Sion: for in thee were found the transgressions of Israel. Therefore shall he cause men to be sent forth as far as the inheritance of Geth, even vain houses; they are become vanity to the kings of Israel; until they bring the heirs, O inhabitants of Lachis: the inheritance shall reach to Odollam, even the glory of the daughter of Israel. Shave thine hair, and make thyself bald for thy delicate children; increase thy widowhood as an eagle; for thy people are gone into captivity from thee.

COMMENTS

The warning of Micah to Judah, concerning the fall of Samaria and the northern kingdom, is that the punishment from the north is to extend through the Philistine plain to the gates of Jerusalem. In verses 6-11 we saw the encroachment from Samaria's viewpoint. In verses 12-15 we see the invasion of the northern kingdom from the vantage point of several Judean towns which are so situated as to be in the path of Sargon. We might have expected the overthrow of the north to end at the boundary between Israel and Judah, but the conqueror was not so neat in his concerns. Certain towns which lay south of the border would, largely for reasons of topography, be taken along with the northern kingdom. Whatever the attitude of the southern kingdom toward this violation of its territory, it was in no position to do much about it.

The cities mentioned are in the Philistine plain of Shephelah in northwestern Judah, and are the home territory of the prophet Micah. Moresheth-gath was Micah's home town. One can imagine the anguish of heart that came to the prophet as, in a vision, he saw the destruction of people and places filled with personal nostalgia and memories.

The first of the cities of the Philistine plain mentioned is Maroth. The name means *bitterness*. The city is known in modern times as *Unman*. It is located in the hill country bordering the plain of Shephelah near Beth-anoth and Eltekon. (Cf. *Joshua 15:59*)

As with each of the cities and towns named here, there is a play on the literal meaning of the name Morath. The people of Morath (bitterness) are anxiously waiting for the good. There is no bitterness like that felt by those who wait in the path of an invading army, hoping against hope for the intervention of a delivering force. Since this is apparently the first city below the border and on Judean territory to be invaded, the citizenry would no doubt hope for the army of the

southern kingdom to intervene on their behalf. In bitterness they waited eagerly for help (goodness) . . . but none came.

To those who stood in the path of the invader, it would seem that Sargon was the originator of their woes. The prophet sees otherwise. That which is to happen, which he has seen already happening in his vision, is "come down from Jehovah." It is punishment, first for sin, and secondly for failing to heed the prophets.

The anxiety of the citizens of Morath over their own plight would be eclipsed by their awareness that Jerusalem itself was threatened?

The next mentioned city in the line of march is Lachish. The literal meaning of Lachish is *swift beast*. Again there is a play on words in the original text. The inhabitants of Lachish (swift beast) are warned to hitch their swift steed to the chariot. There would be need for speed if any were to successfully flee before the invading host.

Lachish is located at the site of today's Tel-el-Hesey, about sixteen miles east of Gaza and slightly north. (Cf. *Joshua 15:39* and *Jeremiah 34:7*) Her punishment is just, in that she was the "beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion."

We are not sure in what sense Lachish was the "beginning" of sin. Some have thought this was one of Solomon's chariot towns. (*I Kings 9:19, 10:26*) If so, the people of Lachish would have been among the first in Israel to be introduced to the false sense of security which comes from the dependance upon military arms rather than upon the might of Jehovah.

It seems more likely that Lachish was the "beginning" of sin in that she had been among the first cities of the southern kingdom to participate in the newly minted idolatry of Jeroboam. (*I Kings 12:16-29*)

Whatever the reason, Micah makes Lachish responsible as the beginning of corruption and idolatry in Judah. The term *daughter of Zion* is a personification of all the people of Judah and of Jerusalem in particular. The implication is that Judah has been infected with Israel's sin and that Lachish is the "carrier."

Even though Lachish is a fortified city, Reoboam having made it so by surrounding it with double walls, battlements and towers, it would not escape the judgement of God at the hands of Sargon.

Micah's home town, Moresheth-gath, is next on the list of cities receiving the prophetic warning. It is difficult to know just who is being addressed in verse 14(a). There is apparently no historic connection between Lachish and Moresheth-gath and so no reason apparent why such a statement should be directed to Lachish. It seems more

likely that "you must give parting gifts" is directed to Judah who must watch another Judean town overrun in the downfall of the northern kingdom.

It was (and still is) customary in that part of the world for members of the family to bring goodbye gifts to a daughter who has been given in marriage, and especially to one whose marriage will take her to a far away place never to be seen again by her family. The goodbye to Moresheth-gath will be like that . . . permanent.

The literal meaning of *Moresbeth* is "possession," and again, in the giving of gifts, there is the play on words which is typical of this passage.

Achzib is mentioned, along with Mareshah, in *Joshua 15:44*. It may be the Chezeb of *Genesis 38:5* and also the Cozeba of *I Chronicles 4:42*. It is probably to be identified with modern Aen-Kezbah, situated eight miles north and east of Beit Jibrin in the Philistine plain.

The plural "houses of Achzib," is taken by some to indicate two Achzibs. If so it would be translated "the two Beth-Achzib." If this is true, the second Achzib is probably the one mentioned in *Joshua 29:29* and *Judges 1:13*. It is located in Asher and situated at or near the present site of Ez-zib on the coast between Acco and Tyre.

As with the other locations mentioned here, the name Achzib is a play on words. The Hebrew form of the word is *akbzabb*, meaning "a deceitful thing." It is applied in *Jeremiah 15:18* to a stream which seasonally dries up and which would deceive a weary traveler who expected to refresh himself. (Compare *Job 6:15*)

So Achzib shall be a deceitful thing to the king of Israel. The members of the royal family, fleeing to the town or towns of Beth Ach-achzib will not find a way of escape or refreshment.

It might be well to recall just here, that Sargon claims to have carried off only some 27,000 people from the northern kingdom. If so, it was the members of the royal family along with the social, political and cultural leaders. In this way the conquered people would be leaderless and unlikely to rebel. The flavor of fleeing royalty is found throughout the prophecies of the downfall of Israel.

In verse 15 we again find the usual play on words; this time found in the use of *yoresb*, "him that shall possess," with *Mareshah*, "a possession." *Joshua 15:44* pictures Moresah as located near Achzib. Archeologists identify it with a ruin called Merash near Beit-Jibrin . . . about one mile to the south.

The Israelites had taken the city from the Canaanites. It will once more be possessed by a new possessor.

Adullam identified with the ruins at present day Aid-el-ma, three miles southeast of Soco and northeast eight miles from Mareshah, is, in a sense, the high water mark of the invasion at the time of the fall of Israel. Later, the entire southern kingdom would fall to Sennacharib, but for the present, the Assyrian tide stops here.

Adullam, as its location indicates, is in the lowlands of Judah (*Joshua 15:55*) and is characterized by an abundance of caves. It was here that David had fled from Saul. (*1 Samuel 22:1-ff*)

Now, centuries later, the same caves are to provide refuge for the northern nobility as they flee before the Assyrians. If there is to be a safe hiding place it will be here. So the "glory of Israel" *ie.* the valuables which are to be hidden from foreign plunder, are to come to the caves of Adullam.

Self-inflicted baldness was a symbol of mourning among the worshippers of Baal. (*Amos 8:10, Isaiah 3:24*) It is forbidden in the Law of Moses, *Leviticus 19:27-28* and *Deuteronomy 14:1*) probably because it was associated with the surrounding paganism. The demand that those here receiving the punishment of Jehovah shear their heads and the heads of their children is repeated three times for emphasis. The punishment is essentially for worshipping pagan gods. The fitting form of mourning for such is the mourning practiced by the original worshippers of Baal.

The word "eagle" in the English translation is misleading. The bird referred to here is probably the Carrion Vulture which populates Egypt (where it was worshipped) and Palestine. Its head is completely bald in front, and has only a very thin covering in back. Micah's rebuke is vivid and scathing.

The terrors of war have not changed. Insert new names for the towns and villages in this passage and we have a description of Europe cringing before Atilla the Hun, or Hitler . . . and of the people of the East trembling before the Japanese Imperial Army as it advances down the Pacific island chain toward Australia. Or, to make the allegory more contemporary yet . . . here is a picture of the Czech people shuddering as the Russian tanks roll by, or of Yugoslavia and Hungary bracing for a similar invasion.

The difference is that the invasion of Sargon and later of Sennacharib had been announced in advance by the prophets of God. They had been made aware that the pillage of war was their just punishment for having been unfaithful to God. Perhaps it is only this awareness that distinguishes them from more recent victims of conflict.

MICAH

Chapter VI—Questions

First Cycle

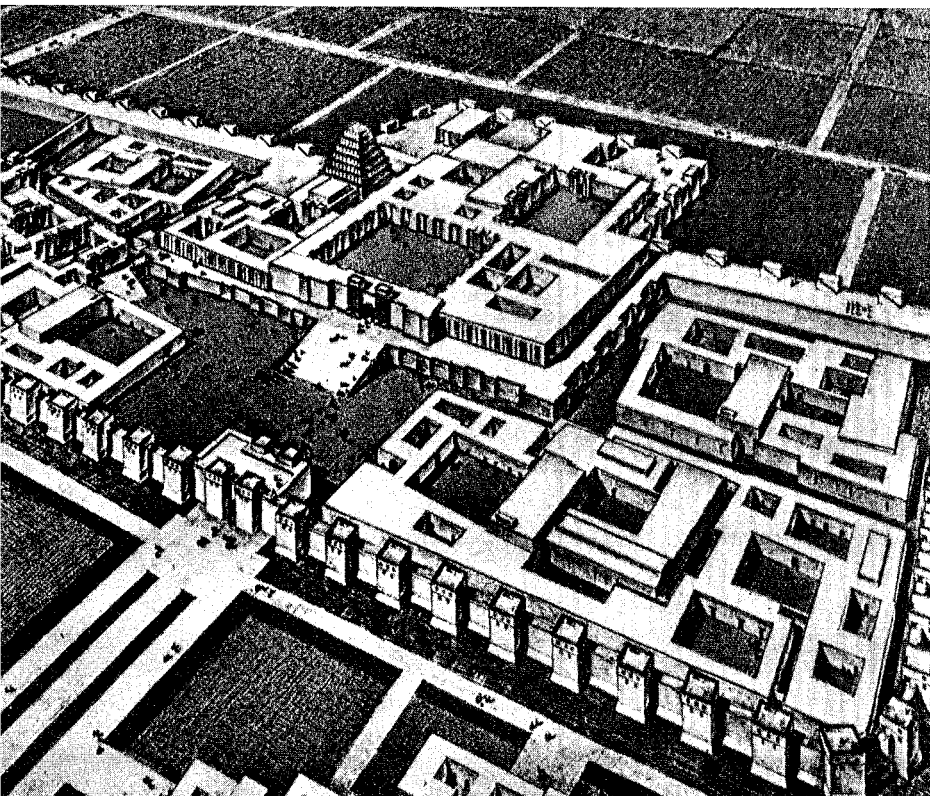
1. What evidence does Micah give in the early verses of his book concerning God's universal concern for all men?
2. The term "the people" is used frequently to designate———.
3. The term "the nations" indicates _____ in contrast to "the people."
4. What long precedent does Micah have for his use of "earth and all that therein is" to call the whole world to listen to God's indictment of His covenant people?
5. _____, Micah's contemporary, uses the same phrase.
6. What two reasons are apparent for God's concern that the "earth and all that is in it" hear His charge?
7. Who is the "star witness" for the prosecution against God's unfaithful people?
8. Show how Stephen's defense (Acts 7) seconds the accusation of Micah against the people.
9. Discuss, in connection with Micah 1:2(c)-3(a), "God is not an absentee God."
10. What is signified by the term "high places" (Micah 1:3(b))?
11. Discuss Micah's statement that the mountains shall melt and the valleys melt like wax. Micah 1:4
12. The purifying wrath of God against the people is to be occasioned by _____ and _____.
13. Trace the eight ways in which the name Israel is used historically in the Bible.
14. What is meant by pre-exilic? by post exilic?
15. Trace the Biblical history of the name Judah and its development into the word Jew.
16. Describe the situation of the city of Samaria.
17. How is Samaria the "transgression of Jacob"?
18. How is Jerusalem the "sin of Judah"?
19. Both *Je* and *Baal* mean _____.
20. Compare the sins of the northern and southern kingdoms.
21. Why was Samaria to be first to feel God's wrath?
22. Discuss the significance of Samaria's graven images.
23. How is spiritual harlotry an apt allegory of idolatry?
24. How does the lament of Micah 1:8 relate to our understanding

*"In the ninth year of Hoshea
the king of Assyria took Samaria"*
(II Kings 17: 6).

This was Sargon II, conqueror
of the capital of the northern
kingdom of Israel. His portrait
has been preserved on this
limestone relief for over two
thousand five hundred years.

FROM: THE BIBLE AS HISTORY IN PICTURES
By Werner Keller - Wm. Morrow Co.





Dur-Sharrukin—"Sargon's citadel"—was inscribed on cuneiform tablets which Emile Botta, the great French archaeologist, discovered at Khorsabad north of Nineveh in 1842. They were found among the ruined walls of what had been a gigantic royal establishment. Its builder was "Sargon, the king of Assyria", referred to in Isaiah 20: 1. The frontage of the city wall itself with its twenty towers—not counting the entrance gateway—was over 2000 feet long. The palace, which can be seen farther back, with its temple-tower, was built on an artificial platform 45 feet high (reconstruction).

that the God of the Old Testament is the same loving God as that of the New Testament?

25. What is the purpose of the punishment promised by Micah?
26. The warning of Micah to Judah is _____.
27. List the cities of the Philistine plains mentioned by Micah. Locate them on a map.
28. Micah's home town was _____.
29. Why did Sargon carry off the social, political and cultural leaders of Israel?
30. Self-inflicted baldness by the worshippers of Baal was a symbol of _____.

CHAPTER VII

SECOND CYCLE

WOE TO THE ARROGANT MISLEADERS . . . Micah 2:1-3

RV . . . Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and seize them; and houses, and take them away: and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. Therefore thus saith Jehovah: Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks, neither shall ye walk haughtily; for it is an evil time.

LXX . . . They meditated troubles, and wrought wickedness on their beds, and they put it in execution with the daylight; for they have not lifted up their hands to God. And they desired fields, and plundered orphans, and oppressed families, and spoiled a man and his house, even a man and his inheritance. Therefore thus saith the Lord; Behold, I devise evils against this family out of which ye shall not lift up your necks, neither shall ye walk upright speedily: for the time is evil.

COMMENTS

Micah now turns from the generalities of judgement impending against the northern and southern kingdoms, their capitals and their cities, to the personal denouncement of those who sit in high places in them. The punishment of Jerusalem and Samaria are the result of sin. Sin is an individual thing. If a society or a city is sinful, it is because it is inhabited by sinful people. If the individual is subject to