

Dr. Perry Phillips, Micah, Prophet Outside the Beltway, Session 2, Micah 1

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This is Drs. Elaine and Perry Phillips and their teaching on the prophet Micah, Prophet Outside the Beltway. Session 2, Micah 1.

We're continuing our introduction to Micah, the Prophet Outside the Beltway, chapter one, and it all fits into the study of context, the canonical, geographical, historical, theological, and literary, which my wife Elaine did last time in the last lecture. My name is Perry Phillips. Everybody seems to be into selfies, selfies this day and age, and so I decided besides just seeing what I look like, I would also show you what the selfie looks like as well, and here we are.

So, greetings. I'm happy to be with you. Let's just do some review.

First of all, Micah's background, and this is reviewing what Elaine did last time. He delivered God's message during a time of great turmoil. The Judean kings that were present at the time are Jotham, and then as before that, Jotham, Hezekiah, and his preaching is roughly between about 740 and 687 BC.

This is about a 53-year timeline. The message concerns Samaria, the capital city of the north, and Jerusalem, the capital city of the south. The area of concern where he is preaching is the Shephelah, which, as Elaine pointed out, is the lowland between the Mediterranean Sea and the mountain spine in the middle of the country. Just a little bit on the time again, the dates, just briefly.

We have Jeroboam starts out the northern dynasty as the king, 731, with the split of the kingdom after Solomon dies. That kingdom fell with the fall of its capital city, Samaria, in 722, and a little after that, about 120 years after that, Jerusalem fell. Micah is going to speak not only about the fall of Samaria but also about the fall of Jerusalem. Here are the kings that we are talking about: Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. It is during this time that Assyria is your major power, and it is during this time that Micah is doing his ministry.

Relevant geography, again just by way of review, this is the land of Canaan as it was promised to the Israelites by the Lord, and Jerusalem, where the arrow points, is located in what became the tribal area of Judah, and the Shephelah, as we mentioned before, is an area that is between the central spine and the Mediterranean, and what I'm pointing to is close to the area of Moreshah, where Micah was ministering. Here's again a little map, I don't mean to belabor the point, but the topography of this area is very important, as Elaine brought out, concerning armies, both local and international, that would come into the area. Let's point out

Jerusalem in the hill country, rather secluded, rather protected, but not invincible, and Moreshah, where Micah was ministering, is in the Shephelah, and this whole area, lowland, is called the Shephelah.

It is about the mountains and hills there, which are about half the height of what you find in the central hill country. Jerusalem goes up about 2,800 feet, and the highest mountains in the Shephelah and the highest hills are maybe about 1,500 feet. This is just another indication of what we're talking about. Again, this shows you the topography very nicely.

There is Jerusalem, the capital of the south, Moreshah, and the lowlands, and the Shephelah that we're talking about, and some of the cities that are mentioned are in that oval that just showed up on the map. Here is Moreshah, the Tell Moreshah, the ancient site of Moreshah, that's Elaine that is teaching a group of students from Gordon College, and what shows up in this particular diagram is what the structure of the Shephelah is like. You've got the hills, like Moreshah, but then notice where the pointer is going, behind Elaine's head, and then over to the left, and continuing to the left, is a broad valley, and it is through these broad valleys that you will find the armies that are moving back and forth, and so the Shephelah again becomes a buffer zone, because once the armies get to the hill country, it's more difficult for them to maneuver, but the defense of the hill country is going to be here in the Shephelah, and I just have another view of the relationship between the Shephelah and the hill country.

This particular view comes from a city that we will mention later, called Lachish, or Lachish, and this shows the valley that starts from Lachish, the tel, the ancient site, is just to the left, and you can see it is a straight shot to go from this particular area, from this city, it is a straight shot just to go right up this valley, over to here, there's the hill country, and Jerusalem would be right about there. So, the people up here in Jerusalem are going to be very concerned about what is happening to the Shephelah. Well, historical background for Micah's message we've seen, and we will now look at the verses in Micah chapter 1. We'll go through it one by one, and then we'll take a look at some commentary.

I'm using the ESV, the English Standard Version, for Micah chapter 1. Later on, when I go to chapter 3, I'll be using the NASV. I like to just shift back and forth between those two versions. So, verse 1, The word of the Lord that came to Micah of Moresheth, or the Moreshti, in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

And as we mentioned, Samaria is the capital of the north, Jerusalem is the capital of the south, after the split in the kingdom in 931 BC. Here's a map that is somewhat cartoonish, but shows what is going on. Israel to the north, and Judah to the south.

Now, sometimes in Micah, the term Israel refers to all of Israel, meaning Israel and Judah. In other cases, when Israel is the name used, it means the northern kingdom, and Judah means the southern kingdom. And you can see, initially, as Elaine had mentioned, in the previous discussion, Shechem turned out to be the first capital of Israel.

Later on, that's going to move, and we'll show how the move occurred. And Jerusalem is the capital of the kingdom to the south, Judah. Two cities that we want to point out in Israel are Dan to the north and Bethel to the south.

The reason we're doing that is because those are two of the cities where the first king of Israel, Jeroboam, set up rival worship areas in Jerusalem. As Jeroboam mentioned, why go all the way down to Jerusalem to worship? Here, I'll just set up a couple of places for you to worship. And, of course, he does it on his northern boundary and on his southern boundary.

Later on, the capital of the Omri dynasty moves from Shechem. And oh, by the way, yes, we have pictures of Jeroboam and Rehoboam. You see it here, as far as this is, unusual documents that were found that show us what the kings looked like.

But anyway, eventually, Omri moves the capital from Shechem to Samaria. That becomes such an important place that the whole northern kingdom of Israel is often referred to as Samaria. And there's Moresah in relationship to all the above.

The big battle in the time of Micah and before was a battle between Baal, the religion that had come in from Phoenicia, and the Yahwistic religion, the religion of the God of the Bible down in the south. And there was always a battle between the religion of the north, which was Baalism, and the religion of the south, which is the God of the pictures of Baal and Asherah. This is Baal, the storm god, riding the clouds, etc.

And the Asherah was kind of a fertility figure. We'll just censor that part. Well, moving on, in verses two to five, we have what used to be called a lawsuit, but more properly, a covenant dispute.

In other words, the Lord is looking at the covenant that he has made with the people, and he is saying, you are not following this. He does it almost as in a court scene, where there is a prosecutor, a judge, a defendant, and witnesses, and this all comes up in the discussion that we have in Micah.

So, we start that with verse two. Hear you peoples, all of you; pay attention, O earth, and all that is in it, and let the Lord God be a witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple.

Let's break this up a little bit. Who are the peoples of the earth that Micah is addressing? Well, you might think as we go back to that particular verse that the peoples of the earth might be everybody.

But we will make the case that he's probably just talking to the people in that particular area, and I will substantiate that as we move along. The reason I'm saying that is because in Hebrew, the word for earth, *eretz*, can also mean the word for land. And so, verse two could be you people of the land, not of the whole earth, but you people of the land, you people that I'm talking about, you people in Samaria, you people in Israel, you people in Judah, you people in Judah, you are the people that I am talking about here and not the entire earth.

When we get to chapter five, we will see that the Lord speaks of the entire earth and not just the land of Judah and Israel. What is God's holy temple? After all, he's coming out of his holy temple. Is it the temple in Jerusalem or the heavenly temple? We will try to answer that question.

But the defendants, of course, are the people of the land. As Elaine had mentioned, even though we had a righteous king later on, the people continued to do evil, and Micah is addressing them along with the leaders that are leading them into this evil. And then, in verses two to five, we also have the indictment.

And when you have an indictment, what do you bring? You bring witnesses. Well, interestingly enough, when you look back at the covenant in Deuteronomy, the witnesses are the earth and the heaven, the mountains, and the hills. But in this particular case, interestingly enough, the witness is the judge.

It is God who's going to be the witness himself against what the people are doing. Moving on to verse three. For behold, the Lord is coming out of his place, again, his holy temple that we saw in the previous verse, and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth.

The Lord is coming out of his place, his holy place. Now, here's an interesting thing. The phrase coming out it's interesting that a particular phrase, *yatsia*, from the Hebrew *yatsa*, goes out.

This is used by kings who go out to war. And so, the Lord is coming out, in a sense, to war against the people who have become his enemies as a result of their idolatry and their social, political, and moral sins as well. God will tread the high places.

Well, the mountains? Yeah, because that's primarily where the false shrines were located, not just in the north, but later on, what we find is there are many false shrines in Judah as well. And these are located on the hills, in high places. Sometimes the word *bama* is used for a false shrine.

Bama means an elevated place, a high place. And the shrines were related to the mountains or to the hills. And so, the Lord is going to tread upon them.

He's going to squash them. He's going to come down, and he's going to squash them the way we step on ants if they get around us too much or squash a bug. In my humble opinion, verse 5 implies that what he's talking about is not just the mountains in general, but really what he's going to squash are the false shrines.

And the mountains are going to see this. They're going to be witnesses as well as the Lord. Well, continuing in verse 4, he comes down, he treads the mountains, and we read, the mountains will melt under him, and the valleys will split open like wax before the fire like waters poured down a steep place.

Well, wax before a fire. We know what happens if you were to turn the blowtorch upon a candle. It would certainly melt, and waters pour down a steep place. Well, if you've ever been in an area of a lot of rain or flood, like California, you see what a lot of rain can do to a mountainside.

It just totally erodes it away, and the material just cascades down into the valley below. And that will become significant later on when we discuss the details of what Micah says about what's going to happen to the northern capital of Samaria. But what about the topographical upheaval that we read about in this verse? Mountains melt, valleys split open.

It would be fairly obvious if we were in an area with volcanoes, but there are no active volcanoes in the Levant, and there are certainly none in Israel. So, what are we talking about? Here's my suggestion. It may be a reference to the splitting of the Red Sea.

That's the last time things were split. The Red Sea was split through a mighty action of God, and metaphorically, the Lord is saying here that the land is going to split. It's going to be an even greater action than the splitting of the Red Sea.

But here's something else that's interesting, too. Running right through this area is the Jordan Valley, the Rift Valley, part of the Great Rift Valley, which is a split in the earth. And perhaps what he's talking about, what Micah is talking about when he talks about splitting open the land, the volcanic activity that is going on as the two parts of the Rift Valley combat one another, and you get the rifting and the earthquakes that go on that are shaking the mountains and the valleys as well.

But whatever it is, it's metaphorical for God's mighty actions that will be taking place that will be, again, in my opinion, as mighty as the splitting of the sea. This is going to

be clear that it is God who is doing this, that this is not just natural activity. Verse 5 talks about the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel.

And notice the parallelism here with Jacob and Israel. Sometimes, Israel and Jacob are used interchangeably in Micah. And he says, what is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? But now, what is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem? And it's very interesting in this particular case how Micah is lumping Samaria and Jerusalem as the heads of the idolatry that is going on.

And my goodness, to read more about what's going on with the idolatry that's going on in Jerusalem, all one has to do is look at Jeremiah, look at Ezekiel, where it describes in great detail how the temple area that was supposed to be devoted to the God of the Bible became devoted to the false gods in Jerusalem and how the whole temple was profaned, just as Samaria in the north were profaned by the false shrines that we had in that area. But let's break this down in a little more detail. In the first part of verse 5, Micah concentrates on Samaria, but its destruction, he says, will reach the gates of Jerusalem.

And when we look at the historical context of Sennacherib's attack on Judah, as he comes up to try to attack Jerusalem, this is going to make a little more sense. But from what we read here, it looks like Samaria is going to experience destruction, and it's going to reach the gates of Jerusalem, but it doesn't go into Jerusalem. So, this is a very interesting prophecy that we have here.

And the reason for the destruction is idolatry. Again, we're talking about Baalism here, which is the main competitor to the God of the Bible. I mentioned before that Jacob and Israel are used synonymously, and this occurs in many places in Micah itself.

Interestingly enough, if you go back to Genesis chapter 32, with the struggle that Jacob had with the angel, there's where his name is changed to Israel. So, the connection between Jacob and Israel goes all the way back to Genesis. And then I just want to mention in other places, mainly the historical books, primarily Kings.

Kings seem to be fairly fastidious in differentiating Israel as the northern tribe and Judah as the southern tribe. But this becomes a little more confusing in Chronicles, and it also becomes a little bit more fuzzy, shall I say, not confused in the prophets as well. Finally, in the second part of verse 5, what's the transgression of? And what are the high places? Remember what the verse said? What is Samaria's transgression? What are the high places of Jerusalem? Literally, in Hebrew, it's not the word what, but the word who.

Who is the transgression of Samaria? Who are the high places of Jerusalem? And one wonders why use a personal word like who instead of what. And the suggestion is that the sin of these places is being personalized. This is not abstract.

These are people who carry out idolatry. And we can look at that in light of 1 Peter chapter 4 verse 17, where the Lord says if it's time for judgment to begin with the household of God, and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome of those who do not obey the gospel of God? In other words, it's a very, very personal thing that the Lord is looking at when he looks at Jerusalem, and when he looks at Samaria, he personalizes that because these are people who are carrying out the sin that is described. Well, we have the call to the trial, if you like, to the dispute, if you like, and then verses 6 through 9, we have the judgments as a result of the indictment.

And if you're going to have judgments, the implication is that the subject, the defendant, has been found guilty. And now, here's what the judge is going to do. Verse 6, therefore, I will make Samaria a heap in the open country, a place for planting vineyards.

Normally, you wouldn't expect that in a busy city. And I will pour down her stones into the valley and uncover her foundations. So, it's not like a very serious judgment on Samaria.

In Samaria, you get the idea that instead of being a city, somehow it's going to be an open field, and people are going to be planting vineyards there, as you would in an open field. Not only that, the stones which are built for defensive purposes on the hill of Samaria are going to be cast down to the valley below once the judgment takes place. So, in the first part, Samaria's stones will be poured down the hill into the valley, like water pouring down a steep place that we read about in verse 4, and also uncover her foundations.

Now, what is happening during the time of war? The city is destroyed, there's a lot of destruction, and the foundations of the buildings are revealed because the top has been destroyed. But it's very interesting to look at the word for uncover, uncover her foundations. The word uncover is the same one that is used elsewhere for sexual sin, for uncovering someone's nakedness.

And it fits because idolatry was considered by the Lord that those who committed idolatry were like an unfaithful wife who had exposed her nakedness to somebody else, to a lover, to a paramour rather than to her husband. And so, the idea of the uncovering nakedness of Samaria fits in very nicely with the correlation that the Lord makes between idolatry and adultery. So, this fits well.

It's also used for prostitution, and we will get into that later because what the idolaters have done by going to another god, in a sense, has resulted in prostitution. Literally, to worship Baal, there was religious prostitution in the temples in order to help the god Baal, who was not only the storm god but also the god of fertility, to help fertilize the land, to make the land fertile. There was sexual activity taking place in his shrines, in the local shrines of Baal, and so this is also being used to. This also fits with the uncovering of the spiritual lewdness that you find in the false temples in Samaria.

And then in B, uncover her foundation again the word uncover is the same one used elsewhere for sexual sin, as I have mentioned before, and used for prostitution. Here's a picture of Samaria, the hill of Samaria. You'd have to use your imagination to think of an old city on there, but now notice you've got cacti, you've got olive trees, you've got a lot of flowers, and Samaria really was plowed like a field, and things were planted there.

By the way, I should mention when Samaria finally fell in 722; it wasn't because the city had been entered; it was too strong for that. What the Assyrians had to do is siege the city for three years and starve the people out. So, Samaria really was a stronghold, but eventually, it succumbed to the Assyrians.

Here is where ivories were found, this is where the palace area was found. A lot of ivory objects were found in this area, and I'll show you why that's significant in just a second, but here are the uncovered foundations of Samaria. It is literally true what Micah said would occur. Ivory in Samaria—we go to Amos, chapter 3, mentions the ivory.

Ivory was very important; it would be imported from Africa, basically the tusks of elephants that were used for very exotic boxes and exotic coverings like veneer for furniture, etc. And Amos talks about this when he says, I will also smite the winter house together with the summer house, the houses of ivory will also perish, and the great houses will come to an end, and that is exactly what happened in Samaria. And he says, woe to those who recline on beds of ivory and sprawl on their couches.

As I mentioned before, ivories were found in the area of the picture where I showed you a few seconds ago with the uncovered foundations. Here are some of the ivories. As you can see, they're very intricate, they would be very expensive, it would take a lot of good artistry in order to be able to produce something like this, and this is the kind of thing that was in Samaria. You see, Samaria was rich economically, but spiritually, it was dead; it was very poor.

Moving on to verse 7, all her carved images, and now we know what we're talking about is the ivory shall be beaten to pieces, all her wages shall be burned with fire, and all her idols will lay waste. In other words, the wages burned with fire, and the

stuff that's being brought as votive offerings to the idolatrous shrines would eventually disappear. For from the fee of a prostitute, she gathered them, I've mentioned the relationship there before, and to the fee of a prostitute they shall return, and we'll try to unpack that.

Starting with verse 7, we begin to get into something that is very common in Micah that Elaine had mentioned, and that is wordplay. Words, in this particular case, are going to be words that sound alike but mean something different, and we'll look at that in a moment. But here in verse 7 we do find a play on the word for the city and the word for smashed idols, and the word in Hebrew for Samaria is shomron, but shomron will become shemama, shomron, shemama.

You see the play on words here, the wordplay that you have here, and we will see more of that as we move on. But the ritual prostitution was related to Baal worship, as I mentioned before, and gifts were given to the shrines from deceived idol worshippers. Baal was responsible for rain, fertility, healing, raising people from the dead, rising from the dead himself, and so the prostitution that was going on there is mentioned in that particular verse, but we find the following.

Fees from prostitution, interestingly enough, were forbidden to be given to the temple in Jerusalem. They were never to be used as a votive offering to the temple in Jerusalem, to the God of the covenant, but the gifts were given to the high places, that is in shrine. Apparently, what Micah is telling us is that the gifts that were given to the bamot, which was the Hebrew word for the high places, the gifts that were given to the bamot through prostitution in Samaria, are now going to wind up in another bamot where prostitution takes place, and that is in Assyria.

So, all the stuff that has been collected in rich Samaria is going to be taken to Assyria and is going to wind up in their high places, in their idolatrous worship areas, rather than in Samaria. 4 and verse 8, Micah continues, for this, I will lament and wail, I will go stripped and naked, I will make lamentation like the jackals and mourning like the ostriches. Micah feels this himself.

He himself is inwardly in great turmoil over what is going to happen. Lament for the fall and desolation of Samaria. Jackals are known in Israel in that area, in dry areas to inhabit desolate areas, and they howl at night like wolves or coyotes.

Jackals do the same thing. In Isaiah's so-called little apocalypse, which is basically Isaiah 34 in this case, we find these particular words. Thorns will come up in its fortified towers, nettles, and thistles in its fortified cities.

It will also be a haunt of jackals and an abode of ostriches or possibly owls. The idea is that the place is vacant and so now these wild animals can come, and since nobody's taking care of the ground, thorns and thistles are now going to rise in the

place where the people used to live. So, all the beautiful buildings are collapsed, the vineyards are gone, we've got thorns, thistles, ostriches, owls, jackals.

Not a place to live. Note the normal way to mourn was to wear sackcloth and put ashes on over the head, and we find this in Esther. And so, when Micah is mourning over what is happening, perhaps he is also putting on ashes on his head.

We find the same thing in Jonah, for the people of Assyria in Nineveh, who heard Jonah's message, they repented, and they showed their repentance by putting ashes on their heads, mourning for what was going to happen to them, but then the Lord relented. And I have reference here to Matthew 11 and to Luke 10. This is where Jesus said if the people in Tyre and Sidon had seen what I did in you, meaning Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, if they had seen the miracles that I have done, that you have seen, they would have repented in dust and ashes back at that particular time.

So, this is a form of mourning and repentance that has been used for hundreds of years. But interestingly enough, it can also be a means of seeking God's guidance, as in Daniel chapter 9, where he fasts, has dust on his head, etc. The second part of this verse, going naked, may be an extreme form of mourning, or it could indicate the captives that are going to be taken from Jerusalem.

They are going to be naked, and they are going to be shackled. And we find this image of exiles, of refugees, of captives going away naked from a city. We find this in Isaiah chapter 20, talking about the people of Egypt and of Cush, young and old, that the king of Assyria, by the way, did take away after he had conquered Egypt, and they are going away naked and barefoot with buttocks uncovered to the shame of Egypt.

And the same thing is going to happen to Judah now. And even though the nation, especially the capitals, deserve judgment, Micah knows they deserve judgment, but he is still going to mourn for the upcoming doom of his people. Of course, we find that in Jeremiah as well, but we find that also in Paul, in his writing to the Romans, in chapters 9 through 11, especially in chapter 9, when Paul mourns over the fact that his people are not listening to the message of the gospel and accepting Jesus as their Messiah, as their Savior.

The wound is going to be incurable. It has come to Judah. It has reached the gate of my people to Jerusalem.

We mentioned that before. Samaria falls. The armies are marching south.

They're coming to Jerusalem. They, as we'll see, have wiped out the cities of the Shephelah. Now the gateway is open.

The buffer is open. The gate is open for the armies to move up to Jerusalem, but they're not going to enter Jerusalem. Not this time.

Again, we're talking about Assyria. We're talking about 701 BC. Later on, around 586, the Babylonian army got into Jerusalem and destroyed Jerusalem.

But in this case, they only come to the gates. One would think that this would be a lesson for the people in Judah. Look what's happened to Samaria.

Look at the armies outside of your walls. Repent. But they do not do so, not to the degree where they say themselves, Jerusalem's wound is going to reach the gate, but it doesn't come in.

And as I mentioned just a few seconds ago, this may refer to the attack on Jerusalem by the Assyrian king Sennacherib in 701 BC. He reached the gates of Jerusalem but did not conquer it. And I'll show you a little later on he boasts about taking one of the most important cities, if not the most important city in the Shephelah by the name of Lachish or Lachish.

And he boasts about that. He boasts about locking Hezekiah in Jerusalem like a bird in a cage. But unlike other cities where he locks the king as a bird in a cage, Sennacherib would say, ah, yes, and I grabbed him and plucked his feathers.

But he doesn't do that with Hezekiah. And from what we know from our history of the attack of Sennacherib on Jerusalem, especially that we see also in Isaiah 36-39, the army surrounds Jerusalem. However, the Lord intervenes and wipes out 185,000 soldiers of the Assyrians, and Sennacherib has to hide back at his home in Assyria.

But there are further consequences for Judah. Verse 10, tell it not in Gath, weep not at all, in Beth-le-aphrah roll yourselves in dust. In other words, tell it not in Gath, weep not at all, in Beth-le-aphrah roll yourselves in dust.

Okay, where are these cities? Well, they're out in the Shephelah. As I mentioned previously, the Assyrians came, and wiped out the cities in the Shephelah, especially Lachish, before moving up toward Jerusalem. Now, here is where we start getting into some interesting play on words.

But before we get to that, let's look at Micah's prophecies regarding Judah, given during the time of a previous campaign that the Assyrians had against the Philistines. And Elaine had mentioned that this would be Sargon's campaign against Philistia. We have campaigns in 720.

The Assyrians then have some battles. Once they get their act together, they come again between 714 and 710 BC. And so, you've got tumult, war, and disaster happening down to the coastal area.

And Micah is now using this and looking ahead to the Sennacherib battle against Jerusalem that's coming in 701. And so, Micah is basically saying to the people, look at what's happening down there. The same thing's going to happen here if you don't change your ways.

And then verse 10b, tell it not in Gath. Interestingly enough, Gath was a Philistine city, but it had fallen to the people of Judah, to the Judahites, to the Jews a number of times. It's a major Philistine city, as I mentioned.

This tells it not in Gath, really; Micah is echoing what David's lament was at the death of Saul and his son Jonathan when David says, tell it not in Gath. Don't let the people of Gath know this because they are going to rejoice. And I don't want them rejoicing, so don't say anything about it.

The same expression is now used by Micah. Here's where we begin a nice play on words. Gath sounds like the Hebrew word for tell.

And by tell, I mean to relate, to say something. Okay, not tell as in an ancient hill. And here's what's interesting.

In Hebrew, it sounds something like this: begat al tagidu, okay? Begat al tagidu. Notice they're just, what we would call the G and the T are metastasized. They're in different places.

And so, it's a play on words that you have here. But now, Gath wasn't the only city that was mentioned. Beth-le-aphra was mentioned.

And how does that tie in? Well, the name means house of dust. Aphra is Hebrew for dust. And this is a play on words as well because what the comparison between Aphra, dust, and Apha, the city.

Notice again what we have is the changing around the metathesis of the words. And basically in Hebrew, in English, if we were to put it in English, it would be city of Apha, don't roll in Apha. So again, you get the play on words here.

Well, why bother with a play on words? Because it's more memorable. It has a greater impact. Just like poetry, many times, it is far more memorable and easier to memorize than straight prose.

Verse 11. Pass your way, inhabitants of Shaphir. In nakedness and shame, the inhabitants of Zaanan do not come out. The lamentation of Beth-ezel shall take away from you its standing place.

Notice the cities that are mentioned here. Shaphir, Zaanan, and Beth-ezel.

And as you probably guessed, we're going to have a play on words on these as well. I think Micah had a fun time writing this, aside from the fact that it was sad. Shaphir means pleasant, but its inhabitants will go out in nakedness and shame, as it is said in the verse.

In other words, it's going to be anything but pleasant. It's going to be exactly the opposite of what the name of the city represents. Zaanan sounds like the Hebrew for come out, but what does the verse say? The people of Zaanan are not going to come out and fight.

They're going to stay in their city. Why? Because of fear. So we have, again, the opposite between Shaphir, pleasant, and what's going to happen, Zaanan for come out, but they're not going to come out.

And then finally, Beth-ezel is the house of taking away or withdrawn, and we read that that city is going to be taken away by the enemy. So, you see how all this fits together as a play on words in order to make an impression upon the listeners, Micah's hearers, of what is happening. Something to remember.

Verse 12, for the inhabitants of Maroth wait anxiously for good, because disaster has come down from the Lord to the gate of Jerusalem.

Again, the gate of Jerusalem. We already know what that means.

Sennacherib gets to the gate of Jerusalem, but he cannot break in. What about Maroth? Maroth sounds like the Hebrew for bitter, and they wait for good. As the verse says, they wait for good, but bitterness, disaster, literally the word evil, will come even to the gates of Jerusalem.

Now, let me just make a parenthetical remark here. Part of the problem that Jeremiah ran into later on, and Micah might be running into also, is this is a temple of the Lord. God is never going to destroy his temple.

We are safe. But eventually, the Lord puts an end to that particular feeling because the Lord gets to the point where his temple has become so defiled that he ruins it.

Verse 13, Harness the steeds to the chariots, inhabitants of Lachish, it was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion, for in you were found the transgressions of

Israel.

Lachish, the importance of this city cannot be overemphasized. It was the last Judean outpost towards Egypt, and on the main road thither, Lachish would receive the Egyptian subsidies of horses and chariots in which the politicians put their trust instead of in Jehovah.

And that comes from the international critical commentary. And it shows the importance of this particular city. But Lachish was the beginning of the sin for the daughter of Zion.

Lachish was like a gate into the interior, as we mentioned before, for the Shephelah, Possibly an idolatrous movement started in Lachish, influenced Jerusalem. There's another wordplay here.

Lachish sounds like the Hebrew for team, like a team of horses. Hook the team to the chariots to flee, and perhaps the wordplay to the steeds is a play on Lachish. In other words, it sounds like the word for the team, and Lachish is the beginning of the sin for all of Judah, but nevertheless, they are going to have to flee, and perhaps in chariots, just to get away from the Assyrians.

There's Lachish in relationship to Israel. It's southwest of Jerusalem. Here's an aerial of it, and again, as I've done in other places, here's the valley that the Assyrians would go through to get right up to the hill country of Jerusalem.

And there is the same valley that I showed previously that leads from Lachish right up to the hill country and Jerusalem. Okay, bear with me. A couple more verses.

Sennacherib boasted of the conquering of Lachish because he couldn't get into Jerusalem. What you saw in the previous slide was a wall at the British Museum where panels of the palace of Sennacherib have been taken and set up there where Sennacherib boasts of his conquering of Lachish. This is probably what it looked like in its original form.

Very monumental. And what we find is captives taken away from Jerusalem from Lachish, and this is one of the panels. Again, they're going away from Lachish as Micah mentions.

Finally, just a couple more verses. Therefore, you shall give parting gifts to Meresheth-gath, that is, the people leaving Lachish. The houses of Achzib shall be a deceitful things to the kings of Israel.

And who's giving parting gifts to Meresheth-gath? Well, we don't know for sure, but here's what's interesting. Again, another play on words. Parting gifts can also be the term for dowry.

The city's name, Meresheth-gath, is interesting. It is related to a Hebrew word, Mereshid, which means someone who is betrothed, someone who is giving gifts to somebody else for a marriage. The gifts now are going to be given to the king of Assyria.

So, when the conqueror takes away the city into exile, it's going to be like a bridegroom taking away his wife's dowry. Achzib, we continue with the play on words. Achzib derives from the word for deception.

The houses of Achzib shall be a deceitful thing, will be achzav to the kings of Israel. Why? We don't know for sure. Perhaps because the kings feel that these cities are going to hold off the invasion, but they do not.

And the word deception or deceitful thing is a little bit like we read in Jeremiah 15, you're thirsty, you're in a desert, you go to where you think there's water, where there's a stream, and you get there and there's no water in it. The watercourse has been deceptive. There's nothing there.

I will again bring a conqueror to you, inhabitants of Moreshid, and you can imagine how Micah felt knowing that this is his hometown. The glory of Israel shall come to Adullam. Well, I will again bring a conqueror to Moreshid.

Moreshid was really conquered many times in the back-and-forth flow of international and local armies, so maybe nothing new there. But what is interesting is Adullam is mentioned. Adullam is not a city you have to take in order to be able to go from the coastal plain up to Jerusalem.

It's kind of out of the way, so why even mention it? And why mention that the glory of Israel is going to go to Adullam? The suggestion is, as the NIV, the New English Version, the Holman Christian Standard Bible, and the New English Translation say, the glory of Israel is the nobility. The leaders of Israel are going to go to Adullam. In other words, they are going to flee Jerusalem and try to hide just as David was fleeing Saul and hiding in the caves of Adullam.

And then, finally, the last verse, make yourselves bald, cut off your hair for the children of your delight. In other words, they are also going to be taken into exile and destroyed. Make yourselves bald as the eagle, for they shall go from you into exile.

By the way, we find this later on also in a prophecy on the part of Ezekiel and Jeremiah that this is going to happen during the Babylonian invasion as well. So we

have deep mourning over the loss of children. Well, what are some of the lessons? And here, I can repeat what Elaine had mentioned.

God's sovereignty. He would judge even his sacred temple because it was no longer sacred. He will bring the armies that are expanding because of their wish for aggrandizement.

He will bring them against his people if necessary, and the armies will become a tool of his judgment. In his sovereignty, he can do this. He's the one who can bring this about.

Micah's targets, as Elaine had mentioned previously, resonate with the context of what we find today if we look closely at our own people, ourselves, and our leaders. There is injustice, deception, and corrupt leadership in every sphere. There's moral corruption.

There is a loss of the fear of the Lord. There's a loss of respect for what the Lord tells us through Scripture. Eventually, God is going to judge and destroy idolatry and idolaters.

This is clear not only in the Old Testament but in the New Testament as well. And then, finally, however, there is hope. There's the hopeful message, and that comes from chapter 5, verse 2, that Elaine had mentioned.

The ruler, most translations say, whose origins are of old, from everlasting. Literally, that word is going forth. I started out by looking at verse 1, where it says, the Lord is going forth from his temple, and that word is the word for going out in battle that kings do.

It's very interesting that this is the same word now that is used about this person who is going to come, who is going to be from Bethlehem. His origins, his goings forth, are forever, from forever. And it's interesting to see the parallelism there.

The one who's going forth, the ruler who's going forth, who is going to give us hope because eventually, he's going to take our sin upon himself that is Jesus Christ. This is the same Lord who came out of his temple first for judgment but now for salvation. And with that, we will end.

This is Drs. Elaine and Perry Phillips and their teaching on the prophet Micah, Prophet Outside the Beltway. Session 2, Micah 1.