

MICAH

The Man: The last great prophet of the 8th Century, Micah was most active from about 714-701 B.C. He lived near Amos' hometown in southwestern Judah, and was much like him – a prophet of social justice, champion of the oppressed and underprivileged.

The Times: The Kingdom of Judah was at its peak during the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham (c. 783-735), but the wealthy oppressed the peasant landholders. External ritualism flourished, but religious ethics were ignored. Ahaz was a weak king and a vassal of Assyria, which conquered Syria and Samaria (Israel). Hezekiah, influenced by Micah, was a reformer, cutting the ties to Assyria and purifying Judah's worship.

The Message: Samaria's fate is a warning; failure to repent will bring a similar punishment. There is still hope for a messianic restoration, but first must come the punishment and purification of the people. Alternates between warning and promise.

Prophetic Themes in Micah

Authority: Hear the word of the Lord: [3:5,8; 4:6; 6:1,9]

Covenant Relationship: the Lord rescued the people from Egypt; they must do right and love goodness: [6:1-5,8]

Specific Sins: cheating, stealing, bribery, lying: [2:1-2; 3:1-11; 6:9-13,16]

Judgment: God will devastate the land: [1:6-7; 3:12; 4:10; 6:13-16]

Call to Repentance: I trust in God, my savior: [7:7-9,18-20]

Remnant: the Lord will forgive the remnant and rule over them: [2:12-13; 4:1-8; 5:2-7; 7:18-20]

Readings at Mass

5:1-4 – From Bethlehem shall come the messianic king who will shepherd the people. [Year C, 4th Sunday of Advent; Sept. 8 (Feast of Mary's Birth)]

4:1-4 – The restoration – universal peace: [In Time of War and Civil Disturbances]

2:1-5 – Woe to those who plan evil. [Year II, Saturday – 15th Week in Ordinary Time]

6:1-4,6-8 – Your rescuer requires not sacrifice, but that you do what is right. [Year II, Monday – 16th Week in Ordinary Time]

7:7-9 – I will look to the Lord, my light. [Optional Weekday Mass, 4th Week of Lent]

7:14-15,18-20 – God pardons sins for the remnant. [Saturday – 2nd Week of Lent]