

- Last week we looked the prophet Habakkuk and noted that it was written immediately prior to the Babylonian exile to document Habakkuk's communications with God. (Habakkuk 1:1) We looked at the fact that God established a foundational principle by saying the "righteous will live by faith" (Habakkuk 2:4) which God tells Habakkuk when he questions how God can use an unjust people to punish injustice. Habakkuk 3 contains a prayer in song from Habakkuk to God. Finally, Habakkuk asks God to work "in our days" meaning immediately (Habakkuk 3:1-2) and acknowledged God's power. (Habakkuk 3:3-7) In our history lesson, we looked at the Maccabean empire which was established when a group of revolutionary soldiers revolted against the Seleucid Province Eventually everyone was overrun by Rome anyway. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maccabees>
- Today we look at a book of the Bible about a prophet named Micah and how he talked about God punishing injustice and promising a new King as a deliverer and champion of the oppressed. We will also look at Herod's rise to power in Judea as the puppet of the Roman State.
- Micah is from a city called Moresheth which is in the southern part of Judea (the southern kingdom) and heard words which God revealed to him, about the same time as the prophet Isaiah (Micah 1:1)
- Micah predicts specific destruction of five cities: Jerusalem, Shaphir, Gath, Lachish, and Beeroth. (Micah 1:2-16) Because these cities are so spread out, Micah is really predicting the downfall of all of Israel.
- Micah says that those who are oppressing people (Micah 2:1-2) will be opposed and destroyed by God (Micah 2:3-11) but that He will one day gather a remnant (a small group that will remain faithful) to Himself and will lead them. (Micah 2:12-13). This prophecy was fulfilled by Christ in the establishment of His kingdom.
- Micah talks about how corrupt the leadership of Israel has become (Micah 3:1-4) and how they are even paying off priests to mislead the people into thinking everything is okay when it's not. (Micah 3:5-12)
- Micah communicates through God that eventually they will return from exile and those who remain faithful will enjoy a new, peaceful kingdom. (Micah 4) He famously expresses this sentiment by saying the nations will "beat their swords into ploughshares" meaning that instead of forging weapons, those who work the steel smelters will turn weapons of war into tools used in cultivation (Micah 4:3)
- Micah explains that they will defeat the Assyrians eventually but at a very high cost. (Micah 5)
- Micah explains how God is with Israel and specifically references the delivering of Israel from slavery in Egypt and the Balak, Balaam story as instances where the Lord delivered them. (Micah 6:1-5)
- Micah famously explains what God requires of us – to do justice and love mercy. (Micah 6:6-8)

- There are some key statements in the Bible like this. It reminds us of ([Ecclesiastes 12:13](#)) or Christ's words in ([Matthew 22:36-40](#)).
- Micah says God will punish the whole land for the injustice has become so ingrained. ([Micah 6:9-16 – Micah 7:1-6](#)).
- Finally, Micah says there is coming a day when all nations can be redeemed and have their sins tossed aside by God, fulfilling the covenant promises he made to Abraham. ([Micah 7:7-20](#)).
- Remember that we have been studying about how God sent Christ in the “fullness of time” to fulfill that promise ([Galatians 4:4-7](#))
- We talked about the dream of Daniel and how the four empires he predicted in the statue came into play ([Daniel 2:31-44](#))
- The contributions of the empires were: Babylon (respect for law), Persian (mass communications), Greek (common language) and Rome (engineering/roads).
- It was customary in Rome to pick rulers in local provinces who would be acceptable to the people there but would be “loyal” to Rome – extracting taxes and administering Roman justice.
- Herod (“Herod the Great”) with the support of Rome became ruler about 34 B.C. under the reign of Augustus Ceaser. He ends up banishing his wife and child so that he could marry a Maccabean princess and shore up his claim to the throne. He taxed the people heavily so he could invest in infrastructure projects including rebuilding the temple (portions of which like the famous “temple mount” or the Western Wall of the Temple (“wailing wall”) still exist today. The Romans called him the “King of the Jews” and it is under his reign (or maybe his son Herod Archaleus) that the real King, Jesus, was born. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod\\_the\\_Great](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_the_Great))

#### Questions:

1. When did Micah live and prophesy?
2. What five cities did Micah say would be destroyed and what does he mean by that?
3. What does Micah say that God will oppose?
4. What is a remnant?
5. How does God fulfill Micah's prophecy of the leadership of a remnant?
6. What does God say those who remain faithful will ultimately enjoy?
7. What does it mean to beat swords into ploughshares?
8. What does Micah say will happen to Israel in war with the Assyrians?
9. What two examples does Micah site of God's deliverance?
10. What does Micah say God requires of us? What does this remind us of?
11. Why does Micah say God will punish the land?
12. What does Micah say will happen for all nations one day?
13. What does Micah say this will fulfill?
14. When does Galatians say God sent Christ?

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15. What were the four (five) elements Daniel saw in interpreting the King's dream?
16. What were the four major empires and what were the major contribution of each?
17. Who was Herod the Great and what were some of his major accomplishments?

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