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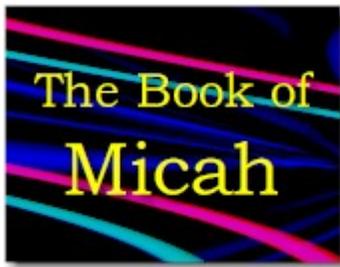
E-Mail: askoffice@askelm.com

The Book of Micah

by Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., September 1997¹

Transcribed and edited by David Sielaff, July 2013

Read the accompanying [Newsletter for July 2013](#)



Micah is sixth in order of the Twelve Minor Prophets. It is next to the last of those prophets who prophesied in the period of the Assyrian supremacy, which would be from the 9th to the 8th centuries BC. This prophecy is centered in its historical context when Isaiah was the main prophet. Much of the information Isaiah covered in his prophetic discourses, particularly in “First Isaiah” (as scholars call Isaiah chapters 1 to 35), is very similar to that which we find in Micah.²

Some of the same statements made by Micah were also made by Isaiah. Look for example at Micah chapter 4. Let me read one or two verses here.

“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of YHWH [the Temple] shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

And many nations shall come, and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of YHWH, and to the house of the God of Jacob [the Temple]; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of YHWH from Jerusalem.’”

• *Micah 4:1–2*

You will find these two verses repeated almost word for word in Isaiah 2:1–4. God’s Holy Spirit clearly inspired the two prophets. They had prophecies which were not only similar to one another but

Table 1: Structure of the Twelve Prophets

1	<i>Assyrian Period</i>	}	Hosea
2			Joel
3			Amos
4			Obadiah
5			Jonah
6			MICAH
7			Nahum
8	<i>Babylonian Period</i>	}	Habakkuk
9			Zephaniah
10	<i>Post-Babylonian Period</i>	}	Haggai
11			Zechariah
12			Malachi

¹ This article was excerpted from an audio lecture “Micah and Modern Times.”

² Micah and Isaiah are considered as twin prophets, like Elijah and Elisha, or Haggai and Zechariah, or in the New Testament we have apostles such as Peter and John. *ELM*

were often identical in meaning.

We find other characteristics of Micah in Isaiah. Micah says in chapter 1:8: **“Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked”** He meant he was going to pull off all his clothes. This would certainly get attention because the Middle Eastern peoples, even in ancient times, were not noted for showing much flesh. They abhorred nudity in any form, unlike people in Europe today and elsewhere in the world. The nakedness means exactly what it says. The same thing was done by Isaiah, sophisticated though he was, when he wanted to emphasize a prophecy he was giving. It says here in Isaiah chapter 20:

“At the same time spoke YHWH by Isaiah the son of Amoz saying, ‘Go and loose the sackcloth from off your loins, and put off your shoe from your foot.’ And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.”

And YHWH said, ‘Like as my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.’”

• *Isaiah 20:2–4*

Isaiah demonstrated for three years what would happen to the Ethiopians and the Egyptians to their shame.³

Latter Day Prophecies of Isaiah and Micah

These prophecies of Isaiah and Micah primarily deal with the latter days. Understand, there was a historical context to the 8th century BC. The geography, the politics, and the religious environment we find in the twin prophets of Isaiah and in Micah are certainly important, but their prophecies, though they had relevance back in their period, they have more than historical interest.

The main thrust of Micah’s judgment, his burden, his prophecy, was against Assyria and what they would do (and did do) to Samaria in the northern part of Israel, and to Judah. Micah was upset that the people of Israel, both northern Israel and southern Israel, had learned the teachings of the Gentiles — the teachings of the Assyrians, Ethiopians, Egyptians, and others — and absorbed them almost wholesale into their societies, penetrating even into Jerusalem, the capital city of Judah.

The seven chapters of Micah mainly give a condemnation of Israel, because of their absorption of idolatry. The idolatry had to do with the time back then, but it also has to do with us today. Many of us feel idolatry has been extinguished, certainly amongst Israelites. This is not true at all because we Gentiles, as well as Israelites, are still imbued with idolatrous concepts and even outright idolatry. You would not believe it on the surface, but the way God views or determines what is idolatry, is very different than most people today think. We must get God’s definition of these things and not mankind’s. In most cases, what man thinks is idolatry is the opposite of what God has condemned.

Micah gives a context regarding a future time when YHWH will introduce Himself into world affairs. He gives the synopsis right after introducing himself in Micah 1:1, giving the time he is prophesying, the time of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, and what Micah **“saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.”**

“The word of YHWH that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.”

• *Micah 1:1*

³ Some Protestant commentators do not want Isaiah to take off his clothes. They say he took off just his outer garments, or his cloak. That is not what it means at all because how could the buttocks be uncovered? They are misinterpreting these scriptures when they do not have to. King David on one occasion did the same thing as you will find in 2 Samuel 6:14–16, 20. These things are extraordinary and I am not advocating them today. At this time in history, both Micah and Isaiah, in order to emphasize and point to the seriousness of their prophecies, did things under God’s direction which you and I might lift our eyebrows about today. Let us try to understand what the Bible is talking about here. *DWS*

Micah was a Morasthite from Moresheth (also known as Moreshethgath, or “possession of Gath” in Micah 1:14) which was southwest of Jerusalem and about 30 miles inland from the Mediterranean coast, just where the Judean hills began. He knew Jerusalem very well. Everyone knew Micah because he was a prominent prophet along with Isaiah. Micah’s main theme has to do with the end time, a period in the future when God will tire of this idolatry in Israel.

“Here all you people; hearken, O earth [not just Israel in this case], and all that therein is: and let the Lord YHWH be witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple.”

• *Micah 1:2*

Now here is an end time scenario. This has never happened in history, but it will happen in the future. We are getting closer to it all the time, very close.

“For, behold, YHWH comes forth out of his place [His heavenly abode], and will come down [from above, down to the earth], and tread upon the high places of the earth. [When He does so, there will be an interesting series of events]

And the mountains shall be molten under him [under YHWH], and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place. [Why?] For the transgression of Jacob is all of this, and for the sins of the house of Israel.”

• *Micah 1:3–5*

He goes on in the rest of the chapter to show that the villages and the towns as well as the capital city of Israel and Judah, meaning Jerusalem, have absorbed the doctrines, the teachings, and the idolatry of the nations. The main culprit was Israel in the north, the northern 10 tribes of Ephraim or Samaria. Judah, which was more isolated in its mountain hideaway to the south, was still affected. This was what Micah was talking about in his prophecies.

Moresheth was the region from where a person would leave the plains area near the Mediterranean and from the southern region near Egypt and go up to Jerusalem. The main fortress in the region, very near Moresheth, was called Lachish. You can go there to this very day and see remains of the large mound which held the ancient city of Lachish.

The Assyrians came to Lachish about the time of Micah or just a bit afterward, captured the fortress, and from there they came up to Jerusalem and almost captured the capital. If God had not intervened in the time of Hezekiah and Isaiah and Micah, the Assyrians would have taken the city. But a plague destroyed the Assyrian army. That time, Judah was spared.⁴

In the first chapter, Micah talks about the introduction of idolatry into northern Israel from Assyria, Egypt and other areas, penetrating even into Jerusalem itself. The mountain ridge where you find Jerusalem, and north where you find Samaria, are on the same mountain ridge. It goes up about 2600 feet, a little higher in some areas.

The Geography of Judah around Jerusalem

The interesting feature is that when you are in the Jerusalem area in the south, though the mountain ridge itself is north to south, the mountains which lead up the mountain ridge, are also north to south and make it very difficult to ascend with an army into Jerusalem. The army must go up one mountain, then down into a valley, and up another higher mountain and down into a valley, and then up the highest mountain upon the plateau where you find Jerusalem.

This is not the case once you get about 20 miles north of Jerusalem. Suddenly the land opens up and though the same general mountain ridge continues from the south to the north, up north the mountains

⁴ God’s intervention against the Assyrians is told in 2 Kings 18:13–19:37; 2 Chronicles 32:1–23; and Isaiah chapters 36. *DWS*

which make up this mountain ridge actually open up, west to east. The result is that it is much easier to come from the Mediterranean into Samaria or to come from the Jordan valley into Samaria from the east up through the Galilean area. This is one reason ancient Israel in the north more readily absorbed these idolatrous teachings, doctrines and practices than Jerusalem. Micah understood what was happening in northern Israel and condemned the practices. He was very upset when he found Judah itself, which was more protected, was absorbing the same type of teachings.

The geography found here in the first chapter is very interesting. I could take you on a journey through this first chapter of Micah and you would be surprised what you could learn about this prophecy from a geographical point of view. This prophecy has to do with the period when Micah says God will intervene in world affairs. He says it will lead to a period when,

“In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of YHWH [a new Temple] shall be established in the top of the mountains.”

• **Micah 4:1**

Many things must happen before that event occurs. The people of Israel must repent, both northern and southern Israel. They must give up the doctrines they inherited from the nations of the world. Assyria, the chief power at that time, full of supremacy, must be defeated. The Assyrians were a great power and typical of the end time power which will exist, as the Book of Revelation talks about in the New Testament. We will see several New Testament themes as we go along.

We can know these prophecies deal with the end time because they refer to things which have never occurred in history. Granted they are based and anchored in the period of the 8th century BC, and the powers mentioned have long since disappeared, but those powers will have a revival. There is type and antitype being presented here. The scriptures are plain on that. Type and antitype occur as far as individuals are concerned and they apply to civilizations. There are cyclical prophecies. The Book of Ecclesiastes has several places where Solomon tells us what happened in the past will happen in the future in a cyclical manner. In these prophecies of Micah, we find both past and future.

The Message of Micah

The first chapter introduces all of Micah and it is primarily against Samaria and Jerusalem telling how they inherited the doctrines and prophecies of the pagans. Not only that, the prophets of YHWH from Samaria who traveled and then lived in Jerusalem, they were telling falsehoods. It means the preachers, the priests, the evangelists of ancient times. They were false and evil prophets and teachers. Some might say, “O well, we certainly do not have that today in Israel,” or “We do not have that in our modern world.” Yet these prophecies have modern relevance to them.

In Micah 2:1 he says, **“Woe to them that devise iniquity.”** Who are these people devising iniquity? Go to verse 4 and you find Micah gets upset with them who devise iniquity and he gives a parable against them. The parable is about how changes are made when no change should be made: changes in doctrine, changes in land patterns, changes in the way God does things, and particularly, changes in geographical points.

False prophets supported these changes. Look at verse 6,

“Prophecy you not, say they to them that prophesy: they shall not prophesy to them, that they shall not take their shame.”

• **Micah 2:6**

This is King James language, but it shows that the prophets who were prophesying falsehoods or lies were not even ashamed doing so. You might apply this in modern terms today to see if such falsehoods occur. Indeed, they do occur. Micah goes on to say that God Himself will change things. He will bring destruction because the false prophets of Israel (not Micah and Isaiah, but the other prophets) continued to speak lies. This is the topic of Micah chapter 2, going to chapter 3. The result will bring devastation to Jerusalem.

“Hear this, I pray you, you heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity. They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward [they want money for their services], and the priests thereof teach for hire. And the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon YHWH, and say, ‘Is not YHWH among us? None evil can come to us.’”

• *Micah 3:9–11*

Even though they do all of these things, here is the judgment upon them,

“Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps [ruins] and the mountain of the house [the Temple] as the high places of the forest.”

• *Micah 3:12*

He means the Temple will be just like the high places of the forest. This is where the forest ends and where there is nothing above but bare rock. You have seen the high mountains above the tree line. This is what Jerusalem shall become.

This is an end time prophecy. It certainly did occur in the Babylonian captivity 150 and some odd years later. It occurred again in the time of Titus, the Roman general, who in 70 AD destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the Temple. This is also in a context of the latter days because in chapter 4 there is the scripture I gave you in the beginning:

“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of YHWH shall be established in the top of the mountains [— the top of the mountains in Zion].”

• *Micah 4:1*

The top mountain in Jerusalem is the Mount of Olives. No Temple sanctuary has ever been built on it before. The Mount of Olives was where Jesus was crucified, buried, resurrected from the dead, and ascended into heaven. The Mount of Olives was designed to have a Temple upon it in the last days.⁵

To understand the whole prophecy of Micah there is something important for you to realize. I want you to read the prophecy of Micah from chapter 4 and 5 by yourself. Then go to chapter 6, which is the next to last chapter. I am giving just an outline here of what the Book of Micah is all about. Micah’s principle complaint is the idolatry, the falsehood, the deceit in ancient Israel and the end of the age.

Let us not just pick on Israel, because the beginning of Micah says God will bring judgment to the whole world. (This judgment is the subject of the Book of Revelation.) All Israel is singled out in this prophecy because it is a priesthood nation, a nation which should teach truth to the world. If any of us or any person claims to be a teacher of God, a prophet of God, a minister of God, or an evangelist of God, then they ought to be teaching the truth. They should shun idolatry in all its many forms.

The ancient Israelites may not like idols but they sure flocked around the ancient Temple. In Jerusalem today, at every hour of the day, you will find Jews at the so-called Western Wall, also known as the Wailing Wall. Some people ask, why do they congregate there? They do not need to do so. God does not require or command them to do so. Even today, some Jews make their worship idolatrous. Idolatry can be done in many ways. The idolatry Micah talks about was inherited from the heathens, particularly from the Assyrians and Egyptians. It was appropriated by the priests and the prophets of Israel as their own. It got so you could not tell the difference between the doctrines of God and the doctrines of Balaam, of his god Baal and other gods.

⁵ While Dr. Martin’s statement here may well be true, this paragraph reflects Dr. Martin’s thinking when he spoke in 1997. His views modified after that time. He felt that the specific location of the next Temple needed a thorough reinvestigation in light of the evidence he developed in his book [The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot](#).

In my opinion, Micah 4:1 does indeed say **“the house of YHWH”** will be in the highest mountain. The most obvious and simple understanding is that this refers to the Temple and that in this current day, just before the end times begin, it is a fact that **“the top of the mountains”** in Jerusalem is the top of the Mount of Olives. No other mountain in the area is higher. DWS

Micah and Balaam

We see in chapter 6 Micah referring to one historical event in the past, so the Israelites will comprehend what his prophecies were all about. Micah singles out a major prophetic event which took place in the time of Moses, some 600 years before Micah. It occurred the year just prior to crossing the river Jordan, and entering the Promised Land of Canaan. Micah tells the people, if you go back and learn again the prophecy told by Moses, all the information I am giving hinges on that earlier prophecy. Micah says,

“Hear you now what YHWH, says; Arise, contend you before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice [as a witness to the whole earth]. Hear you, O mountains, YHWH’s controversy, and you strong foundations of the earth [His complaint reaches far]: for YHWH has a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel. O my people, what have I done unto you [says God]? and wherein have I wearied you? testify against me [if you can].”

• ***Micah 6:1–3***

Why is YHWH asking these questions? He answers the questions by referring to the time of Moses:

“For I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of servants; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O my people, remember now [Micah says in the name of God] what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim [in the plains of Jordan] unto Gilgal⁶; [Why?] that you may know the righteousness of YHWH.”

• ***Micah 6:4–5***

The prophet goes back to an earlier period because these types of events are cyclical in nature.⁷ You must go back to the 40th year after the Exodus to understand what Micah is talking about in his prophecy. He says pay attention to what king Balak of Moab requested, and what Balaam the pagan prophet answered.

Remember that Micah in earlier chapters was censoring Israel against idolatry and for allowing the nations and their theological opinions to influence and thwart what God had given to them. Micah was upset. He was trying to get the people of northern Israel, in Samaria, as well as those in Judea and Jerusalem, to see the evil of their ways, repent, and to change. He used the prophecies of Balaam as an example of God’s judgment on sin, particularly the sin of idolatry.

Background for Micah: Balaam and Balak

Balak was king of Moab, and Balaam was a prophet of pagan gods. He brought other prophets from the area of Mesopotamia.⁸ Go to Numbers chapter 22 (through chapter 25) to find the story of how Balak on the other side of Jordan, hired Balaam, who was from Pethor.⁹ Balaam has been compared to the Pontifex Maximus of the entire world. This is why Balak called for him. Balak had priests of his own. They had gods which Balak and his people worshipped called Milcom and Chemosh, and others. (Even King Solomon took up some of those doctrines later because of the influence of his wives and concubines, much to his later regret.) These eastern peoples of Moab were descendants of Shem. They came from Lot, close in kin to the ancient Israelites.

⁶ Shittim was in the plains of Jordan. Gilgal was where Israel had their first Passover in the Promised Land. *ELM*

⁷ That is a great principle to comprehend. The apostle Paul expressed the same thing, as did the apostle John in the Book of Revelation (verse 2:14). What we must do at this end time is put all these prophecies together, and realize that there is a scenario being put out to us that we can put flesh on the skeleton if we go by the Books of Daniel and Revelation. *ELM*

⁸ There was a consequence of Balaam’s prophecies which helps us understand what the apostle Paul said back in the 1st century AD, as well as what Micah said to the Israelites in the 8th century BC. It also has to do with us today. As in the days of Micah, the earth will bear witness to the soon-coming of the Lord where the mountains will melt under His feet. In the New Testament period that means the presence of Christ Jesus in the name of and with the personality of YHWH dominating His characteristics. *ELM*

⁹ That means from “Peter,” the equivalent of “Saint Peters” in Mesopotamia. *ELM*

Balak knew if he wanted to have the God of heaven and earth curse someone, he had to go through people with special authority. Balaam was like a pope, a Pontifex Maximus on the earth. This was the reason Balak called for his aid. Balaam was willing to come but he told Balak, in effect, “I can do nothing unless YHWH Himself (the God of Israel and the God I worship) tells me to do it.”

Balak agreed to this provision, but he still wanted Balaam to curse Israel. They looked down from the heights over the Jordan Valley toward the west, later called Judea. They could see the vast expanse of the people of Israel below. They knew about the Exodus and their great and miraculous passage through the Red Sea, and the miraculous destruction of the Amalekites, and how the Israelites were supplied in the wilderness for 40 years. They understood all these miracles.

They also knew that the God of Israel, YHWH, was a powerful God. In fact, many identified Him as the God of Gods. Therefore, they called on Balaam, who said, “I will prophesy in the name of YHWH. I will say what I have to say.” Balak said to Balaam, I do not want you to bless them, I want you to curse them.

Balaam could not do it. He began to leave. On the way, God had a conversation with Balaam. God was upset with him on one point, there was one thing Balaam did not do, and so the “Balaam’s ass” incident occurred. That was in Numbers chapter 22. Finally, Balaam did all God told him to do, and he went back to Balak. Balaam gave a series of four prophecies. On four different occasions sacrifices were offered at an altar, yet Balaam did not curse but he blessed Israel, much to Balak’s displeasure. Balaam could do nothing else. He had to perform his role of a prophet and he had to tell the truth as God commanded.

These four prophecies are given in Numbers chapters 23 and 24. It is most interesting that in Numbers 24:14 the reader is told when Balaam’s prophecies will be fulfilled. They were not to occur immediately. Some of them were grand prophecies, having world-shaking consequences.

“And now, behold, I go unto my people [says Balaam]: come therefore, and I will advertise you what this people shall do to your people [of Moab] in the latter days.”

• *Numbers 24:14*

The next verse begins the first prophecy:

“And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor has said, and the man whose eyes are open has said: He has said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling [into a trance], but having his eyes open [here is what he saw and what he said]:

‘I shall see him [that is, Israel will smite Moab in the future], but not now [at this time]: I shall behold him, but not nigh [not soon, it is the latter days], there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter [a ruling rod], shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth [Seth].”

• *Numbers 24:15–17*

This “Sheth” has to do with the Moabites. Then comes the second prophecy:

“And Edom shall be a possession [to Israel], Seir [the nation or area of Edom] also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.”

• *Numbers 24:18*

You can see why King Balak of Moab was not pleased with this. **“A star shall come out of Jacob.”** The star is the Messiah. It will not be for that time, but it will occur **“in the latter days.”** Micah referred to this in his prophecy. He said go and read what Balaam said and you will see what will happen to all the nations round about. It will extend to Assyria. The second prophecy continues: **“Out of Jacob shall come he [Messiah], that shall have dominion, and he shall destroy him that remains of the city.”** (Numbers 24:19).

He meant a city of Edom on the Mediterranean coast of Lebanon. (You must go to Obadiah verse 20 to understand what city is being referred to; it is Zarephath.) Remember, all the Minor Prophets are tied together. One way they are tied together is with this prophecy of Balaam. Here is the third prophecy:

“And when he looked on Amalek, he [Balaam] took up his parable [against the Amalekites], and said, ‘[although] Amalek was the first of the nations [first to war against Israel]; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever [*ad*, in the future].”

• **Numbers 24:20**

Now the Amalekites had much to do with ancient Israel later on. They almost destroyed Israel in the time of Esther. In the latter time, at the end of the age the Amalekite people will be eliminated. This does not end the matter. Here is **the fourth prophecy**:

“And he looked on the Kenites [a tribe nearby], and took up his parable, and said, ‘Strong is your dwellingplace, and you put your nest in a rock. Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur [the Assyrians] shall carry you away captive.”

• **Numbers 24:21–22**

This takes place at the end time as well. These are short, terse prophecies, but they are the prophecies of Balaam dealing with the end time of world-shaking consequences.

Micah is telling the Israelites to pay attention to them because his prophecies are based upon Balaam’s prophecies. This does not end it. Numbers 24:23, **“He [Balaam] took up his parable and said, ‘Alas [or Woe], who shall live when God does this!”** You and I are coming closer to that time every day.

Then Balaam’s prophecies end. These last two verses have world-shaking consequences to them as well.

“And the ships shall come from the coast of Chittim [Chittim means Southern Europe, the European people], and shall afflict Asshur [Assyrians in the east, the eastern peoples], and shall afflict Eber [the Hebrews, Israel will be in the middle], and he [the Chittim or the Assyrians] also shall perish for ever [*ad*, in the future].’ And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way.”

• **Numbers 24:24–25**

This is the end of Balaam’s prophecy. At the very end of these prophecies, we find Assyria shall be destroyed. Who will come out the winner? It will be the people of Eber. The Hebrews will have a person who will be the star which comes out of Jacob, who shall have dominion. He will put down the Amalekites, the Kenites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Assyrians, and those of Chittim in a major war at the end of the age. This war has not happened yet. Micah refers to this prophecy as one you should read so Micah’s prophecy can be understood. Balaam’s prophecies have to do with the end time and Micah’s prophecies deal with the end time.¹⁰

What followed after Balaam gave these prophecies? The Israelites immediately after were given to idolatrous relationships with the Midianite women and committed adultery with them. The sexual practices were religious. Moses was upset. God was upset. Joshua was upset. It resulted in 24,000 Israelites being killed soon after Balaam gave his prophecies about the end times. Micah said, go to Balaam’s prophecies to see the consequences of my prophecies. Micah is about Israel and Judah, and a time when God is about to come to earth, when idolatry again will be rampant on earth and even in Israel.

Micah, Balaam, and the Apostle Paul

Let us go farther. To better understand the prophecies of Micah, read 1 Corinthians chapter 10. Look at the events mentioned by the apostle Paul. He connected Micah’s prophecies in a cyclical sense, using them as a type for his own period, but reaching to our period at the end of the age, the time period Balaam referred to, the very time which Micah referenced.

¹⁰ The prophecies of Micah are a *midrash*, a commentary, an explanation, and an expansion of Balaam’s prophecies. Both prophecies must be read and studied for a more complete understanding of these end-time events. Then go read Paul. *DWS*

“Moreover, brethren [he said to the Corinthian Gentiles], I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea [speaking of the Exodus]; and were all baptized unto Moses ...

[they] did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. [he goes on to say:] But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.”

• **1 Corinthians 10:1–2, 4–5**

Right after Balaam’s prophecies, the Israelites went immediately into idolatry. Paul says in verse 6 to those in the 1st century AD, **“Now these things were our examples.”** But these events are not only for them; they reach out and are an example for those who live at the end of the age. This means us:

“Now these things were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.”

• **1 Corinthians 10:6**

They lusted not just after physical fornication, but fornication of the idolatry of this world which many people have the gall to say were YHWH’s teachings. Paul says, **“Neither be you idolaters, ...”** He is following the Balaam prophecies precisely.

“Neither be you idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’ Neither let us commit fornication as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.”

• **1 Corinthians 10:7–8**

In Numbers 25:9 it says 24,000 were finally killed, but Paul is saying on the first day 23,000 died. They were killed because they descended into idolatry.

“Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur you, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer [a death angel]. Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, [Who are those?] upon whom the ends of the world [*aions*, the ages] are come.”

• **1 Corinthians 10:9–11**

In other words, the final admonition was for Christians, reaching to the end of the age. You and I are in that age. We are coming into the period which Micah talked about: **“in the last days”** (Micah 4:1). We are coming into the period which Balaam talked about for Israel **“in the latter days,”** when a star will come out of Jacob, when Messiah will come, and that is the very thing which will occur when idolatry is put down.

The apostle Paul goes on to say to the Corinthians, who were Gentiles, who had the Holy Spirit, but at the same time they had absorbed many of the teachings of the Gentiles around them and they were bringing in Gentile teachings and were trying to mix them with the teachings of Christianity. The apostle Paul had to straighten them out.¹¹

Do you know what we have done at the end of the age, over the last 1900+ years since Paul wrote? Christianity has absorbed, in most cases, the very things Paul said the Corinthians should not do, the very things Micah said should not be done, and the very things Balaam prophesied. All these must be put into an end-time context. The apostle Paul continues,

¹¹ The Gentiles of the Corinthian *ekklesia* did not intend to mix idolatry with the truth Paul taught them. Rather, such teachings were so large a part of their lives and culture, they could hardly do otherwise. Their thoughts were directed toward such things because it was part of their being a natural man (1 Corinthians 2:7–16). Specifically look at 1 Corinthians 2:14:

“The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

“There has no temptation [or trial] taken you such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer [allow] you to be tempted above what you are able; but will with the temptation [or the test] also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.”

• 1 Corinthians 10:13–14

Paul’s whole theme is **“flee from idolatry.”** He goes on to say the Corinthians were involved in idolatrous practices. Some things done in Corinth were all right, he said, but other things were not right. Some were mixing pagan rites in with what some people call the Lord’s Supper. They were performing all sorts of customs which in many cases were nothing more than idolatry. The same thing happened after Balaam gave his prophecies and advice to Balak about the ancient Israelites. And again, why were these examples given? They were for us who live at the closing of the *aioms*. That means for you and me today.

Idolatry was a central theme even of the apostle Paul’s teaching, which is, “do not commit idolatry.” Idolatry is in many ways the most tenacious doctrine that people hold on to more than any other. Idolatry involves things which we do in our everyday lives throughout the year. How many of you just love Christmas? Is not Christmas a fine, beautiful way to have a good time according to most people? Yet it is nothing more than the celebration of pagan sun god worship. Go ahead and keep it if you wish, that is up to you, but the apostle Paul says, **“flee from idolatry.”**

We also find the epistle of First John telling us **“Little children, keep yourselves from idols”** (1 John 5:21). Idolatry is everywhere in our modern generation, as it was in the past, and as it will be at the end of the age. We find the apostle Paul connecting these events of the past to what Micah said we should look at if you want to understand his prophecies.

Back to Micah

Return to Micah and look at some very interesting things. In Micah 2:12–13 we find at the end of the age, Israel will be dealt with and will learn its lesson. It says in the Book of Zechariah (12:11–13:2) there will be a great mourning in Israel, in Judea, in Jerusalem. At the very end of the age, they will give up idolatry and get it out of their system. That is the central key.

Not everyone will do it at first. To finally remove idolatry will require the destruction of Jerusalem once more. We find it in the 14th chapter of Zechariah, we find it in Micah 3:12; and in other scriptures as well. Here is what will happen with Israel, and it is a glorious thing. It is just as Balaam said. When Balaam got up, and tried to bring curses finally upon Israel, even though they deserved them, he could not give any curses whatever. This is what Micah was trying to encourage Israelites to understand. But to come to the period when God will bless Israel, and bless it abundantly, it was meant for them to flee idolatry at that time, and not go to it immediately as in Numbers chapter 25, on the heels of Balaam’s prophecies. Nor were they to do what they did in the time of Isaiah, or in the time of Micah, or in the time of the apostle Paul.

There is coming a period, however, at the end of the age when Israel will learn its lesson. This lesson will be learned not only in Israel but also throughout the entire world. The whole world finally will begin to realize idolatry is not the way to understand God. In fact, it is the way to misunderstanding. We must get rid of this idolatrous society and the principles of idolatry which penetrate the very fabric of our civilization. It is the subject the prophets talked about most. Idolatry is why we find, in a prophetic sense, even the apostles Paul, John, and others center their teachings on it. Let us look at what will finally happen.

“I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of you; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah [on the other side of Jordan], as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men.

The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and [they] are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and YHWH on [or as] the head of them.”

• Micah 2:12–13

Notice this — God is coming in person to lead them out of captivity, to break the gates which keep them hemmed in — in the world. He will be called the great Messiah, the Breaker. He also will break the idols in other places. He will lead them. He will be the great King. Who is this great king? Or as Balaam said, **“there shall come a Star out of Jacob”** (Numbers 24:17)? Here is what Micah said in chapter 5:

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall he come forth unto me to be ruler in Israel.”

• **Micah 5:2**

Who is being spoken of here? We know from the New Testament who was born in Bethlehem Ephrathah. It was Jesus the Christ, the Messiah. He is **“the breaker.”** He is the one to come. He is the one to set His feet upon the surface of this earth, to lead Israel into righteousness. It goes on to say He will be the ruler in Israel. To continue Micah 5:2: **“Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting,”** as it says in the King James. This means “from ancient times,” long before Abraham was ever here on earth.

Remember what Jesus said when they said to him **“You are not 50 years old, and have you seen Abraham?”** (John 8:57). He replied to them, **“Before Abraham was I am”** (John 8:58). By saying **“I am,”** He identified Himself with YHWH, the One who was, the One who is, the One who will be — the One who is continually present. The **“I AM”** And who is this **“I Am”**? He came of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1, 5–6; Luke 2:4, 15; and John 7:41–43). Do you see the New Testament relevance to all of this? Paul, John, Peter, and the rest of them saw all of these things.

More Interconnected Prophecy

Micah connects his prophecies with Balaam’s prophecies at the time of the Exodus. Both have a latter-day significance when the whole world will be in a confrontation between the people of Chittim in the west¹² against the Shemetic tribes in the east (Asshur), and Heber in the middle, that is the Hebrews, Israel. Though they are terse and very short, these prophecies link together what Micah says in seven chapters, what Isaiah says in chapter 66, what the Book of Daniel says in chapter 12 in a skeleton form, and what the Book of Revelation says in chapter 22.

Put them all together and you have a prophetic scenario of teaching: how Jesus Christ will come to save Jacob (or Israel), and not only save Israel but the whole world from their idolatry, and put them into a relationship with God in which righteousness, judgment, and proper living will be in existence. Prosperity will break out on the earth. That is why Micah says,

“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of YHWH shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.”

• **Micah 4:1**

When this person out of Bethlehem comes along, He is called **“the Breaker,”** or as Balaam says, **“the Star that shall come out of Jacob.”** When He comes to rule with dominion, with the scepter on his side, many nations shall come and say,

“... let us go up to the mountain of YHWH, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of YHWH from Jerusalem.”

• **Isaiah 2:3 and Micah 4:2** (almost identical in Hebrew)

Ernest L. Martin, 1997
David Sielaff, July 2013

¹² This would include the United States of America because we are an appendage and closely associated with Europe. *ELM*

Addendum by David Sielaff

Below is an introduction to Micah from *The Bible Remembrancer: Containing an Analysis of the Whole Bible* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1848), p. 72.

“Micah ... was contemporary with Hosea, Joel, Isaiah; and probably with Jonah and Nahum. His words are addressed to both the northern and southern kingdoms — to Samaria and to Judah. In the Book of Jeremiah (probably 150 years later) there is a curious and interesting reference to [Micah] ... (Jeremiah 26:17–19).

From the prophet Micah came that remarkable prediction which enabled the chief priests and scribes to inform Herod the Great where Christ should be born: ‘But you, Bethlehem Ephratah, though you be little among the thousands of Judah, out of you shall He come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting’ (*compare Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:3–6*). The prediction was uttered, be it borne in mind, seven centuries before its fulfillment.”

Cobbin’s Outline of Micah

Reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah; & Pekah and Hoshea, of Israel.	Ch. 1	Testimony against Samaria and Jerusalem.	5	Assyria to be waste. Destruction of idolatry.
	2	Judgments for oppression and injustice. Announcement of the coming up of the breaker.	6	God’s controversy with Israel. Reminded of redemption from Egypt, and escape from the enmity of Balaam. God not pleased with sacrifices. God requires mercy and justice.
	3	Accusations against the rulers of Israel. And against false prophets. Zion and Jerusalem to be plowed as a field, and lie in heaps.	7	The scantiness of grape gleanings symbolic of the small number of the godly. “I will look unto YHWH.” Confusion of the nations
Messiah	4	Messiah’s kingdom and glory.		
On sacrifices	5	Messiah’s birthplace — Bethlehem-Ephratah.		

Micah 3:12 was quoted later by friends of the prophet Jeremiah when he was being defended before King Jehoiakim of Judah. Jeremiah was on trial for saying God would judge the king and country of Judah. This was considered treason. The punishment of death was sought by Jeremiah’s enemies:

“Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying, ‘Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus says YHWH of hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest [Micah 3:12]. **Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him [Micah] at all to death? did he not fear YHWH, and besought YHWH, and YHWH repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls.”**

• *Jeremiah 26:17–19*

To defend him, Jeremiah’s friends quoted Micah 3:2 to show that Micah’s prophecies were heeded by King Hezekiah, and Jeremiah’s prophecies and warnings should be heeded also. We know that Micah had enemies at court who warned him to keep quiet and stop prophesying (see Micah 2:6). Neither Micah nor Jeremiah heeded the demands or threats. They continued prophesying as God instructed.¹³

¹³ Note also what is reported in Jeremiah 26:20–24. King Jehoiakim threatened another prophet, Urijah, who fled to Egypt. Jehoiakim’s agents tracked him there, brought him back to Judah, and Jehoiakim put him to death. This incident apparently took place before or after Jeremiah’s trial (in Jeremiah 26:17–19, 24) before Jehoiakim. See also Amos 7:10–17.

David Dorsey, The Literary Structure of the Old Testament

David Dorsey understands the Book of Micah as having seven major literary units, which exhibit a symmetric arrangement, which was intentional. The last three sections of Micah not only correspond to the first three, but they help the reader of Micah understand the dilemmas posed by the first three.¹⁴

- a coming defeat and destruction (1:1–16)
- b corruption of the people (2:1–13)
 - c corruption of leaders (3:1–12)
 - d CENTER: glorious future restoration under YHWH’s own strong and righteous rule (4:1–5:15)
 - c’ corruption of leaders; YHWH’s provision of good leaders in the past and His requirements as Israel’s divine ruler (6:1–16)
 - b’ corruption of the people; do not trust anyone except YHWH (7:1–7)
- a’ future reversal of defeat and destruction (7:8–20)

In the Book of Micah God asks three things from His people. God’s requirements are simple:

“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does YHWH require of you, but [1] to do justly, and [2] to love mercy, and [3] to walk humbly with your God?”

• **Micah 6:8**

If all children of Adam, tribes, and nations could live up to these three standards, there would be fewer problems in this world, and God would have slight judgment against men (although sin would still be an issue). In the future, under the rule of Christ when the Kingdom of God is on earth during the millennium, physical human beings and nations will largely live up to those three standards. These three standards actually reiterate the whole of the law which Christ quoted from Deuteronomy: to love God with all your being, and to love your neighbor as yourself. We know man cannot live up to God’s simple standards of righteousness. Only God can give us the changed heart through His Holy Spirit to live up to those standards.

James Nogalski’s Understanding of Micah

In his comprehensive 2-volume commentary on the Twelve Minor Prophets, James Nogalski notes that the text of Micah interacts often with the text of the other eleven Minor Prophets and other Old Testament books such as Isaiah and Jeremiah (as Dr. Martin points out above). Micah 4:4 has an apparent traditional blessing formula similar to one used later in Zechariah 3:10. Nogalski points out:

“Micah 6:1–7:7 contains numerous references to other canonical traditions: Wilderness motifs in Mic 6:3-5), the Deuteronomistic History (Omri and Ahab in Mic 6:16), Amos (in Mic 6:10–12), and Deuteronomy (in Mic 6:2).”¹⁵

Micah prophesied the near-future destruction of Samaria. He did so to implicitly warn Jerusalem that the same sins of Samaria also threaten God’s judgment upon Jerusalem (Micah 1:5–7). Micah 3:12 explicitly uses the images of Samaria’s future to also show the results of Jerusalem’s future. Imagine the horror when the prophecies of Micah (and those of other Minor Prophets) about Samaria came true.¹⁶

Dr. Martin began his analysis with Micah 4:1–3. All commentaries note the near total match of the Hebrew text of Isaiah 2:2–5 and Micah 4:1–4. I want to end by examining these passages again.

¹⁴ David Dorsey, “Chapter 32: Micah: Walk Humbly with Your God,” in *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi* (Grant Rapids: MI, Baker Books, 1999), pp. 299–300.

¹⁵ James Nogalski, *The Book of the Twelve: Micah–Malachi* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2011), pp. 511, quote 513, 557.

¹⁶ Nogalski, *The Book of the Twelve*, p. 549. Prophecies of destruction were also put forth by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

Isaiah 2:2–5	Micah 4:1–5
<p>² And it shall come to pass <u>in the last days</u>, that the mountain of YHWH's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all <u>nations</u> shall flow unto it.</p> <p>³ And many <u>people</u> shall go and say, 'Come you, and let us go up to the mountain of YHWH, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: <u>for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of YHWH from Jerusalem.</u>'</p> <p>⁴ And he shall judge among the <u>nations</u>, and shall rebuke many <u>people</u>: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.</p> <p>⁵ O house of Jacob, come you, and <u>let us walk in the light of YHWH.</u></p>	<p>¹ But <u>in the last days</u> it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of YHWH shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and <u>people</u> shall flow unto it.</p> <p>² And many <u>nations</u> shall come, and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of YHWH, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: <u>for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of YHWH from Jerusalem.</u>'</p> <p>³ And he shall judge among many <u>people</u>, and rebuke strong <u>nations</u> afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.</p> <p>⁴ But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of YHWH of hosts has spoken it.</p> <p>⁵ For all people <u>will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of YHWH our God for ever and ever</u> [for the age and beyond].</p>

This time after Christ returns is not **“the last days”** referred to here. The phrase **“the last days”** here refers to the time leading up to Christ's return. Christ's rule is a time of new beginnings; a new eon begins.

So, how can we know these verses refer to a time before Christ's Second Advent? Look at Micah 4:5: **“For all people will walk every one in the name of his [own] god, and we [we of Jacob, Micah 4:2] will walk in the name of YHWH our God.”** This verse is not in the Isaiah passage (Isaiah and Micah were contemporaries). The law and Word of YHWH (Micah 4:2) shall somehow give judgment to the nations (Micah 4:3).

Micah 4:5 shows a distinction between YHWH, Israel's God, and the gods worshipped by **“all people.”** After Christ returns no one **“will walk”** after any god other than YHWH. No other god will be around to respond to appeals or worship. Satan, his angels, and evil spirits will be in prison. Whereas Micah 4:5 says the people of the world will each walk or live **“in the name of his god,”** there is no criticism for people doing so. This passage is referring to the period of the **“restitution of all things”** (Acts 3:21) talked about by the apostle Peter. So, Isaiah 2:2–4 and Micah 4:1–3 will occur in the future to us, before Christ returns.

Note what Micah 4:5 does not say. **“All people”** are NOT simply calling the true God (YHWH) by another name. It is easy to learn the name of the Father of Jesus Christ. It is YHWH. We know at some future time everyone will acknowledge YHWH is the name of the Creator (Deuteronomy 28:9–10; Ezekiel 39:7). The nations will then acknowledge YHWH exists, He is their creator, and they have a responsibility to obey Him. At present, the nations and peoples are allowed to follow other gods until God teaches them otherwise. Yes, Micah is referring to idolatry and pagan gods. The education of the nations and peoples will occur beginning **“from Jerusalem,”** from **“out of Zion”** (Isaiah 2:3; Micah 4:2). It will be one of Israel's tasks to teach the world YHWH is the God of gods.

Therefore, both Isaiah 2:2–4 and Micah 4:1–3 refer to a time when Micah 4:5 still applies and God reveals Himself to the world, starting from Jerusalem. Contrary to what most people believe, the fulfillment of these passages will occur before Christ's Second Coming, and not during the millennium. God is gracious toward all who strive **“to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly”** with God?”