
מיכה • MICAH

INTRODUCTION

The prosperous half-century of peace enjoyed by the Northern Kingdom of Israel ended with the death of Jeroboam II and the westward advance of the Assyrians. In 731 BCE, the fall of Damascus marked the end of Syria's freedom; a brief decade later brought the same fate to Israel and its capital Samaria. Although the kingdom of Judah was spared at that time from the Assyrian yoke, the anti-Assyrian policies of Hezekiah brought Sennacherib of Assyria to Judah in 701 BCE and Judah was left a weak vassal state. Micah stands solidly with Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah as a fierce champion of pure worship of Yahweh and of social justice.

The earliest surviving *Masoretic Text* versions include the *Codex Cairensis* (895 CE), the *Petersburg Codex of the Prophets* (916 CE), and *Codex Leningradensis* (1008 CE). Since 1947, the current text of the *Aleppo Codex* is missing 1:1 to 5:1 and the entire book is missing from the *Codex Sinaiticus* of the Greek *Septuagint*. In the MT, the *Book of Micah* is 6th of the 12 'Minor Prophets' but, in the LXX, it appears 3rd (after Hosea & Amos). The book is represented in 2 of the *Qumran MSS*: 4QXII^f (just 5:1-2) & 4QXII^g.

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

The superscription to the *Book of Micah* indicates that its author was a younger contemporary of Isaiah. The latter theme of the prophet – the promise of forgiveness and peace – comes to us in an expanded and edited post-Exilic form in 4:1-5:15. The picture of the restored Jerusalem in 7:8-20 also comes from the post-Exilic period. The consensus among scholars is that the book in its current form was produced in the Persian (or possibly Hellenistic) period. Some, but not all, scholars argue that only Chs 1-3 contain material from the late 8th Century BCE prophet.

מיכה פרק א

א דְּבַר־יְהוָה | אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל־מִיכָה הַמֶּרְשֵׁתִי בִימֵי
יוֹתָם אָחָז יְחִזְקִיָּה מְלָכֵי יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר־חָזָה עַל־
שָׁמְרוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַם:

ב שִׁמְעוּ עַמִּים כֻּלָּם
הַקְשִׁיבִי אֶרֶץ וּמְלָאָהּ
וַיְהִי אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה בָּכֶם לְעֵד
אֲדֹנִי מֵהִיכַל קֹדֶשׁוֹ:
ג כִּי־הִנֵּה יְהוָה יֵצֵא מִמְּקוֹמוֹ
וַיֵּרֶד וְדָרַךְ עַל־בָּמֹתַי בְּמוֹתֵי אֶרֶץ:
ד וְנִמְסוּ הַהָרִים תַּחְתָּיו
וְהָעִמְקִים יִתְבַּקְּעוּ
כַּדּוֹנֵג מִפְּנֵי הָאֵשׁ
כַּמַּיִם מִגָּרִים בְּמוֹרֵד:
ה בַּפֶּשַׁע יַעֲקֹב כָּל־זֹאת
וּבַחֲטָאוֹת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
מִי־פֶשַׁע יַעֲקֹב
הֲלוֹא שָׁמְרוֹן

MICAH 1

¹ The word of Yahweh that came to Micah or Moresheth during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah kings of Judah; his visions concerning Samaria and Jerusalem:

- ² Listen, all you peoples;
attend, earth, and everyone on it!
Yahweh intends to give evidence against you,
the Lord, from his Holy Temple.
- ³ For look, Yahweh is leaving his home;
down he comes, treading the heights of the earth.
- ⁴ Beneath him, the mountains melt
and valleys are torn open,
like wax near a fire,
like water pouring down a slope.
- ⁵ All this is because of the crime of Jacob,
the sin of the House of Israel.
What is the crime of Jacob?
Is it not Samaria?

MICAH 1

- ¹ Jotham reigned over Judah 750–735, Ahaz 735–715 and Hezekiah 715–687 BCE.
- ² In place of 'Yahweh', following most LXX MSS (κύριος) and the NJB, the MT has 'The Lord Yahweh' (אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה) and the NRSV has 'Lord GOD'.
- ³ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation. In place of 'look', the WEBBE has 'behold'.
- ⁴ The imagery of this verse pictures an earthquake and accompanying landslide.
- ⁵ 'The sin of the House of Judah' follows the LXX (ἡμαρτίαν οἴκου Ἰσραήλ) and Tg; the MT has 'the high places of Judah'.

וּמִלְּבֵמוֹת יְהוּדָה
 הֲלוֹא יְרוּשָׁלַם׃
 וּשְׁמַתִּי שְׁמֶרֶן לְעֵי הַשָּׂדֶה
 לְמַטְעֵי כֶרֶם
 וְהִגַּרְתִּי לְגִי אֲבָנֶיהָ
 וְיִסְדֶּיהָ אֲגַלֶּה׃
 וְכָל־פְּסִילֶיהָ יִפְתּוּ
 וְכָל־אֲתֻנֶּנֶיהָ יִשְׂרְפוּ בָאֵשׁ
 וְכָל־עַצְבֶּיהָ אֲשִׁים שְׂמֶמָה
 כִּי מֵאֲתָנָן זֹנָה קִבְּצָה
 וְעַד־אֲתָנָן זֹנָה יִשׁוּבוּ׃
 עַל־זֹאת אֶסְפְּדָה וְאֵילֶילָה
 אֵילָכָה שִׁלֵּל שׁוֹלָל וְעָרוֹם
 אֶעֱשֶׂה מִסְפֹּד כְּתָנִים
 וְאֶבֶל כְּבָנוֹת יַעֲנֶה׃
 כִּי אֲנוּשָׁה מִכּוֹתֶיהָ
 כִּי־בָאָה עַד־יְהוּדָה

What is the sin of the House of Judah?

Is it not Jerusalem?

6 Therefore, I shall make Samaria a ruin in the open country,
a place for planting vines.

I shall send her stones rolling into the valley
until I have laid her foundations bare.

7 All her images will be shattered,
all her earnings consumed by fire.
I shall leave all her idols derelict –
they were amassed out of prostitutes' earnings
and prostitutes' earnings once more they will be.

8 This is why I shall howl and wail,
why I shall go barefoot and naked,
why I shall howl like the jackals,
why I shall shriek like the owls.

9 For, there is no cure for her wounds:
the blow falls on Judah,

⁶ In vv. 2–5, Micah narrows the scope of God's judgment from the nations (vv. 2–4) to his covenant people (v. 5): universal judgment is coming but, ironically, Israel is the focal point of God's anger.

⁷ 'They were amassed' follows the LXX (συστήγαγεν); the MT has 'she amassed'.

⁸ The remainder of this chapter foretells disaster for 12 towns in Philistia and SW Judah. 7 of these are known: Gath, Moresheth-Gath, Zanaan, Lachish, Achzib, Mareshah, & Adullam (cf. Jos 15:35–44). The name of one town has been lost (v. 10); the remaining 4 must have been in the same region. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁹ In place of 'her wounds' (following the MT – the LXX has the singular 'her wound', πλῆγῇ αὐτῆς, as do the *Peshitta* & *Vg*), the *NJB* has the conjectural 'the wounds that Yahweh inflicts'.

נִגַּע עַד־שַׁעַר עַמִּי
 עַד־יְרוּשָׁלַם:
 בְּגַת אֶל־תִּגִּידוּ
 בְּכוֹ אֶל־תִּבְכוּ
 בְּבֵית לְעַפְרָה
 עָפָר הַתַּפְּלָשְׁתִּי הַתַּפְּלָשִׁי:
 עֲבְרִי לָכֶם יוֹשֶׁבֶת שָׁפִיר י
 עָרִי־הַבִּשֵּׁת
 לֹא יֵצְאָהּ יוֹשֶׁבֶת צָאֲנָן
 מִסִּפְּדֵי בֵּית הָאֶצֶל
 יִקַּח מִכֶּם עֲמֻדָתוֹ:
 כִּי־חָלָה לְטוֹב יב
 יוֹשֶׁבֶת מְרוֹת
 כִּי־יֵרֵד רֶגַל מֵאֵת יְהוָה
 לְשַׁעַר יְרוּשָׁלַם:
 רָתַם הַמֶּרְכָּבָה לְרֶכֶשׁ יג
 יוֹשֶׁבֶת לִכְיֹשׁ
 רֹאשִׁית חַטָּאת הִיא לְבַת־צִיּוֹן
 כִּי־בָדָד נִמְצְאוּ פִשְׁעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

it falls on the gateway of my people,
on Jerusalem itself.

10 Do not announce it in Gath,
in ... shed no tears!

In Beth-Leaphrah,
roll in the dust!

11 Sound the horn, inhabitant of Shaphir!
She has not left her city,
she who lives in Zanaan.
Beth-Ezel is wailing,
and shall tear its support from you.

12 What hope has she of happiness,
she who lives in Maroth?
Instead, Yahweh sent down disaster
on the gateway of Jerusalem itself!

13 Harness the horse to the chariot,
you inhabitant of Lachish!
That is where the sin of the Daughter of Zion began;
the crimes of Israel can be traced to you!

¹⁰ The 2nd line is defective: only one letter of the original place name remains. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹¹ 'Sound the horn' is conjectural translation following the *NJB* (adding *shophar*); the *MT* (and *NRSV*) has 'pass on your way'. For the last two lines, here following the *MT* & *NRSV*, the *NJB* has the conjectural 'Beth-Ezel is torn from its foundations, from its strong supports'.

¹² The 1st line conjectural (literally 'she could hope') following the *Tg*; the *MT* has 'for she is tortured with desire'. 'Maroth' (מְרוֹת) means bitterness.

¹³ The epithet 'Daughter of Zion' pictures the city of Jerusalem as a young lady.

יד לְכֵן תַּתֵּנִי שְׁלוּחִים
 עַל מוֹרֶשֶׁת גַּת
 בְּתִי אֶכְזִיב לְאַכְזִיב
 לְמַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 טו עַד הִירָשׁ אָבִי לָךְ
 יוֹשֶׁבֶת מַרְשָׁה
 עַד־עַדְלָם יָבוֹא
 כְּבוֹד יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 טז קִרְחִי וְגִזִּי
 עַל־בְּנֵי תַעֲנוּגֶיךָ
 הִרְחַבִּי קִרְחָתְךָ כְּנֹשֶׁר
 כִּי גָלוּ מִמֶּךָ: {ס}

- 14 Therefore, you must provide a dowry
for Moresbeth-Gath.
The houses of Achzib will prove a disappointment
for the kings of Israel.
- 15 I shall bring the plunderer to you again,
you citizen of Mareshah,
and into Adullam will vanish
the glory of Israel.
- 16 Shave your heads bald,
for the children that were your joy.
Make yourselves bald like the vulture,
for they have left you for exile.

¹⁴ The name 'Moresbeth' (מוֹרֶשֶׁת) – the prophet's home, v. 1) suggests 'the betrothed': the town with its marriage gifts is to be handed over to a new master. 'Achzib' (אֶכְזִיב) plays on אַכְזִיב ('disappointment'): because of the enemy invasion, the town would not be able to deliver soldiers for the army and/or services normally rendered to the crown.

¹⁵ The name 'Mareshah' (מַרְשָׁה) plays on יִרָשׁ ('he who takes possession'). David took refuge in Adullam (1S 22:1). An emendation would give the reading, "Forever from Adullam the glory of Israel will depart," i.e. Yahweh will abandon the very place that saw the beginnings of the Davidic dynasty.

¹⁶ Shaving the head was a common rite of mourning. Alternative readings for 'vulture' (here following the NJB) are 'eagle' (as NRSV) and 'griffin'.

מיכה פרק ב

א הִזִּי חֲשִׁבֵי־אֶן וּפְעֵלֵי רָע
עַל־מִשְׁכָּבוֹתָם
בְּאֹזֶר הַבֶּקֶר יַעֲשֶׂה
כִּי יִשְׁלַל יָדָם:
ב וְחִמְדּוּ שָׂדוֹת וְגִזְלוּ
וּבָתִּים וְנִשְׂאוּ
וַעֲשֻׁקוּ גִבֹּר וּבֵיתוֹ
וְאִישׁ וְנַחֲלָתוֹ: {פ}
ג לִכֵּן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
הִנְנִי חֹשֵׁב עַל־הַמִּשְׁפָּחָה הַזֹּאת רָעָה
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִמְשְׁכוּ מִשָּׁם צִוְּאוֹתֵיכֶם
וְלֹא תִלְכּוּ רוֹמָה
כִּי עַתָּה רָעָה הִיא:
ד בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יֵשֵׂא עֲלֵיכֶם מִשָּׁל
וְנָהָה נָהִי נָהִיָּה
אָמַר שְׂדוֹד נִשְׁדָּנוּ
חֶלֶק עַמִּי יִמִּיר

MICAH 2

- 1 Alas for those who plot evil,
who lie in bed planning mischief.
No sooner is it dawn than they do it,
since they have the power to do so.
- 2 Seizing the fields that they covet,
they take over houses as well:
owner and house, they seize alike,
the man himself as well as his inheritance.
- 3 Therefore, Yahweh says this:
Look, I am now plotting a disaster for this breed
from which you will not extricate your necks;
you will not hold your heads up then;
for, the times will be disastrous indeed.
- 4 That day, they will make a satire on you,
they will strike up a dirge and say,
"We have been stripped of everything;
my people's land has been divided up,

MICAH 2

- 1 The literal translation of the 2nd line, here following the NJB, is 'those who do evil upon their beds'.
- 2 This verse refers to confiscation for debt, of which the creditors take advantage to enlarge their estates.
- 3 Alternative translations for 'breed' (as NJB) are 'family' (NRSV) and 'clan'; NETB has 'nation'.
- 4 The last line here follows the LXX (τοῦ ἀποστρέψαι· οἱ ἀγροὶ ἡμῶν διεμερίσθησαν); the MT is corrupt.

אֵיךְ יִמִּישׁ לִי
 לְשׁוֹבֵב שְׂדֵינוּ יַחֲלֹק:
 לִכֵּן לֹא־יִהְיֶה לָּךְ ה
 מְשֻׁלָּךְ חֶבֶל בְּגֹרֶל
 בִּקְהַל יְהוָה:
 אֶל־תִּטְּפוּ יִטְיֹפוֹ ו
 לֹא־יִטְּפוּ לְאַלֶּה
 לֹא יִסַּג כְּלָמוֹת:
 הָאֱמֹר בֵּית־יַעֲקֹב ז
 הִקְצֹר רוּחַ יְהוָה
 אֶסְ־אֶלֶּה מַעֲלָלָיו
 הֲלֹא דְבָרִי יִיטִיבוּ
 עִם הַיָּשָׁר הַלֵּךְ:
 וְאַתֶּמוּל עָמִי לְאוֹיֵב יְקוֹמֻם ח
 מִמּוֹל שְׁלָמָה
 אֶדֶר תִּפְשֹׁטוֹן
 מִעֲבָרִים בְּטַח שׁוֹבֵי מִלְחָמָה:

no one else can restore it to them,
 our fields have been awarded to our despoiler."

5 Because of this, you will have no one
 to measure out a share
 in Yahweh's community.

6 "Do not drivel," they drivel,
 "do not drivel like this!
 Disgrace will not overtake us!

7 "Can the House of Jacob be accursed?
 Has Yahweh grown short-tempered?
 Is that his way of going to work?
 His prophecies can only be favourable
 to one who walks uprightly!"

8 But you are the ones who play the enemy
 to my people.
 From the inoffensive man, you snatch his cloak;
 on those who feel safe, you inflict the damage of war.

5 The words of this verse are addressed to the land-grabbers, who will be excluded from the division of the land in the restored kingdom.

6 The word here rendered as 'drivel' (טִפּוֹ - the NRSV & NETB have 'preach') means literally 'to cause to flow, to dribble', usually in a pejorative sense. The last line is conjectural - the MT is uncertain.

7 'Accursed' is a conjectural translation (אָרױר); the MT has 'said' (אָמַר). 'His prophecies' follows the LXX (λόγοι αὐτοῦ); the MT has 'my prophecies'. The last line here follows the MT (and NRSV); the NJB has the conjectural 'for his people Israel'.

8 This verse has been reconstructed, based on the LXX (καὶ ἔμπροσθεν ὁ λαός μου εἰς ἔχθραν ἀντέστη· κατέναντι τῆς εἰρήνης αὐτοῦ τὴν δορὰν αὐτοῦ ἐξέδειραν τοῦ ἀφελέσθαι ἐλπίδα συντριμμὸν πολέμου); the MT reads, "And yesterday my people played the enemy; from in front, you took the precious garment from those returned from battle who pass by trustingly."

ט נָשִׁי עַמִּי תִגְרְשׁוּן מִבֵּית תַּעֲנֻגִיהָ
 מַעַל עַל־לִיָּהּ תִּקְחוּ הַדָּרִי לְעוֹלָם:
 י קוּמוּ וּלְכוּ כִּי לֹא־זֹאת הַמְּנוּחָה
 בַּעֲבוּר טָמְאָה תִּחְבֵּל
 וְחִבַּל נִמְרָץ:
 יא לֹא־אִישׁ הַלֵּךְ רוּחַ וְשֹׁקֵר כִּזָּב
 אֶטֶף לָךְ לֵיזִן וּלְשֹׁכֵר
 וְהִיָּה מְטִיף הָעָם הַזֶּה:
 יב אֶסֶף אֶאֱסֹף יַעֲקֹב כָּלֶךְ
 קִבֵּץ אֶקְבֹּץ שְׂאֵרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 יַחַד אֲשִׁימֵנוּ
 כְּצֹאן בְּצֹרָה
 כְּעֹדֵד בְּתוֹךְ הַדְּבָר
 תִּהְיֶימָנָה מֵאָדָם:
 יג עֲלֵה הַפֶּרֶץ לִפְנֵיהֶם
 פָּרְצוּ וַיַּעֲבְרוּ
 שְׁעַר וַיֵּצְאוּ בּוֹ
 וַיַּעֲבֵר מֶלֶכְכֶּם לִפְנֵיהֶם
 וַיְהִיָּה בְּרֹאשָׁם: {פ}

- 9 My people's women you evict from the homes they love
and deprive the children of my glory forever.
- 10 You say, "Up and off with you! You cannot stay here,
because of uncleanness that destroys
with a grievous destruction."
- 11 If a man of the spirit came and invented this lie,
"I prophesy wine and liquor for you,"
he would be the prophet for a people like this.
- 12 I shall assemble the whole of Jacob,
I shall gather the remnant of Israel,
I shall gather them together
like sheep in an enclosure;
and, like a flock within their fold,
they will bleat far away from anyone.
- 13 Their leader will break out first,
then all break out
through the gate and escape,
with their king leading the way
and with Yahweh at their head.

9 The expression, 'my glory', may refer to the dignity or honour that God bestowed on each Israelite family by giving them a share of his land.

10 For the last 2 lines, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has the conjectural, "For a worthless thing, you exact an extortionate pledge."

11 The impostor's prophecy also plays on the double meaning of the verb 'prophesy' and 'cause to flow' (see the #6).

12 'Their fold' is a conjectural translation (בְּצֹרָה); the MT has 'Bozrah' (בִּצְרָה).

13 The 'fold' (v. 12) from which the sheep/people 'break out' is probably a reference to their place of exile.

מיכה פרק ג

א ואמר
שמעו־נא ראשי יעקב
וקציני בית ישראל
הלוא לכם לדעת את־המשפט:
ב שנאי טוב ואהבי רעה רע
גזלי עורם מעליהם ושארם מעל עצמותם:
ג ואשר אכלו שאר עמי
ועורם מעליהם הפשיטו
ואת־עצמותיהם פצחו
ופרשו באשר בסיר
וכבשר בתוד קלחת:
ד אז יזעקו אליהוה
ולא יענה אותם
ויסתר פניו מהם בעת ההיא
כאשר הרעו מעלליהם: {פ}
ה כה אמר יהוה
על־הנביאים המתעים את־עמי

MICAH 3

- 1 Then I said,
"Kindly listen, you leaders of the House of Jacob,
you princes of the House of Israel.
Surely, you are the ones who ought to know what is right.
- 2 Yet, you hate what is good and love what is evil,
skinning people alive, pulling the flesh off their bones,
- 3 eating my people's flesh,
stripping off their skin,
breaking up their bones,
chopping them up small
like flesh for the pot, like meat in the stew-pan."
- 4 Then they will call to Yahweh,
but he will not answer them.
When the time comes, he will hide his face from them
because of the crimes they have committed.
- 5 Yahweh says this against the prophets
who lead my people astray:

MICAH 3

- 1 'The House of Jacob' follows the LXX (οἴκου Ιακωβ) and NJB; the MT and NRSV have 'Jacob' (יעקב).
- 2 The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- 3 'Like flesh' follows the LXX (ὡς σάρκα) and Peshitta; the MT has 'as' (כאשר).
- 4 In place of 'they' (1st line), here following the MT, LXX, NJB & NRSV, NETB has, for clarity, 'these sinners'.
- 5 On gifts to prophets, see 1S 9:7-8, 1K 14:3, 2K 4:42, 5:15, 22, 8:8-9, Am 7:12.

הַנֹּשְׁכִים בְּשִׁנֵּיהֶם
וְקָרְאוּ שְׁלוֹם
וְאִשֵּׁר לֹא־יִתֵּן עַל־פִּיהֶם
וְקִדְּשׁוּ עַל־יוֹ מִלְחָמָה:
לִכְן לַיְלָה לָכֶם מַחְזוֹן ^ו
וְחֹשֶׁכָה לָכֶם מִקְסָם
וּבֹאֵה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ עַל־הַנְּבִיאִים
וְקִדְּרָה עֲלֵיהֶם הַיּוֹם:
וּבִשׁוּ הַחֲזִים ^ז
וַחֲפְרוּ הַקְּסָמִים
וַעֲטוּ עַל־שִׁפְם כָּלֶם
כִּי אֵין מַעֲנֶה אֱלֹהִים:
וְאוֹלָם אֲנֹכִי מִלְּאֲתִי כַח אֶת־רוּחַ יְהוָה ^ח
וּמִשְׁפָּט וּגְבוּרָה לְהַגִּיד לְיַעֲקֹב פֶּשְׁעוֹ
וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל חַטָּאתוֹ: {ס}
שִׁמְעוּ־נָא זֹאת רָאשֵׁי בֵּית יַעֲקֹב ^ט
וְקִצְיָנֵי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
הַמִּתְעַבִּים מִשְׁפָּט
וְאֵת כָּל־יִשְׁרָה יַעֲקֹשׁוּ:

So long as they have something to eat,
they cry, "Peace,"
but on anyone who puts nothing into their mouths
they declare war.

- ⁶ Therefore, for you, night will be without vision
and for you the darkness without divination.
The sun will set for the prophets;
the daylight will go black above them.
- ⁷ Then the seers will be covered with shame,
the diviners with confusion;
they will all put their hands over their mouths
because there is no answer from God.
- ⁸ Not so with me: I am full of strength, full of Yahweh's spirit,
of the sense of right, of energy
to accuse Jacob of his crime and Israel of his sin.
- ⁹ Kindly listen to this, you leaders of the House of Jacob,
you princes of the House of Israel,
who detest justice,
wresting it from its honest course,

⁶ The coming of 'night' (and 'darkness' in the following line) symbolises the cessation of revelation.

⁷ In place of 'seers', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'prophets'. Alternative translations for 'their mouths' (as NJB & NETB) are 'their lips' (NRSV), 'the moustache' and 'the beard'.

⁸ In contrast with the false officials, Micah's call has imbued him with power, justice and might, because it filled him with 'Yahweh's spirit'.

⁹ 'Wresting' is conjectural; the MT has 'they wrest'. This verse recalls Am 5:6-7.

י בִּנְה צִיּוֹן בְּדָמִים
 וִירוּשָׁלַם בְּעוֹלָה:
 יא רֹאשֵׁיהֶן בְּשָׁחַד יִשְׁפֹּטוּ
 וְכֹהֲנֶיהָ בְּמַחִיר יִזְרוּ
 וְנְבִיאֶיהָ בְּכֶסֶף יִקְסְמוּ
 וְעַל־יְהוָה יִשְׁעֵנּוּ לֹא־מֶרֶץ
 הֲלוֹא יְהוָה בְּקִרְבָּנָם
 לֹא־תִבּוֹא עָלֵינוּ רָעָה:
 יב לָכֵן בְּגִלְלָכֶם צִיּוֹן שָׂדֵה
 תִּחְרַשׁ וִירוּשָׁלַם עֵיין
 תִּהְיֶה וְהָר הַבַּיִת לְבָמֹת יַעֲרִ: {פ}

- 10 who build Zion with blood,
 and Jerusalem with iniquity!
 11 Her leaders give verdicts for presents,
 her priests take a fee for their rulings,
 her prophets divine for money
 and yet they rely on Yahweh!
 They say, "Isn't Yahweh among us?
 "No disaster is going to overtake us!"
 12 That is why, thanks to you, Zion will become plough-land,
 Jerusalem a heap of rubble
 and the Temple Mount a wooded height.

10 '(You) who build' follows the LXX (οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες) and Peshitta; the MT has 'build'. Faced with the imposing buildings of the capital, Micah's mind turns first to the underlying extortion that paid for their construction (see also Jr 22:13 – 15, Am 3:10, 15, 5:11, 6:8).

11 The 2nd line refers to the decisions of the priests (cf. Ex 22:8, Dt 17:8–13, Jr 18:18, Ezk 7:26, Hg 2:11–14, MI 2:7).

12 This verse was quoted at the trial of Jeremiah (Jr 26:18). The pronoun, 'you', is plural, referring to the 'leaders', 'priests' and 'prophets' of v. 11.

מיכה פרק ד

א וְהָיָה | בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים
יְהִיָּה הָרַר בֵּית־יְהוָה נָכוֹן בְּרֹאשׁ הַהָרִים
וְנִשָּׂא הוּא מִגְבְּעוֹת
וְנִהְרָו עָלָיו עַמִּים:
ב וְהָלְכוּ גוֹיִם רַבִּים
וְאָמְרוּ לָכוּ
וְנַעֲלֶה אֶל־הַר־יְהוָה
וְאֶל־בַּיִת אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב
וְיֹרְנוּ מִדְּרָכָיו
וְנִלְכֶּה בְּאַרְחֹתָיו
כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה
וּדְבַר־יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַם:
ג וְשֹׁפֵט בֵּין עַמִּים רַבִּים
וְהוֹכִיחַ לְגוֹיִם עַצְמִים עַד־רְחוֹק
וְכָתְתוּ חֶרֶב־תֵּיָהֶם לְאַתִּים
וְחִנִּיתֵיהֶם לְמִזְמֹרוֹת
לֹא־יִשְׁאֹו גּוֹי אֶל־גּוֹי חֶרֶב
וְלֹא־יִלְמְדוֹן עוֹד מִלְחָמָה:

MICAH 4

- 1 In days to come,
Yahweh's Temple Mountain
will tower above the mountains
and rise higher than the hills.
- 2 Then the peoples will stream to it,
then the many nations will come and say,
"Come, we will go up to Yahweh's mountain,
to the Temple of the God of Jacob,
so that he may teach us his ways
and we may walk in his paths;
For, the Law issues from Zion
and Yahweh's word from Jerusalem."
- 3 He will judge between many peoples
and arbitrate between mighty, far-off nations.
They will hammer their swords into ploughshares
and their spears into billhooks.
Nation will not lift sword against nation
or ever again be trained to make war.

MICAH 4

- ¹ The origin of this prophecy (vv. 1–4), found also in Is 2:2–4, is uncertain. Though many scholars date this and subsequent prophecies (4:1–5:15) in the post-Exilic period, they are quite possibly based on genuine oracles from Micah, edited in their present form after the Exile.
- ² The literal translation of 'Temple' (following the NJB) is 'house' (as NRSV).
- ³ The NJB, following Is 2:4, omits 'far-off'; here, we follow the MT & NRSV (wherein 'far away').

ד וישבו איש תחת גפנו ותחת תאנתו
 ואין מחריד
 כיפי יהוה צבאות דבר:
 ה כי כל־העמים ילכו איש בשם אלהיו
 ואנחנו נלך בשם־יהוה אלהינו לעולם ועד:
 {פ}
 ו ביום ההוא נאם־יהוה
 אספה הצלעה
 והנדחה אקבצה
 ואשר הרעתי:
 ז ושמתי את־הצלעה לשארית
 והנהלאה לגוי עצום
 ומלך יהוה עליהם בהר ציון
 מעתה ועד־עולם: {פ}
 ח ואתה מגדל־עדר
 עפל בת־ציון עדיך תאתה
 ובאה הממשלה הראשנה
 ממלכת לבת ירושלם:

4 Rather, each man will sit under his vine and fig tree
 with no one to trouble him.
 The mouth of Yahweh Sabaoth has spoken.
 5 For, all peoples go forward, each in the name of its god,
 while we go forward in the name of Yahweh our God.
 {פ}
 6 That day, says Yahweh,
 I shall gather in the lame
 and bring together the strays
 and those whom I have treated harshly.
 7 From the footsore, I shall make a remnant,
 and, from the far-flung, a mighty nation;
 and Yahweh will reign over them on Mount Zion
 thenceforth and forever.
 8 To you, Tower of the Flock,
 Ophel of the daughter of Zion,
 to you your former sovereignty will return,
 the royal power of the daughter of Jerusalem.

⁴ Compare this verse to Zc 3:10.

⁵ To 'go forward in the name' of a god is to recognise the god's authority as binding over one's life.

⁶ Under the image of the Good Shepherd (see #Ezk 34:1), vv. 6–8 form a promise of the restoration of Israel in Zion, after punishment.

⁷ The precise meaning of the difficult form here translated 'far-flung' (הנהלאה) is uncertain; we assume a Niphal participle of an otherwise unattested denominative verb הלא ('to be far off') but emendations include הנהלה include ('the sick one[s]') and הנלאה ('the weary one[s]').

⁸ 'Tower of the Flock' (מגדל־עדר – 'Migdal-Eder'), an ancient place name (cf. Gn 35:21), here indicates Jerusalem, comparing it to a sheepfold.

ט עֲתָה לָמָּה תִרְיַעִי רַע
הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵין־בָּךְ
אִם־יֹועֵצְךָ אָבָד
כִּי־הִחְזִיקְךָ חֵיל בְּיֹלְדָה:
י חוּלִי וְגַחִי בַת־צִיּוֹן בְּיֹלְדָה
כִּי־עַתָּה תִצְאִי מִקְרִיָּה וְשָׁכַנְתְּ בַשָּׂדֶה
וּבָאת עַד־בָּבֶל שֵׁם תִּנָּצְלִי
שָׁם יִגְאָלְךָ יְהוָה
מִכַּף אֹיְבֶיךָ:
יא וְעַתָּה נֶאֱסָפוּ עָלֶיךָ
גוֹיִם רַבִּים
הֹאמְרִים תַּחֲנֹף
וְתַחֲזוּ בְצִיּוֹן עֵינֵינוּ:
יב וְהֵמָּה לֹא יָדְעוּ מַחֲשַׁבֹת יְהוָה
וְלֹא הִבִּינוּ עֲצָתוֹ
כִּי קִבְּצָם כַּעֲמִיר גִּרְנָה:
יג קוּמִי וְדוּשִׁי בַת־צִיּוֹן כִּי־קִרְנֶיךָ
אֲשִׁים בְּרָזֶל וּפְרָסֶתֶיךָ אֲשִׁים נְחוּשָׁה

- 9 Why are you crying out now?
Have you no king?
Has your counsellor perished,
for pangs to grip you like those of a woman in labour?
- 10 Writhe in pain and cry aloud, daughter of Zion,
like a woman in labour, for now you must leave the city
and camp in the open country; to Babylon you must go,
and there you will be rescued, there Yahweh will ransom you
from the hands of your enemies.
- 11 Now many nations
have mustered against you.
They say, "Let us desecrate her,
let us gloat over Zion!"
- 12 However, they do not know Yahweh's thoughts,
they do not understand his design;
he has collected them like sheaves on the threshing-floor.
- 13 Start your threshing, daughter of Zion,
for I shall make your horn iron, and your hooves bronze,

⁹ This prophecy (vv. 9–10) predicts the deportation. The Hebrew pronoun is FS, indicating that Jerusalem, personified as a young woman, is now addressed (see v. 10); in v. 8 the tower/fortress was addressed with masculine forms, so there is clearly a shift in addressee here.

¹⁰ 'Cry aloud' is conjectural; the MT has 'give birth' (different vowel pointing). The mention of 'Babylon' (בָּבֶל) envisages the Exile of 587 BCE.

¹¹ This prophecy (vv. 11–13), unlike the preceding one, describes the liberation of Zion itself, besieged by the nations.

¹² Alternative readings for 'design' (here following the NJB) are 'plan' (as NRSV) and 'strategy' (as NETB).

¹³ In vv. 11–13, the prophet jumps from the present crisis (which will result in exile, v. 10) to a time beyond the restoration of the exiles.

וְהִדְקוֹת עַמִּים רַבִּים
וְהִחְרַמְתִּי לַיהוָה בְּצַעַם
וְחִילָם לְאַדֹּן כָּל־הָאָרֶץ:
יְד עֲתָה תִתְגַּדְּדִי בַת־גִּדּוֹד
מִצֹּר שָׁם עָלִינוּ
בְּשֹׁבֵט יָכּוּ עַל־הַלְחִי
אֵת שִׁפְט יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס}

so that you can crush many peoples;
and you will devote what they have stolen to Yahweh,
their wealth to the Lord of the whole earth.

¹⁴ Now look to your fortifications, Fortress!

They have laid siege to us;
the ruler of Israel will be struck
on the cheek with a rod.

¹⁴ The 1st line here follows the LXX (νῦν ἐμφοραχθήσεται θυγάτηρ Εφραιμ ἐν φοραγμῷ); the MT has 'gash yourself, daughter of the troop'. The NRSV (and many English translations) includes this verse as 5:1; here, we follow the MT (& NJB).

מיכה פרק ה

א ואתה בית־לחם אפרתה
צעיר להיות באלפי יהודה
ממך לי יצא להיות מושל בישראל
ומוצאתיו מקדם מימי עולם:
ב לכן יתנם
עד־עת יולדה ילדה
ויתר אחיו
ישובון על־בני ישראל:
ג ועמד ורעה
בעז יהוה
בגאון שם יהוה אלהיו
וישבו כי־עתה יגדל
עד־אפסי־ארץ:
ד והיה זה שלום
אשור | כי־בוא בארצנו
וכי ידרך בארמנותינו
והקמנו עליו שבעה רעים

MICAH 5

- 1 But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
the least of the clans of Judah,
from you will come for me a future ruler of Israel
whose origins go back to the distant past, to the days of old.
- 2 Hence, he will abandon them
only until she who is in labour gives birth,
and then those who survive of his race
will be reunited to the Israelites.
- 3 He will take his stand and he will shepherd them
with the power of Yahweh,
with the majesty of the name of his God,
and they will live in peace, for his greatness will extend
henceforth to the most distant parts of the country.
- 4 He himself will be peace!
Should the Assyrian invade our country,
should he set foot in our land,
we shall raise seven shepherds against him,

MICAH 5

- ¹ The NRSV (and many other English translations) include this as v.2 (see #4:14); here, we follow the MT (and NJB). 'The least' follows the LXX (ὀλιγοστός εἶ); the MT has 'little'.
- ² Micah is perhaps thinking of the famous prophecy of the 'Alma, delivered by Isaiah some 30 years previously (see Is 7:14).
- ³ Some emend וישבו ('and they will live') to ושובו ('and they will return').
- ⁴ 'In our land' follows the LXX (ἐπὶ τῇ χώρᾳ ἡμῶν) & Peshitta; the MT has 'in our palaces' (בְּאַרְמֻנֹתֵינוּ).

וְשָׁמְנָה נְסִיכֵי אָדָם:
 וְרָעוּ אֶת־אֶרֶץ אַשּׁוּר ^ה
 בַּחֶרֶב וְאֶת־אֶרֶץ נִמְרֹד בַּפֶּתַח־הָיָה
 וְהָצִיל מֵאֲשּׁוּר כִּי־יָבוֹא בְּאֶרְצֵנוּ
 וְכִי יִדְרֹךְ בְּגִבּוֹלֵנוּ: {פ}
 וְהָיָה | שְׂאֲרֵית יַעֲקֹב ^ו
 בְּקֶרֶב עַמִּים רַבִּים
 כְּטֹל מֵאֵת יְהוָה
 כְּרִבִּיבִים עַל־יַעֲשֹׁב
 אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִקְוָה לְאִישׁ
 וְלֹא יִיחַל לִבְנֵי אָדָם: {פ}
 וְהָיָה שְׂאֲרֵית יַעֲקֹב בְּגוֹיִם ^ז
 בְּקֶרֶב עַמִּים רַבִּים
 כְּאֲרִיָּה בְּבֵהֲמוֹת יַעַר
 כְּכַפִּיר בְּעֵדְרֵי־צֹאן
 אֲשֶׁר אִם־עֲבָר וּרְמָס וְטָרַף
 וְאֵין מִצִּיל:
 תָּרֵם יָדָךְ עַל־צָרֶיךָ ^ח
 וְכָל־אֹיְבֶיךָ יִכְרֹתוּ:

eight leaders of men.

- ⁵ They will shepherd Assyria with the sword,
the country of Nimrod with naked blade.
He will save us from the Assyrian,
should he invade our land or set foot inside our frontiers.
- ⁶ Then what is left of Jacob,
surrounded by many peoples,
will be like dew from Yahweh,
like showers on the grass,
which do not depend on human agency
and are beyond human control.
- ⁷ Then what is left of Jacob among the nations,
surrounded by many peoples,
will be like a lion among the forest beasts,
like a fierce lion among flocks of sheep
trampling as he goes, mangling his prey,
which no one takes from him.
- ⁸ You will be victorious over your foes
and all your enemies will be torn to pieces.

⁵ 'With naked blade' follows one LXX MS (ἐν ὁμφαίᾳ) and the *Vetus Latina*; the MT has 'in its entrances' (בַּפֶּתַח־הָיָה).

⁶ This saying (vv. 6–7), in two symmetrical strophes, announces the function of the 'remnant' in the salvation of the peoples (cf. vv. 1–4, 7:12) and in their punishment (4:13, 5:8, 14). The first theme, occurring only at the end of the Exile, suggests a date later than Micah.

⁷ The NJB, following the LXX, lacks 'among the nations'; here, we follow the MT.

⁸ The literal translation of the first line is, "Let your hands be lifted against your enemies."

ט	וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם־הַהוּא נֶאֱסֶיֶהוּ וְהִכַּרְתִּי סוּסֶיךָ מִקֶּרְבְּךָ וְהִאַבְדֹתִי מִרְכַּבְתֶּיךָ:	9	When that day comes, says Yahweh, I shall tear your horses away from you, I shall destroy your chariots.
י	וְהִכַּרְתִּי עָרֵי אֶרֶץ וְהִרְסֹתִי כָל־מִבְצָרֶיךָ:	10	I shall tear the cities from your country; I shall overthrow all your fortresses.
יא	וְהִכַּרְתִּי כְשָׁפִים מִיָּדְךָ וּמַעוֹנָנִים לֹא יִהְיוּ־לְךָ:	11	I shall tear the spells out of your hands and you will have no more soothsayers.
יב	וְהִכַּרְתִּי פְסִילֶיךָ וּמִצְבֹּתֶיךָ מִקֶּרְבְּךָ וְלֹא־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה עוֹד לְמַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ:	12	I shall tear away your images and your sacred pillars from among you, and no longer will you worship things that your own hands have made!
יג	וְנִתְּשֹׁתִי אֲשִׁירֶיךָ מִקֶּרְבְּךָ וְהִשְׁמַדְתִּי עָרֶיךָ:	13	I shall uproot your sacred poles and shall destroy your cities!
יד	וְעָשִׂיתִי בָאָף וּבַחֲמָה נֶקַם אֶת־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא שָׁמְעוּ: {פ}	14	In furious anger, I shall wreak vengeance on the nations who have disobeyed me!

⁹ The prophecy of vv. 9–13 declares that Yahweh will ‘tear’ (literally ‘cut off’) from his people all their spurious human supports (cf. Is 2:7–8, 30:1–3, 15–16, 31:1–3, Ho 3:4, 8:14, 14:4): military power, apparatus of divination and of the cult on the ‘high places’. However, the threat also implies an era of peace and of true faith. This prophecy is applied by vv. 8 & 14 to the nations, enemies of Yahweh; it is a subsequent adjustment.

¹⁰ An alternative translation for the 1st line is, “I shall destroy the cities of your land.”

¹¹ The precise meaning of the word here translated as ‘spells’ (the NRSV has ‘sorceries’) is uncertain (note its use also in Is 47:9, 12).

¹² An alternative reading for ‘images’ is ‘idols’.

¹³ The literal translation of ‘sacred poles’ is ‘Asherah poles’ (Asherah was a Canaanite god).

¹⁴ Translated literally, this verse reads, “I will accomplish in anger and in rage, vengeance on the nations who do not listen.”

מיכה פרק ו

א שִׁמְעוּ־נָא אֶת אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אָמַר
קוֹם רִיב אֶת־הַהָרִים
וְתִשְׁמַעְנָה הַגְּבָעוֹת קוֹלִי:
ב שִׁמְעוּ הָרִים אֶת־רִיב יְהוָה
וְהָאֲתָנִים מוֹסְדֵי אָרֶץ
כִּי רִיב לִיהוָה עַם־עַמּוֹ
וְעַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל יִתּוּכַח:
ג עַמִּי מִה־עָשִׂיתִי לָךְ וּמִה
הֲלֹאֲתִיד
עֲנֵה בִי:
ד כִּי הֵעֵלְתִּיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
וּמִבֵּית עֲבָדִים פָּדִיתִיךָ
וְאֶשְׁלַח לְפָנֶיךָ
אֶת־מֹשֶׁה אֶהֱרֹן וּמִרְיָם:
ה עַמִּי זְכַר־נָא מִה־יַּעַן בָּלַק מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב
וּמִה־עֲנָה אֹתוֹ

MICAH 6

- 1 Now listen to what Yahweh says:
"Stand up; state your case to the mountains
and let the hills hear what you have to say!"
- 2 Listen, mountains, to the case as Yahweh puts it,
you enduring foundations of the earth:
for, Yahweh has a case against his people
and, with Israel, he will argue it.
- 3 "My people, what have I done to you,
how have I made you tired of me?
Answer me!
- 4 For, I brought you up from Egypt,
I ransomed you from the palace of slave labour
and sent to lead you
Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.
- 5 My people, please remember:
what was Balak king of Moab's plan

MICAH 6

- ¹ The 'mountains' are God's favourite place of meeting with his people (Sinai, Nebo, Ebal, Gerizim, Zion, and Carmel); they are changeless witnesses and often personified (Gn 49:26, 2S 1:21, Ps 68:15-16, Ezk 35-36).
- ² This verse interrupts God's statement (vv. 1, 3) as the prophet summons the mountains as witnesses; *NETB* has it in parentheses.
- ³ The literal translation of 'how have I made you tired of me', here following the *NJB*, is 'how have I wearied you', as in the *NRSV* & *NETB*.
- ⁴ Translated literally, 'to lead you' is 'before you'.
- ⁵ In place of 'what happened' (here following the *NRSV*), the *NJB* has an ellipsis – there is a lacuna in the *MT*. The reference is to the crossing of the Jordan. 'You to know' follows the *LXX* (ὅπως γινώσκῃ) and *Peshitta*; the *MT* has 'knowledge of'.

בְּלַעַם בֶּן-בְּעוֹר מִן-הַשְּׂטִיִּם
עַד-הַגִּלְגָּל לְמַעַן
דַּעַת צְדָקוֹת יְהוָה:
בַּמָּה אֶקְדָּם יְהוָה ^ו
אֶכַּף לֵאלֹהֵי מָרוֹם
הָאֶקְדַּמְנוּ בְּעוֹלוֹת
בַּעֲגָלִים בְּנֵי שָׁנָה:
הִירָצָה יְהוָה בְּאַלְפֵי אֵילִים ^ז
בְּרִבְבוֹת נְחֹלֵי-שֶׁמֶן
הֲאִתֵּן בְּכוֹרִי פִשְׁעִי
פָּרִי בִטְנִי חֲטָאת נַפְשִׁי:
הֲגִיד לְךָ אָדָם מַה-טוֹב ^ח
וּמַה-יְהוָה דּוֹרֵשׁ מִמֶּךָ
כִּי אִם-עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד
וְהִצָּנֶעַ לִבְתּוֹ
עִם-אֱלֹהֶיךָ: {ס}
קוֹל יְהוָה לְעִיר יִקְרָא ^ט
וְתוֹשִׁיָּהּ יִרְאֶה שְׁמֶךָ
שִׁמְעוּ מִטָּה וּמִי יַעֲדָה:

and how did Balaam son of Beor answer him?

What happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
for you to know Yahweh's saving justice?

6 "With what shall I enter Yahweh's presence
and bow down before God All-High?

Shall I enter with burnt offerings,
with calves one year old?

7 Will Yahweh be pleased with rams by the thousand,
with ten thousand streams of oil?

Shall I offer my eldest son for my wrongdoing,
the child of my own body for my sin?"

8 "He has told you what is right
and what Yahweh wants of you.

Only this, to do what is right,
to love loyalty

and to walk humbly with your God."

9 Yahweh's voice thunders to the city,
it is sound wisdom to fear your name,
"Listen, tribe of assembled citizens!

⁶ After God's indictment, where he recalls his kindness (vv. 3–5), his repentant worshipper asks what his God demands of him (vv. 6–7).

⁷ The term נַפְשִׁי is often translated 'soul' but the word usually refers to the whole person; here 'the sin of my soul' = 'my sin'.

⁸ For 'he has told you', following the MT & NRSV, the Peshitta has 'I will tell you'; the NJB has 'you have already been told', following the Old Greek.

⁹ The NJB lacks the 2nd line, here following the NRSV. 'Of assembled citizens' follows the LXX (τίς κοσμήσει πόλιν) and Tg; the MT is obscure: 'and who has appointed it yet'.

י	עוֹד הָאֵשׁ בֵּית רָשָׁע אֲצֻרוֹת רָשָׁע וְאִי־פֶת רָזוֹן זְעוּמָה:	10	Can I overlook the false measure, that abomination, the short ephah?
יא	הָאֲזָכָה בְּמֵאזְנֵי רָשָׁע וּבְכִיס אֲבָנֵי מִרְמָה:	11	Can I tolerate rigged scales and at the bag of fraudulent weights?
יב	אֲשֶׁר עֲשִׂירֶיהָ מְלֹאוֹ חָמָס וְיֹשְׁבֶיהָ דְּבָרוֹ-שָׁקָר וְלִשְׁוֹנָם רִמְיָה בְּפִיהֶם:	12	For the rich there are steeped in violence and your inhabitants speak lies, with tongues of deceit in their mouths.
יג	וְגַם-אֲנִי הִחֲלִיתִי הַכּוֹתָךְ הַשָּׁמַם עַל-חַטֹּאתֶיךָ:	13	"I myself have therefore begun to strike you down, to bring you to ruin for your sins.
יד	אַתָּה תֹאכַל וְלֹא תִשְׂבַּע וְיִשְׁחָךְ בְּקִרְבֶּךָ וְתִסָּג וְלֹא תִפְלִיט וְאֲשֶׁר תִּפְלֹט לַחֲרֹב אָתָּן:	14	You will eat but not be satisfied; you will store up but never keep safe; what you do keep safe, I shall hand over to the sword.
טו	אַתָּה תִּזְרַע וְלֹא תִקְצֹר אַתָּה תִּדְרֹךְ-זֵית וְלֹא-תִסּוֹד שֶׁמֶן וְתִירֹשׁ וְלֹא תִשְׁתֶּה-יַיִן:	15	You will sow but will not reap, press the olive but will not rub yourself with oil, tread the grape but will not drink the wine.
טז	וְיִשְׁתַּמֵּר חֻקֹּת עֲמֹרִי וְכָל מַעֲשֵׂה בֵּית-אֲחָאָב	16	"For, you have kept the laws of Omri; what the House of Ahab did, you have done;

-
- 10 The 1st line is a conjectural translation following the NJB; the MT has, "Is there a house of the wicked, treasure of wickedness?"
- 11 In place of 'tolerate' (following the NRSV), the NJB, following the Vg, has 'connive at'; the MT has 'be pure'.
- 12 Some transfer this verse to follow v. 9 to improve the continuity. The last line is probably a gloss.
- 13 'Began' follows the LXX & Peshitta; the MT has 'made sick'.
- 14 At the end of the 1st line, the MT adds 2 words of which one is unknown; the NRSV reads, 'there shall be a gnawing (filthy) hunger within you'.
- 15 The literal translation of 'press' (דָּרַךְ) is 'tread' (treading olives with feet could be harmful and would not supply the necessary pressure).
- 16 'You have kept' follows the LXX (ἐφύλαξας) & Peshitta; the MT has 'he keeps himself'. 'Your citizens' is a conjectural translation; the MT has 'its'. 'Of other people' follows the LXX (λαῶν); the MT has 'of my people'.

וַתִּלְכוּ בְּמַעֲצוֹתָם
לְמַעַן תִּתִּי אֶתְךָ לְשִׁמְהָ
וַיִּשְׁבִּיָּה לְשִׁרְקָה
וְחִרְפַּת עַמִּי תִשָּׂאוּ: {פ}

by modelling yourselves on their standards,
you force me to make an appalling example of you
and reduce your citizens to a laughing-stock;
hence, you will endure the scorn of other people.”

מיכה פרק ז

אֶלְלִי לִי א
כִּי הָיִיתִי בְּאֶסְפִּי-קִיץ
כְּעֹלֵלָת בָּצִיר
אֵין-אֶשְׁכּוֹל לֶאֱכֹל
בְּבוֹרָה אֹתָהּ נִפְשִׁי:
ב אֲבַד חֲסִיד מִן-הָאָרֶץ
וַיֵּשֶׁר בְּאָדָם אֵין
כָּלֶם לְדָמִים יֹאֲרְבוּ
אִישׁ אֶת-אֶחָיו יִצְוֹדוּ חָרֶם:
ג עַל-הֶרֶעַ כַּפַּיִם
לְהִיטִיב הַשֵּׁר שְׂאֵל
וְהַשְׁפֵּט בְּשִׁלּוֹם
וְהַגְדֹּל דִּבַּר הַזֶּה נִפְשׁוֹ הוּא
וַיַּעֲבֹתוּהָ:
ד טוֹבָם כְּחֹדֶק

MICAH 7

- 1 How wretched I am,
a harvester in summer time,
like a gleaner at the vintage:
not a single cluster to eat,
none of those early figs I love!
- 2 The faithful have vanished from the land:
there is no one honest left.
All of them are on the alert for blood,
every man hunting his brother with a net.
- 3 Their hands are adept at doing evil:
the official makes his demands,
the judge gives judgement for a bribe
and the man in power pronounces as he pleases;
thus, they pervert justice.
- 4 The best of them is like a briar,

MICAH 7

- 1 'A harvester' follows the LXX (ἀμῆτω); the MT has 'the harvester'. 'A gleaner' is conjectural; the MT has 'gleanings'. Note the assonance between 'cluster' (אֶשְׁכּוֹל) and 'to eat' (אֶכֹּל). The speaker here is feminine – probably personified Samaria.
- 2 Alternative translations for 'vanished' are 'perished' and 'been destroyed'.
- 3 The 1st line is restored following the LXX (ἐπὶ τὸ κακὸν τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῶν ἐτοιμάζουσιν); the MT has 'against evil, hands to prosper'. 'Gives judgement' is conjectural (not present in the MT). The last line (literally, 'so they wrap it up') is omitted by the NJB and here follows the NRSV.
- 4 The 2nd line follows Symmachus; the MT has 'an honest man outside a hedge'; for the first 2 lines, the LXX reads, "And I will take out their good things, as a moth chews away." (καὶ ἐξελοῦμαι τὰ ἀγαθὰ αὐτῶν ὡς σῆς ἐκτρῶγων). 'Thorn hedge' (מִסּוּכָה) & 'confounded' (מְבוּכָה) are similar in sound. 'From the north' is a conjectural translation following the NJB; the MT has 'of your watchmen'.

יִשָּׁר מִמְּסוּכָה
 יוֹם מִצְפִּיךָ פִּקְדָתְךָ בָּאָה
 עֲתָה תִהְיֶה מְבוֹכָתָם:
 אֶל־תִּאֱמִינוּ בִרְעֵה
 אֶל־תִּבְטְחוּ בְּאֻלּוֹף
 מְשַׁכְּבֵת חִיקְךָ
 שֹׁמֵר פֶּתַח־חַיִּי־פִיךָ:
 כִּי־בֶן מִגְבֵּל אָב
 בֵּת קָמָה בְּאִמָּה
 כָּלָה בַּחֲמֹתָהּ
 אִיבֵי אִישׁ אֲנָשֵׁי בֵיתוֹ:
 וְאֲנִי בִיהוָה אֶצְפֶּה
 אוֹחִילָה לֵאלֹהֵי יִשְׁעִי
 יִשְׁמַעֲנִי אֱלֹהֵי:
 אֶל־תִּשְׁמַחֵי אִיבֹתַי לִי
 כִּי נָפַלְתִּי קָמְתִּי
 כִּי־אֲשׁוּב בַּחֹשֶׁךְ
 יְהוָה אֹר לִי: {פ}

the most honest of them like a thorn hedge.
 Now, from the north, their punishment approaches!
 That will be when they are confounded!
 5 Trust no neighbour,
 put no confidence in a friend;
 do not open your mouth
 to the wife who lies in your arms.
 6 For son insults father,
 daughter rebels against mother,
 daughter-in-law against mother-in-law;
 a person's enemies come from within the household itself.
 7 But I shall look to Yahweh,
 my hope is in the God who will save me;
 my God will hear me.
 8 Do not gloat over me, my enemy:
 though I have fallen, I shall rise;
 though I live in darkness,
 Yahweh is my light.

⁵ The literal translation of the 3rd line is 'guard the doors of your mouth'.

⁶ This verse is quoted by Jesus in Mt 10:35.

⁷ This verse, in which the prophet proclaims his confidence in God's power to save, may have been the original conclusion of his book; it presented a suitable opportunity for the addition of the poems of hope that follow (vv. 8–12), probably dating from Exilic times.

⁸ The identity of the 'enemy' is not clear, though more probably Edom (Ps 137:7–9, Is 34:5–8, Ezk 25:12–14, 35, Ob 10–15) or Damascus than Babylon. 'Darkness' represents judgment; 'light' (also in v. 9) symbolises deliverance; Yahweh is the source of the latter.

זַעַף יְהוָה אֶשָּׂא ט
 כִּי חָטָאתִי לוֹ
 עַד אֲשֶׁר יִרְיֵב רִיבִי
 וַעֲשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּטִי
 יוֹצִיאֵנִי לָאוֹר
 אֶרְאֶה בְּצִדְקָתוֹ:
 וְתֵרָא אִיְבָתִי י
 וּתְכַסֶּה בּוֹשָׁה
 הָאִמְרָה אֵלַי
 אִין יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 עֵינַי תִּרְאֶינָה בָּהּ
 עֲתָה תִּהְיֶה לְמִרְמָס בְּטִיט חוּצוֹת:
 יוֹם לְבָנוֹת גְּדִרֶיךָ יא
 יוֹם הֵהוּא יִרְחַק־חֶק:
 יוֹם הוּא וְעַדֶיךָ יָבוֹא יב
 לְמִנֵּי אֲשׁוּר וְעַרֵי מִצּוֹר
 וּלְמִנֵּי מִצּוֹר וְעַד־נָהָר
 וְיָם מִיָּם וְהָר הָהָר:

9 I must endure Yahweh's anger
 for I have sinned against him,
 until he takes up my cause
 and rights my wrongs;
 he will bring me out into the light,
 and then I shall contemplate his saving justice.
 10 When my enemy sees this,
 she will be covered with shame,
 having sneered, "Where is Yahweh your God?"
 This time, I shall be watching
 as she is trampled underfoot
 like mud in the streets.
 11 That will be the day for rebuilding your walls,
 the day for expanding your frontiers!
 12 The day when others come to you
 all the way from Assyria, from Egypt,
 from Tyre and all the way from the Euphrates,
 from sea to sea, from the mountains to the mountains,

⁹ Alternative translations for 'endure' are 'lift' and 'bear'.

¹⁰ The literal translation of 'trampled underfoot' is 'a trampled down place'.

¹¹ This prophecy, which may be dated to the Persian Era (after 538 BCE), announces the restoration of the ramparts of Jerusalem and the expansion of its boundaries to hold a great number of people, either Israelites of the Diaspora or convert gentiles. It does seem to be the work or words of Micah (cf. #7).

¹² The last line here follows some MSS of the LXX (και απο θαλασσης εως θαλασσης και απο ορους εως ορους); the MT is uncertain.

וְהִיְתָה הָאָרֶץ לְשִׁמְמָה יג
 עַל־יִשְׁבִּיָּה מִפְּרִי מַעֲלִיָּהֶם: {פ}
 רָעָה עֹמֶךָ בְּשִׁבְטֶךָ יד
 צֹאן נַחֲלָתְךָ
 שֹׁכֵנִי לְבִדָּד
 יַעַר בְּתוֹךְ כְּרָמְל
 יִרְעוּ בָשָׁן וְגִלְעָד
 כִּימֵי עוֹלָם:
 כִּימֵי צֵאתְךָ טו
 מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲרָאֵנוּ נִפְלְאוֹת:
 יִרְאוּ גוֹיִם וַיִּבְשׁוּ טז
 מִכָּל גְּבוּרָתָם
 יִשְׁיִמוּ יָד עַל־פִּה
 אֲזִינֵיהֶם תִּחְרַשְׁנָה:
 יִלְחֲכוּ עָפָר כְּנָחָשׁ יז
 כְּזֹחֲלֵי אֶרֶץ
 יִרְגְּזוּ מִמִּסְגְּרֹתֵיהֶם
 אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 יִפְחָדוּ וַיִּרְאוּ מִמֶּךָ:

- 13 the earth will become a desert
due to its inhabitants, in return for what they have done.
- 14 With a shepherd's crook, lead your people to pasture,
the flock that is your heritage,
living confined in a forest
with meadow land all round.
Let them graze in Bashan and Gilead
as in the days of old!
- 15 As in the days when you came out of Egypt,
I shall grant him to see wonders!
- 16 The nations will see and be confounded
in spite of all their power;
they will put their hands over their mouths,
their ears will be deafened.
- 17 They will lick the dust like snakes,
like reptiles that crawl on the earth.
They will creep trembling out of their lairs,
to Yahweh their God,
in terror before you.

13 Originally, this verse may have been a threat aimed at Judah, but in its present context applies to the hostile nations.

14 The word here translated as 'crook' can also mean 'sceptre'. The regions of 'Bashan' and 'Gilead' were noted for their rich grazing lands.

15 In place of 'I shall grant him to see', her following the MT, the NJB has 'grant us to see'.

16 Apparently, the last line means the opposing nations will be left dumbfounded by Yahweh's power.

17 The NJB omits the 4th line, here following the NRSV. The translation assumes that 3rd line goes with what precedes it.

מִי־אֵל כְּמוֹךָ יח
 נָשָׂא עוֹן וְעִבֵּר עַל־פֶּשַׁע
 לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נַחֲלָתוֹ
 לֹא־הֶחֱזִיק לְעַד אָפוֹ
 כִּי־חָפֵץ חֶסֶד הוּא:
 יָשׁוּב יִרְחַמֵּנוּ ט
 יִכְבֹּשׁ עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ
 וְתִשְׁלִיךְ בַּמַּצְלוֹת יָם
 כָּל־חַטָּאוֹתֵם:
 תִּתֵּן אֱמֶת לִיעֲקֹב כ
 חֶסֶד לְאַבְרָהָם
 אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ
 מִימֵי קֶדֶם:

{ש}

- 18 What god can compare with you
for pardoning the guilt of the remnant of his possession,
and for overlooking crime?
He does not harbour anger forever,
since he delights in showing faithful love.
- 19 Once more, have pity on us
and tread down our faults;
throw all our sins
to the bottom of the sea.
- 20 Grant Jacob your faithfulness
and Abraham your faithful love,
as you swore to our ancestors
from the days of long ago.

¹⁸ The NJB lacks the 3rd line, here following the MT (and NRSV) – a gloss that limits the range of God’s pardon.

¹⁹ In the MT, the first 2 verbs of this verse are in the 3rd person; the verb יָשׁוּב (literally, ‘he will return’) is here used adverbially in relation to the following verb, indicating that Yahweh will again take pity. Some prefer to read יִכְבֹּס (‘he will cleanse’) in place of יִכְבֹּשׁ (‘tread down’); if the MT is taken as it stands, sin is personified as an enemy that Yahweh subdues. ‘Our sins’ follows the LXX (ἀδικίας ἡμῶν), Tg and Peshitta; the MT has ‘their sins’.

²⁰ The salvation of Israel is the fulfilment of the Covenant and of the Promise, the foundation of hope and the focus of faith for the people of God.