

Dr. Perry Phillips, Micah, Prophet Outside the Beltway

Session 2, Micah 1

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Phillips, Micah, Session 2, Micah 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Perry Phillips **analyzes Micah chapter 1**, reviewing the historical, geographical, and theological context of Micah's prophecy. He **highlights the prophet's ministry in the Shephelah region** during the reigns of Judean kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, a period marked by significant conflict with Assyria. The lecture **examines Micah's use of vivid imagery and wordplay** to convey God's judgment on Samaria and the impending threat to Jerusalem. Dr. Phillips **connects Micah's message to themes of idolatry, covenant disobedience, and God's sovereignty**, concluding with a brief look at the hope offered in later chapters of Micah. Finally, the lecture **focuses on specific verses** providing a verse by verse explanation and commentary.

2. 18 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Phillips, Micah, Session 2 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Minor Prophets → Micah).



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3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Perry Phillips' lecture on Micah 1:

Introduction:

This document summarizes the key points from Dr. Perry Phillips' lecture on Micah 1, part of a series titled "Micah, Prophet Outside the Beltway." The lecture focuses on the historical, geographical, and theological context of Micah's prophecy, with a detailed verse-by-verse analysis of chapter 1. The overarching theme is the impending judgment of God on both Samaria (the northern kingdom of Israel) and Jerusalem (the southern kingdom of Judah) due to their idolatry and covenant unfaithfulness.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Contextual Background:

- **Time:** Micah prophesied during the reigns of Judean kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (roughly 740-687 BC). This period was marked by significant political turmoil and the rise of Assyria as a major power.
- **Geography:** Micah ministered in the Shephelah, a lowland region between the Mediterranean Sea and the central mountain spine. This region was a crucial buffer zone, making it vulnerable to invasion. Moreshah, Micah's hometown, was located in this area, which was strategically important due to the valleys through which armies would travel. The lecture points out that Jerusalem, nestled in the hill country, was more protected but still vulnerable.
- **Canonical:** The lecture builds upon previous instruction from Dr. Elaine Phillips that covered the overall context of the book of Micah.

1. The Split Kingdom and Idolatry:

- **The Division:** The kingdom of Israel split after Solomon's death (931 BC), resulting in a northern kingdom (Israel/Samaria) and a southern kingdom (Judah/Jerusalem).
- **Rival Worship:** Jeroboam I, the first king of the northern kingdom, established alternative worship centers in Dan and Bethel, leading to idolatry.
- **Baalism:** The lecture highlights the conflict between Yahwism (worship of the God of the Bible) and Baalism, a religion from Phoenicia, which gained prominence in

the northern kingdom and later infiltrated Judah. Baal was seen as a storm and fertility god.

- **Covenant Dispute:** The Lord presents a “covenant lawsuit” against the people. He is accusing them of breaking the covenant they had made. The witnesses aren’t the traditional witnesses of heaven and earth, but the Lord himself.

1. **God’s Judgment and Metaphorical Language:**

- **God’s Departure:** The Lord is described as “coming out of his place” (Micah 1:3), a phrase that suggests a king going out to war. This indicates that God is acting in judgment against his people.
- **Treading the High Places:** God will “tread upon the high places of the earth” (Micah 1:3), which are references to idolatrous shrines located on hills. Phillips emphasizes that it is not the mountains themselves that God is destroying but the shrines on them.
- **Mountains Melting:** The imagery of mountains melting and valleys splitting open (Micah 1:4) is a metaphor for the powerful impact of God’s judgment, likened to the splitting of the Red Sea. It is also suggested the image of splitting the earth could reference the Jordan Rift Valley and the volcanic activity of the area.
- **Samaria's Destruction:** Samaria is to be made a "heap in the open country, a place for planting vineyards" (Micah 1:6), highlighting the utter devastation and conversion of the city into an agricultural area. This language demonstrates a turning point in the role of the city from a stronghold to an open field. Its stones will be poured down into the valley, and its foundations uncovered, which is language that also speaks to sexual sin and prostitution. The foundations’ uncovering is likened to the “uncovering of nakedness” and is related to spiritual adultery by way of idolatry.
- **Ivory and Wealth:** The lecture uses Amos and other sources to highlight the luxury and wealth present in Samaria. The abundance of ivory was used to decorate homes, indicating economic prosperity but spiritual bankruptcy.
- **Wordplay:** Dr. Phillips emphasizes that Micah uses wordplay throughout the chapter, employing words that sound alike but carry different meanings to create a memorable and impactful message. This is seen in the use of "Samaria/Shemama" as well as the cities mentioned.

1. **Impact of Judgment on Judah:**

- **Samaria's Fall and Jerusalem:** The prophecy suggests that while Samaria will be destroyed, the destruction will “reach the gate” of Jerusalem (Micah 1:9), indicating that the threat to Jerusalem is significant but at this point, it does not fall.
- **Sennacherib's Attack:** The historical context is tied to Sennacherib’s attack on Jerusalem in 701 BC, where the Assyrian army reached the gates of the city but was unable to conquer it due to divine intervention. Hezekiah was locked in "like a bird in a cage" according to Sennacherib, but Sennacherib did not take Hezekiah’s power away.
- **Lachish's Significance:** Lachish, a Judean outpost on the way to Egypt, is identified as a key site where idolatry was embraced. The city was also significant because it was the site where the Egyptians sent subsidies for horses and chariots. It was the "beginning of sin for the daughter of Zion" and its importance is emphasized by Sennacherib’s boasting about conquering it.

1. **Micah’s Lament and Mourning:**

- **Personal Anguish:** Micah expresses deep personal sorrow over the impending doom, lamenting and wailing for the fall of Samaria. He identifies with the pain of his people.
- **Imagery of Mourning:** Micah’s mourning includes going stripped and naked, like captives, and comparing himself to desolate animals like jackals and ostriches. These are all extreme images of despair.
- **Dust and Ashes:** The lecture connects this behavior to traditions of mourning that involve sackcloth and ashes, also found in the book of Esther and the teachings of Jesus.
- **Nakedness and Shame:** The lecture notes the image of naked captives being taken from cities as a common theme of the time.

1. **Specific Cities and Their Wordplay:**

- **Gath:** The phrase “tell it not in Gath” echoes David’s lament and uses a play on words between the city and the word for “tell”.
- **Beth-le-aphrah:** The name "house of dust" ties into the action of rolling in dust, using a play on words between "aphra" (dust) and "Aphar" (the city).

- **Shaphir:** Meaning "pleasant," but the inhabitants will go out in nakedness and shame - the opposite of its name.
- **Zaanan:** Sounds like "come out," but the inhabitants will not come out because of fear.
- **Beth-ezel:** Means "house of taking away," and this city will be taken away.
- **Maroth:** Sounds like the Hebrew word for "bitter," and disaster is coming even to the gate of Jerusalem.
- **Lachish:** A city where idolatry started and where inhabitants will be fleeing in chariots
- **Meresheth-gath:** Linked to "betrothed" and the giving of gifts, but in this context, the gifts are taken away by the conqueror.
- **Achzib:** Linked to "deception," and the city will be a deceitful thing to the kings of Israel.
- **Moresheth:** Micah's hometown which will be conquered.
- **Adullam:** A place of refuge where the leaders will flee, echoing David hiding from Saul.

1. Lessons and Application

- **God's Sovereignty:** God is sovereign and will judge even his sacred temple when it is defiled.
- **Judgment on Idolatry:** God will judge and destroy idolatry and idolaters.
- **Relevance Today:** Micah's critique of injustice, deception, and corrupt leadership is relevant to modern society.
- **Hope in the Messiah:** There is hope in the coming Messiah, whose origins are "from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). This hope is tied to the Lord who comes both for judgment and for salvation.

Quotes:

- *"The Lord is coming out of his place...and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth."* (Micah 1:3) - Illustrates God's active judgment.
- *"Therefore I will make Samaria a heap in the open country, a place for planting vineyards."* (Micah 1:6) - Depicts the complete desolation of the city.
- *"Tell it not in Gath, weep not at all; in Beth-le-aphrah roll yourselves in dust."* (Micah 1:10) - Example of wordplay and lament.
- *"For the children of your delight... they shall go from you into exile."* (Micah 1:16) - Shows a time of mourning and sorrow.
- *"The ruler...whose origins are of old, from everlasting."* (Micah 5:2) - Points to the hope in the coming Messiah.

Conclusion:

Dr. Phillips' lecture provides a comprehensive analysis of Micah 1, emphasizing the historical, geographical, and theological elements of the text. Through wordplay and vivid imagery, Micah's message speaks of God's judgment on unfaithfulness and idolatry, while also pointing to the hope of a future ruler. The lecture stresses that the same themes and problems that plagued the people of Micah's time still hold relevance today.

4. Phillips, Micah, Session 2, Micah 1

Micah, Prophet Outside the Beltway: Session 2 Study Guide

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each:

1. What is the general time period in which Micah delivered his prophetic message, and which Judean kings reigned during this time?
2. Briefly describe the geographical region known as the Shephelah and its significance in the context of Micah's ministry.
3. According to the lecture, what was the main religious conflict occurring in Israel during Micah's time?
4. In Micah 1:2, who are the "peoples" and "earth" that the Lord is addressing, and what is the significance of the Lord's temple?
5. What is the significance of the Hebrew word "yatsia," and how is it used in Micah 1:3?
6. According to Micah 1:4, how will the Lord's actions impact the mountains and valleys, and what past event might this reference?
7. In Micah 1:5, how are Samaria and Jerusalem connected to the transgressions of Jacob and the high places?
8. What is the symbolic meaning of the destruction of Samaria and the "uncovering of her foundations" in Micah 1:6?
9. Explain the wordplay used in Micah 1:10 regarding the cities of Gath and Beth-le-aphrah and the words they sound like in Hebrew.
10. According to the lecture, why is the city of Lachish significant in Micah's prophecy?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Micah's ministry took place roughly between 740 and 687 BC, a time of great turmoil. The Judean kings present during this time were Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

2. The Shephelah is the lowland region situated between the Mediterranean Sea and the central mountain spine of Israel. It was a key buffer zone and a pathway for armies, making it strategically important.
3. The main religious conflict during Micah's time was the battle between Baal worship, which came from Phoenicia, and the Yahwistic religion of the God of the Bible.
4. The "peoples" and "earth" likely refer specifically to the people within the land of Israel and Judah, not the entire earth. The Lord's holy temple is a point of origin for His judgment of the land.
5. The Hebrew word "yatsia," meaning to go out, is used to describe kings going out to war. In Micah 1:3, this term suggests the Lord is coming out to war against his people because of their sins.
6. The mountains will melt and the valleys will split open, symbolizing a catastrophic upheaval. This might allude to the splitting of the Red Sea and the ongoing volcanic activity of the Jordan Rift Valley.
7. Micah connects Samaria and Jerusalem as the sources of idolatry, identifying Samaria as the transgression of Jacob and Jerusalem as the high place of Judah.
8. The destruction of Samaria signifies its complete ruin, with its stones cast down, and her foundations uncovered, which symbolizes both physical destruction and the exposure of its spiritual nakedness.
9. Gath sounds like the Hebrew word for "tell" and Beth-le-aphrah sounds like "house of dust," thus creating a play on words emphasizing the mourning and shame to come.
10. Lachish was the last Judean outpost towards Egypt and the location for receiving Egyptian subsidies of horses and chariots. It was also where a significant idolatrous movement began to influence Jerusalem.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the significance of the geographical context of the Shephelah in understanding Micah's prophecies, especially concerning the movement of armies and the defense of the hill country.
2. Discuss the literary techniques, particularly the use of wordplay, employed by Micah in chapter 1, and explain how these techniques enhance his message about judgment and repentance.
3. Compare and contrast the roles of Samaria and Jerusalem in Micah's prophecy, especially in regard to their respective idolatrous practices and the judgments they will face.
4. Explore the implications of the "covenant dispute" or lawsuit imagery in Micah 1:2-5, including the roles of the prosecutor, judge, defendant, and witnesses.
5. Examine the interplay between themes of judgment and hope within Micah's prophecies, referencing specific verses and discussing how these themes relate to one another.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Shephelah:** The lowland region between the Mediterranean Sea and the central hill country of Israel.
- **Samaria:** The capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel, often used to refer to the entire northern kingdom.
- **Jerusalem:** The capital city of the southern kingdom of Judah.
- **Baalism:** A religious system centered on the worship of Baal, a Canaanite storm god and fertility god, which often involved idolatry and ritual prostitution.
- **Yahwistic Religion:** The religion of the God of the Bible, centered on the covenant with God, the temple, and the law.
- **High Places (Bama):** Elevated places, often on hills or mountains, where pagan shrines and idolatrous practices were performed.
- **Covenant Dispute:** A literary device used in prophecy depicting a formal legal setting where God brings charges against his people for breaking the covenant.
- **Yatsia:** A Hebrew word meaning "to go out," often used to describe kings going out to war.
- **Moreseth-gath:** The hometown of the prophet Micah, located in the Shephelah.
- **Lachish:** A key Judean city located in the Shephelah, a major target in the Assyrian invasion.
- **Adullam:** A place of refuge mentioned in Micah, possibly referencing the caves where David hid from Saul; symbolic of the leaders fleeing.
- **Wordplay:** A literary device involving the use of words in a way that plays on their different meanings or sounds, often to emphasize a point.
- **Metathesis:** The transposition of sounds or letters within a word.

4. FAQs on Phillips, Micah, Session 2, Micah 1, Biblealearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Micah 1:

1. **Who was Micah, and what was the historical context of his prophecies?** Micah was a prophet who ministered in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, specifically in the Shephelah region, during the reigns of Kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (approximately 740-687 BC). His messages addressed the sins of both the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Samaria) and the Southern Kingdom of Judah (Jerusalem), during a time when Assyria was the dominant power and there was a major conflict between the worship of Baal and the worship of Yahweh. The northern kingdom fell to Assyria in 722 BC and Judah faced the threat of invasion by Assyria under Sennacherib in 701 BC. Micah was prophesying during a time of great political, social, and religious upheaval.
2. **What is the significance of the Shephelah region in Micah's prophecy?** The Shephelah is the lowland area between the Mediterranean Sea and the central mountain spine of Judah. It served as a crucial buffer zone, and its topography made it the primary route for invading armies moving towards the hill country and Jerusalem. Micah ministered in Moreshah, a town in the Shephelah and the fates of cities in this area are discussed at length by Micah in chapter 1. The Shephelah was the front line of defense for Judah, and its fate was directly linked to the safety of Jerusalem, therefore being very important in Micah's prophecies.
3. **What is the central conflict or "covenant dispute" that Micah addresses in his first chapter?** Micah presents a "covenant dispute" or lawsuit where God, as judge and witness, accuses the people of Israel and Judah of violating their covenant with Him through idolatry and social injustice. Micah depicts God as coming out of his holy place to confront his people and indict them for their sins. This dispute is focused on the breaking of the covenant and the consequent judgment that is to be handed down. The primary sins include the worship of Baal and other false gods, especially in the high places.

4. **What does Micah mean when he speaks of God "treading on the high places" and mountains melting?** Micah uses vivid, metaphorical language to describe God's judgment. "Treading on the high places" refers to the destruction of false shrines and idolatrous worship sites, often located on hilltops and mountains. The imagery of mountains melting and valleys splitting open is a metaphor for God's mighty actions and the disruption that will come upon the land as a consequence of the people's sins. It may also be a reference to the parting of the Red Sea which would be remembered as the last time God acted with such might.
5. **What role does idolatry play in Micah's prophecy, and how does it relate to sexual sin?** Idolatry is the root cause of the judgment in Micah's message. The worship of Baal and other gods was considered spiritual adultery and prostitution. Micah connects idolatry with sexual sin, because the worship practices at Baal shrines included ritual prostitution. This connection emphasizes the unfaithfulness of the people to their covenant with God. The act of idolatry is described as an exposure of nakedness, much like an unfaithful wife exposing herself to others, and is portrayed as both an economic and spiritual betrayal of Yahweh.
6. **What is the significance of Micah's use of wordplay when describing the cities facing judgment?** Micah uses wordplay with the names of various cities to make his message more memorable and impactful. For example, Gath sounds like the Hebrew word for "tell," and Beth-le-aphrah sounds like the Hebrew words for "house of dust." Similar wordplay exists for Shaphir, Zaanan, Maroth, Meresheth-gath, and Achzib. Through these puns, Micah draws attention to the contrast between the meaning of the city names and their fate which is often the opposite. This use of wordplay also makes the prophecy more poetic and more easily remembered.
7. **How does Micah depict the impending destruction of Samaria and the threat to Jerusalem?** Micah prophesies that Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, will be destroyed and turned into an open field with the city's foundations uncovered, a consequence of its idolatry and social injustice. The destruction of Samaria will then reach the gates of Jerusalem, demonstrating that Judah's sins are just as grave. While Jerusalem will not fall completely at the time of this prophecy, the threat and siege will serve as a warning to the people of Judah. This is shown historically through the Assyrian invasion of the area under Sennacherib.

8. **What is the ultimate message of hope that can be found in Micah?** Despite the heavy emphasis on judgment, Micah offers a message of hope centered around the coming of a ruler from Bethlehem whose origins are eternal (Micah 5:2). This ruler, who is later understood to be Jesus Christ, represents the same Lord who went forth from his temple initially for judgment but ultimately will go forth for salvation. The hope is that he will take away the sins that have resulted in all this destruction and lead to renewal.