EDIFIED EDITION

Micah

A modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures

7	105	Old	33
chapters	verses	Testament	book of 66

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Edified Edition (EDE): a modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures from the original Hebrew and Greek, in everyday British English. www.edifiededition.com

Numbered notes follow each chapter.

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Chapter 1

Micah 1 opens with the word of the LORD to Micah of Moresheth concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. All peoples are summoned to hear, for the Lord GOD is coming out from His holy temple to tread on the heights of the earth, and the mountains melt beneath Him. All this is for Jacob's rebellion and Israel's sins: Samaria will become a heap of rubble, her idols smashed and her prostitute's wages burned. Micah goes about barefoot and naked, wailing like jackals, because Samaria's wound is incurable and has reached the gate of Jerusalem. A chain of wordplays on the towns of the Shephelah, from Gath to Mareshah and Adullam, traces the invader's advance, and Zion is told to shave her head in mourning, for her children will go into exile.

[1]This is the word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morashtite, which he saw about Samaria and Jerusalem while Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah reigned over Judah.[1]

[2]Listen, you peoples, all of you; pay attention, earth, and everything in it. Let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple.

[3]For look, the LORD is coming out from His dwelling place; He comes down and treads on the heights of the earth.

[4]The mountains melt beneath Him and the valleys split apart, like wax before the fire, like water pouring down a slope.

[5]All this is because of Jacob's rebellion and the sins of the house of Israel. What is Jacob's rebellion? Is it not Samaria? And what are Judah's high places? Are they not Jerusalem?[2]

[6]So I will turn Samaria into a heap of rubble in the open country, a place for planting vines. I will tip her stones down into the valley and lay bare her foundations.

[7]All her carved images will be smashed to pieces, all her temple gifts burned with fire, and I will make all her idols a ruin. Since she gathered them

from a prostitute's wages, they will go back to be a prostitute's wages.[3]

8 Because of this I will mourn and wail; I will go about barefoot and stripped. I will howl like the jackals and moan like the ostriches.

9 For her wound cannot be healed; it has come as far as Judah. It has reached the very gate of my people, Jerusalem itself.

10 Do not tell it in Gath; do not weep at all. In Beth-leaphrah roll yourselves in the dust.[4]

11 Pass on your way, you who live in Shaphir, in shameful nakedness. Those who live in Zaanan do not come out. Beth-ezel is in mourning; its support is taken from you.[5]

12 Those who live in Maroth writhe in pain as they wait for good, for disaster has come down from the LORD to the gate of Jerusalem.[6]

13 Harness the horses to the chariot, you who live in Lachish. You were the beginning of sin for the daughter of Zion, for in you were found the rebellions of Israel.[7]

14 So you will give parting gifts to Moresheth-gath. The houses of Achzib will be a deception to the kings of Israel.[8]

15 I will yet bring a conqueror against you, you who live in Mareshah. The glory of Israel will come to Adullam.[9]

16 Shave your head in mourning for the children you delight in; make yourself as bald as the vulture, for they will go from you into exile.

1 Micah prophesied from about 740 to 700 BC, at the same time as Isaiah. Moresheth (Moresheth-gath, 1:14) was a town in the lowlands south-west of Jerusalem. Jeremiah 26:18 quotes Micah 3:12.

2 The capitals stand for the whole kingdoms; their shrines and their sins began with those who ruled from them.

3 The gifts given at Samaria's shrines, seen as the pay of a temple prostitute, will be carried off to enrich the shrines of the conquerors.

4 Verses 10–15 play on the names of the towns. 'Tell' (taggidu) sounds like Gath; Beth-leaphrah means 'house of dust'. 'Do not tell it in Gath' echoes David's lament (2 Samuel 1:20).

5 Shaphir means 'beautiful', yet goes naked; Zaanan sounds like 'come out', yet stays in; Beth-ezel means 'house at the side', but gives no support.

6 Maroth sounds like 'bitter things'.

7 'Horses' (rekesh) sounds like Lachish. Lachish was Judah's chief fortress after Jerusalem.

8 Moresheth sounds like 'betrothed', given away with a dowry; Achzib sounds like akzab, 'a deceptive stream' that dries up.

9 'Conqueror' (yoresh, 'one who takes possession') sounds like Mareshah. Israel's leaders will hide in Adullam, as David once did (1 Samuel 22:1).

Chapter 2

Micah 2 pronounces woe on those who lie awake planning evil and carry it out at dawn, coveting fields and houses and seizing them, robbing a man of his inheritance. So the LORD is planning disaster against this clan, from which they cannot free their necks; a taunt will be raised over them, and they will have no one to measure out a share in the LORD's assembly. The people tell the prophets not to preach, yet the LORD's words do good to the upright. They strip robes from peaceful travellers and drive women and children from their homes; this land is no resting place. A prophet who promised wine and beer would suit them well. Yet the LORD will gather the remnant of Israel like sheep in a fold, and the One who breaks through will go up before them, with their King at their head and the LORD leading them.

1 Woe to those who plan wickedness and work out evil as they lie in bed! At first light they carry it out, because they have the power to do it.[1]

2 They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them. They rob a man of his home, a person of his inheritance.

3 Therefore this is what the LORD says: I am planning disaster against this clan, and you will not be able to free your necks from it. You will no longer walk proudly, for it will be a time of disaster.

4 On that day people will take up a taunt-song against you and wail a bitter lament: "We are utterly ruined! He has given away my people's share. How He takes it from me! He divides our fields among the traitors."

5 So you will have no one in the assembly of the LORD to stretch out the measuring line and divide the land by lot.[2]

6 “Do not preach,” they preach. “No one should preach about these things; disgrace will not overtake us.”[3]

7 Should it be said, house of Jacob, “Is the Spirit of the LORD impatient? Are these His doings?” Do not My words do good to the one who walks uprightly?

8 But lately My people have risen up as an enemy. You strip the fine robe from those who pass by trustingly, like men coming home from war.

9 You drive the women of My people out of the homes they love; you take My splendour from their children for ever.

10 Get up and go! This is no place of rest, because uncleanness brings ruin, painful ruin.

11 If a man going about with wind and lies were to deceive you, saying, “I will preach to you about wine and beer,” he would be just the preacher for this people!

12 I will surely gather all of you, Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel. I will put them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture; it will be noisy with people.

13 The One who breaks through goes up before them; they break out, pass through the gate and go out by it. Their King passes on before them, the LORD at their head.[4]

1 Literally ‘because it is in the power of their hand’.

2 When the land was shared out again, these men would have no portion (Joshua 18:8–10).

3 ‘Preach’ is literally ‘drip’, used of prophetic speech. The Hebrew of this verse is terse and its sense uncertain.

4 ‘The One who breaks through’ opens the way out of captivity, as a shepherd breaks open the fold. Their King is the LORD Himself.

Chapter 3

Micah 3 addresses the heads of Jacob and rulers of Israel, who ought to know justice but hate good and love evil; they tear the skin from the people and chop up their flesh like meat for the pot. When they cry to the LORD He will not answer. The prophets who lead the people astray cry “Peace” when they have something to eat, but declare war on anyone who feeds them nothing; night will come on them without vision, and the seers will be put to shame, for there is no answer from God. Micah, by contrast, is filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his rebellion. Because rulers judge for a bribe, priests teach for a price and prophets divine for money, while leaning on the LORD, Zion will be ploughed like a field and Jerusalem become a heap of rubble.

1 Then I said, Listen, you heads of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know what is just?

2 Yet you hate good and love evil; you tear the skin off My people and the flesh from their bones.

3 You eat the flesh of My people, strip off their skin and break their bones in pieces; you chop them up like meat for the pan, like flesh for the cooking pot.

4 Then they will cry out to the LORD, but He will not answer them. At that time He will hide His face from them, because of the evil they have done.

5 This is what the LORD says about the prophets who lead My people astray: when they have something to chew on, they proclaim “Peace”, but against anyone who puts nothing in their mouths they declare a holy war.[1]

6 So night will come over you, without vision, and darkness, without divination. The sun will set on the prophets, and the day will go dark over them.

7 The seers will be put to shame and the diviners disgraced. They will all cover their faces, for there is no answer from God.[2]

8 But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, with justice and courage, to declare to Jacob his rebellion and to Israel his sin.

9 Hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel, who despise justice and twist everything that is straight,

10 who build Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with wrongdoing.

11 Her leaders give judgement for a bribe, her priests teach for a fee, and her prophets tell fortunes for silver. Yet they lean on the LORD and say, “Is not the LORD among us? No disaster will come upon us.”

12 Therefore because of you Zion will be ploughed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins,

and the temple mount a wooded hilltop.[3]

1 Literally ‘who bite with their teeth’. Their message depends on how well they are paid.

2 Literally ‘cover the upper lip’, a sign of mourning and shame (Leviticus 13:45).

3 A century later this verse was quoted in Jeremiah’s defence, and it was remembered that Hezekiah had repented at Micah’s word (Jeremiah 26:18–19).

Chapter 4

Micah 4 looks to the last days, when the mountain of the LORD’s house will be set above all the mountains and peoples will stream to it, saying, “Come, we will go up to the LORD’s mountain.” Instruction will go out from Zion; He will judge between many peoples, and they will beat their swords into ploughshares, each sitting under his own vine and fig tree with no one to make him afraid. The LORD will gather the lame and the scattered and reign over them on Mount Zion for ever, and the former dominion will return to the daughter of Jerusalem. For now Zion writhes like a woman in labour and must go to Babylon, but there she will be rescued. Many nations gather against her, not knowing the LORD’s plans, for He has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor, and Zion will rise and thresh them.

1 In the last days the mountain of the LORD’s house will be established as the highest of the mountains and raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it.[1]

2 Many nations will come and say, “Come, we will go up to the LORD’s mountain, to the house of Jacob’s God, so that He may teach us His ways and we may walk in His paths.” For instruction will go out from Zion, the LORD’s word from Jerusalem.

3 He will judge between many peoples and settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more.

4 Each of them will sit beneath his own vine and his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of Armies has spoken.

5 For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.

6 On that day, declares the LORD, I will gather the lame and bring together the scattered, those whom I have afflicted.

7 I will make the lame a remnant and those driven far away a strong nation, and the LORD will reign over them on Mount Zion from now on and for ever.

8 As for you, watchtower of the flock, stronghold hill of Zion’s daughter, your former rule will come back to you; royal power will return to the daughter of Jerusalem.[2]

9 Now why do you cry out so loudly? Is there no king among you? Has your counsellor perished, that pain grips you like a woman in labour?

10 Writhe and groan, daughter of Zion, like a woman giving birth, for now you must leave the city and camp in the open field. You will go to Babylon; there you will be rescued. There the LORD will redeem you from the grasp of your enemies.[3]

11 But now many nations are gathered against you. They say, “Let her be defiled; let our eyes gloat over Zion.”

12 But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD; they do not understand His plan, that He has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor.

13 Get up and thresh, daughter of Zion, for I will give you horns of iron and hoofs of bronze, and you will crush many peoples. You will devote their gain to the LORD, their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.[4]

1 Verses 1–3 are found also in Isaiah 2:2–4, and keep the same wording where the Hebrew is the same.

2 ‘Watchtower of the flock’ is Migdal-eder (Genesis 35:21). ‘Hill’ is Ophel, the fortified hill of Jerusalem by the palace.

3 A century before Babylon became the great power, Micah foresees both the exile there and the return.

4 ‘Devote’ is the word for things given over wholly to God (herem).

Chapter 5

Micah 5 begins with Jerusalem under siege and Israel's judge struck on the cheek. Then the LORD speaks to Bethlehem Ephrathah, small among the clans of Judah: from her will come for Him a ruler in Israel whose origins are from of old, from ancient days. Israel will be given up until she who is in labour has given birth; then He will stand and shepherd His flock in the strength of the LORD, and they will live secure, for His greatness will reach to the ends of the earth, and He will be their peace. When Assyria invades, shepherds will rise to rule it with the sword. The remnant of Jacob will be among the nations like dew from the LORD and like a lion among the flocks. On that day the LORD will cut off Israel's horses and chariots, its strongholds, its sorcery, its carved images and sacred poles, and will take vengeance on the nations that have not obeyed.

[1]Now gather your troops, city of troops, for a siege is laid against us. They strike the judge of Israel on the cheek with a rod.[1]

[2]But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for Me One who will be ruler in Israel, whose goings out are from of old, from ancient days.[2]

[3]Therefore He will give them up until the time when she who is in labour has given birth; then the rest of His brothers will return to the people of Israel.

[4]He will stand and shepherd His flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they will live securely, for now His greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

[5]And He will be their peace. When Assyria invades our land and marches into our fortresses, we will raise up against it seven shepherds, even eight leaders of men.[3]

[6]They will rule the land of Assyria with the sword, the land of Nimrod at its gates. He will rescue us from Assyria when it invades our land and marches across our borders.[4]

[7]The remnant of Jacob will be among many peoples like dew from the LORD, like showers on the grass, which wait for no one and do not depend on human beings.

[8]The remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among flocks of sheep, which tramples and tears as it goes, and no one can rescue.

[9]Your hand will be lifted high over your foes, and all your enemies will be cut down.

[10]On that day, declares the LORD, I will cut off your horses from among you and destroy your chariots.

[11]I will wipe out the towns of your land and pull down every fortress you have.

[12]I will cut off sorcery from your hands, and you will have no more fortune-tellers.

[13]I will cut off your carved images and your sacred pillars from among you, and you will no longer bow down to what your own hands have made.

[14]I will uproot your Asherah poles from among you and demolish your cities.

[15]In anger and fury I will take vengeance on the nations that have not listened.

1 In Hebrew this verse is 4:14, and 5:2–15 are numbered 5:1–14. 'City of troops' may also be read 'cut yourself', a sign of mourning.

2 Matthew 2:6 quotes this verse: 'by no means least among the rulers of Judah ... who will shepherd My people Israel', drawing in 5:4 and 2 Samuel 5:2. Here the Hebrew is translated. 'From ancient days' may also be read 'from the days of eternity'.

3 'Seven ... even eight' means more than enough (compare Ecclesiastes 11:2).

4 Nimrod founded the cities of Assyria (Genesis 10:8–12).

Chapter 6

Micah 6 is the LORD's case against His people, with the mountains and the enduring foundations of the earth called to hear it. "O My people, what have I done to you, and in what way have I made you weary?" He brought them up from Egypt, sent Moses, Aaron and Miriam, and turned Balaam's curse to blessing. The worshipper asks what to bring before the LORD: calves, thousands of rams, rivers of oil, even a firstborn child? He has already been told what is good: to practise justice, to cherish loyal kindness and to walk humbly with God. The LORD's voice calls to the city: its rich are full of violence, with false measures and deceitful weights, and its people speak lies. So they will eat and not be satisfied, sow and not reap, for they have kept the statutes of Omri and the practices of Ahab's house.

1 Listen now to what the LORD says: Get up, plead
your case before the mountains; let the hills hear
your voice.

2 Hear, you mountains, the LORD's case, you
enduring foundations of the earth; for the LORD
has a case against His people, and He will argue it
with Israel.[1]

3 O My people, what have I done to you, and in
what way have I made you weary? Testify against
Me!

4 I brought you up from the land of Egypt and
redeemed you from the house of slavery. I sent
Moses to lead you, and Aaron and Miriam.

5 My people, remember what Balak king of Moab
plotted and how Balaam son of Beor answered
him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, so
that you may know the righteous acts of the
LORD.[2]

6 With what shall I come before the LORD and bow
down before God on high? Shall I come before
Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

7 Would the LORD be pleased by rams in their
thousands, by oil flowing in ten thousand streams?
Should I offer my eldest son for my rebellion, my
own child for the sin of my soul?

8 He has shown you, mortal, what is good; and
what does the LORD seek from you? Only this: to
practise justice, to cherish loyal kindness and to
walk in humility with your God.[3]

9 The voice of the LORD calls out to the city, and it
is wisdom to fear Your name: Listen, you tribe,
and the one who appointed it![4]

10 Are there still in the house of the wicked
treasures gained by wickedness, and the short
measure that is accursed?[5]

11 Can I count anyone innocent who uses dishonest
scales, with a bag of false weights?

12 Her rich men are full of violence; her people
speak lies, and the tongue in their mouth
deceives.

13 So I have begun to strike you down, to make you
desolate because of your sins.

14 You will eat but not be satisfied, and your
stomach will still be empty. You will store up but
save nothing, and what you save I will give to the
sword.

15 You will sow but not reap; you will tread olives
but not anoint yourself with oil, tread grapes but
not drink the wine.

16 For you have kept the statutes of Omri and all
the practices of Ahab's house, and you have
walked by their counsel. So I will make you a ruin,
and your people an object of scorn; you will bear
the contempt of the nations.[6]

1 The scene is a lawsuit, with creation as the witness (Deuteronomy 32:1; Isaiah 1:2).

2 Balaam was hired to curse Israel but blessed them (Numbers 22–24). Shittim was the last camp before the Jordan, Gilgal the first camp after it (Joshua 3:1; 4:19).

3 'Mortal' is adam, 'human being'. 'Loyal kindness' is hesed, steadfast covenant love.

4 The Hebrew of this verse is difficult. 'Tribe' may also be read 'rod', the rod of punishment.

5 Literally 'the lean ephah'. The ephah was a dry measure of about 22 litres.

6 Omri and his son Ahab led the northern kingdom into Baal worship and injustice (1 Kings 16:25–33; 21). 'The nations' follows the Greek; the Hebrew has 'My people'.

Chapter 7

Micah 7 begins with the prophet's lament: he is like one who finds no fruit after the harvest, for the faithful have vanished from the land and everyone lies in wait for blood. Rulers and judges ask for bribes; no friend or neighbour can be trusted, for a man's enemies are the members of his own household. But Micah will keep watch for the LORD and wait for the God who saves him. Zion tells her enemy not to gloat: though she has fallen she will rise, and though she sits in darkness the LORD will be her light; she will bear His anger until He pleads her cause. A day will come for rebuilding her walls, and people will come to her from Assyria to the River. The prophet prays for the LORD to shepherd His flock as in the days of the exodus, and the book ends in praise: "Who is a God like You," who pardons sin, delights in loyal kindness and hurls all our sins into the depths of the sea?

1 How miserable I am! I am like one who gathers
summer fruit after the gleaning of the vineyard:
there is not a cluster to eat, not one of the early
figs I long for.

2 The faithful have vanished from the land; there is
not one upright person left. All of them lie in wait
to shed blood; each hunts his brother with a net.[1]

3 Both hands are skilled at doing evil. The official
asks for a gift and the judge for a bribe; the
powerful man announces what he wants, and
together they weave it.

4 The best of them is like a briar, the most upright
worse than a thorn hedge. The day your
watchmen warned of has come, the day of your
punishment; now is the time of their confusion.

5 Do not trust a neighbour; put no confidence in a
friend. Guard the doors of your mouth even from
the one who lies in your embrace.

6 For a son treats his father with contempt, a
daughter rises up against her mother, a daughter-
in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies
are the members of his own household.[2]

7 But as for me, I will watch for the LORD; I will
wait for the God who saves me. My God will hear
me.

8 Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have
fallen, I will rise; though I sit in darkness, the
LORD will be my light.[3]

9 Because I have sinned against Him, I will bear
the LORD's anger until He pleads my case and
secures justice for me. He will bring me out into
the light, and I will see His righteousness.

10 Then my enemy will see it and be covered with
shame, she who taunted me, "Where is your God,
the LORD?" I will see her brought down; now she
will be trodden underfoot like the mire of the
streets.

11 The day for rebuilding your walls will come; on
that day your boundary will be extended far.

12 In that day they will come to you from Assyria
and Egypt's cities, from Egypt as far as the River,
from one sea to the other, from one mountain
range to the next.[4]

13 But the earth will become desolate because of
those who live in it, as the fruit of their deeds.

14 Shepherd Your people with Your staff, the flock
that is Your inheritance, which lives alone in a
forest in the midst of a fruitful land. Let them
graze in Bashan and Gilead as in days long ago.

15 As in the days when you came out of the land of
Egypt, I will show them wonders.

16 The nations will see and be ashamed of all their
power. They will put their hands over their
mouths, and their ears will be deaf.

17 They will lick dust like a snake, like creatures
that crawl on the ground. They will come
trembling out of their strongholds; they will turn
in fear to the LORD our God and will stand in awe
of You.

18 Who is a God like You, who takes away iniquity
and passes over the rebellion of the remnant of
His inheritance? He does not stay angry for ever,
because He delights in loyal kindness.[5]

19 He will again have compassion on us; He will
trample our iniquities underfoot. You will hurl all
our sins into the depths of the sea.

20 You will show faithfulness to Jacob and loyal
kindness to Abraham, as You swore to our
ancestors in days of old.

1 ‘The faithful’ (hasid) are those who show hesed, loyal kindness.

2 Jesus uses these words of the division His coming would bring (Matthew 10:35–36).

3 From here to verse 10 Zion speaks.

4 The River is the Euphrates.

5 ‘Who is a God like You’ plays on Micah’s name, ‘Who is like the LORD?’