

INTERACTIVE TRAVEL GUIDE

DESTINATION:

Micah

Micah was written by the Prophet Micah to the leaders of Samaria and Jerusalem during the reigns of three kings of Judah: Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. Micah the prophet is remembered as the prophet of authentic worship/service to God and social justice.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- c. 760 – 715 B.C. Ministries of Amos and Hosea in Israel
- c. 750 – 735 B.C. Reign of Jotham, King of Judah
- c. 735 – 715 B.C. Reign of Ahaz, King of Judah
- c. 715 – 686 B.C. Reign of Hezekiah, King of Judah
- c. 740 – 681 B.C. Isaiah's ministry in Judah
- c. 740 – 710 B.C. Ministry of Micah to Jerusalem & Samaria
- 722 B.C. Fall of the Northern Kingdom
- 710 B.C. Sennacherib's invasion of Judah
- c. 875 – 600 B.C. Assyrian Empire at its strength

TRIP PLANNER:

Micah spoke out against the oppression of the people by both spiritual (prophets and religious leaders) and secular leaders. Selfish coveting is for Micah the source of all sorts of evil. He describes Injustice primarily in three activities: in coveting what belongs to others, in perverting justice, and in hypocritical religiosity. Micah can be divided into three sections:

Section 1 – Chapters 1-3. After pronouncing doom on the capital cities of Samaria and Jerusalem, and the peril of continuing to ignore living faithfully in response to God while still claiming to be God's people, he exposes their sins and ultimate destruction.

Section 2 – Chapters 4-5. Micah predicts the future restoration after the destruction, including the expectation of a new Davidic king who would usher in a period of peace and security.

Section 3 – Chapters 6-7. Micah ends with predictions of hope to and redemption through the promised Messiah, in the form of a prayer and confession of sin from the people.

PLACES OF INTEREST:

Morashtite or Moresheth – A small town near Gath about 25 miles southwest of the royal capital in the beautiful hill country of Judah, commanding a broad view across the coastal plain to the Mediterranean. Judean kings maintained five fortress cities within a radius of less than six miles round about Moresheth.

Samaria – Capital city of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Jerusalem – Capital city of the Kingdom of Judah.

Mountain of the Lord (3:12) – Also referred to as Mount Zion; the place where the Lord will establish His kingdom on earth. (See also Zechariah 8:3.)

Bethlehem Ephrathah (5:2) – The predicted place of Jesus' birth, the city is located in the "hill country" of Judah, and was originally called Ephrath (Gen. 35:16, 19; 48:7; Ruth 4:11). It was also called Bethlehem Ephratah (Micah 5:2), Beth-lehem-judah (1 Sam. 17:12), and "the city of David" (Luke 2:4). It is first noticed in Scripture as the place where Rachel died and was buried "by the wayside," directly to the north of the city (Gen. 48:7). The valley to the east was the scene of the story of Ruth the Moabitess. There are the fields in which she gleaned, and the path by which she and Naomi returned to the town.

PEOPLE OF INTEREST:

Micah – The prophet's name, in its long form "Micaiahu," is commonly translated "Who is like the Lord?" And his pursuit of the ministry in response to this question continued the prophetic tradition of calling the people of God into a closer walk with Him. Little is known of Micah, the prophet, other than he was from the town of Morashtite and he prophesied during the reigns of 3 kings of Judah: Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. What holds true for all the prophets holds true for Micah: His life has disappeared behind the word which he was sent to proclaim.

Deliverers – God reminds Israel in Chapter 6 of His deliverance through Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, and reminds them of His righteousness through the counsel of Balak and Balaam.

FUN FACTS:

Micah uses a play on words to describe the Assyrian triumph through the nation in Chapter 1:

Beth Aphrah – Literally "House of Dust" ... "roll yourself in the dust"

Shaphir – Literally "pleasantness" ... "Pass by in naked shame"

Zaanan – Literally "going out" ... "the inhabitant...does not go out"

Beth Ezel – Literally house of removal ... "Its place to stand is taken away from you"

Maroth – Literally "bitterness" ... Becomes weak waiting for good

Lachish – Literally "the beginning of sin"; the rebellion of Jacob

Moresheth Gath – Literally "possession of Gath; inheritance"

Achzib – Literally "lie" ... "shall be a lie to the kings of Israel"

Mareshah – Literally "inheritance" ... "I will yet bring an heir to you, O inhabitant of Mareshah"

Familiar Passages in Micah

4:1-5 They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore. (3)

5:2-4 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting." (2)

6:1-8 He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God? (8)

4:5 For all people walk each in the name of his god,
But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God
Forever and ever. (cf Zech 10:12; Josh 24:15)

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DESTINATION:

Nahum

Nahum means “Prophet of Comfort.” He is the seventh of the twelve Minor Prophets. His prophecy, received by a vision, was of God’s wrath and judgment against the Assyrians for rejecting the previous generation’s example of repentance as a result of Jonah’s message, and returning to their evil practices. The result was punishment and ultimate destruction for their treatment of Israel.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- c. 875 – 600 B.C. Assyrian Empire at its strength
- c. 790-770 B.C. Jonah’s ministry to Nineveh
- 722 B.C. Fall of the Northern Kingdom
- 710 B.C. Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah
- c.742-681 B.C. Ministries of Micah and Isaiah in Judah
- c. 640 -621 B.C. Zephaniah’s ministry in Judah
- c. 663-609 B.C. Life & ministry of Nahum in Israel to Ninevah
- c. 626-585 B.C. Jeremiah’s ministry in Judah
- 586 B.C. Fall of Jerusalem

TRIP PLANNER:

Nahum was a poet and wrote lyrically. Nahum's original poem is recorded in Chapters 2 and 3. It is a book about judgment, as can be seen in each of the three chapters:

Nahum 1: Judgment Is Announced: God is Righteous

Nahum 2: Judgment Is Executed: Nineveh is Destroyed

Nahum 3: Judgment's Reason: Nineveh's Guilt

Nahum's writing testifies to his belief in the righteousness of God. The Assyrians had been used as God's "rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation" (Isaiah 10:5).

PEOPLE OF INTEREST:

Nahum – Little is known about this minor prophet other than he was an Elkoshite. Most historians agree that likely he came from Elkesi beyond Jordan toward Begabon and was of the tribe of Simeon. He was a poet who possessed a remarkable style of writing and who described in unforgettable language the fall of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, in 612 B.C. His contemporaries were Zephaniah, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk. He was likely influenced by the prophecies of Isaiah (compare 1:15 and Isaiah 52:7).

Assyrians – People from a region on the Upper Tigris River, named for its original capital, the ancient city of Assur in modern-day Iraq. The Assyrian kings controlled a large kingdom at three different times in history. The most powerful and best-known nation of these periods is the Neo-Assyrian kingdom, 911-612 B.C. The Assyrians were one of the first groups to convert to Christianity, along with the Armenians and Ethiopians. They went on and played a big role in spreading Nestorian Christianity to the Far East. In the beginning of the 20th century, the Ottoman empire was collapsing, and during World War I, the Assyrians, like the Armenians, claim a genocide was committed against its people during the period of 1914-1922. After the creation of Iraq, the Assyrians refused to sign loyalty to the Iraqi monarchy, and demanded to be recognized as a nation within a nation. Eventually, this led to the Iraqi government committing its first of many massacres against its people.

PLACES OF INTEREST:

Nineveh – Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire. Its founder was Nimrod, who lived shortly after the flood (Gen. 10:8-12). Nineveh reached great importance around 900 B.C. Shalmaneser III of Assyria defeated King Ahab of Israel in the battle of Carcar around the year 843 B.C. Jonah was sent to Nineveh around 800 B.C. to turn them from their cruel ways. In 722 B.C. the whole northern kingdom of Israel was brought into Assyrian captivity under Shalmaneser and Sargon (2 Kings 17). Finally, the great city was conquered and totally destroyed in 612 B.C. by the Medes under Cyaxares (king of Media; modern-day Iran) and the Babylonians under Nabopolassar (father of Nebuchadnezzar II).

FUN FACTS:

There was rivalry between Assyria and Babylon from the very beginning. Babylon is the picture of worldly might in a religious garment. Assyria pictures the haughty, cruel and high-handed world, which knows nothing but her own importance. They became allies in 614 B.C. after the Medes destroyed the city of Assur. The alliance was sealed by the marriage of Nebuchadnezzar to the daughter of Cyaxares.

A few of Nahum's prophecies:

Nahum 1:8-9, 3:19

Nineveh's destruction would be permanent - In 612 B.C. (about 2600 years ago), a coalition of Babylonians, Scythians and Medes conquered the heavily fortified city. It ceased to be an important city from that point on.

Nahum 1:10

Ninevites would be drunk in their final hours - Fulfilled 612 B.C. According to the ancient historian Diodorus Siculus, "The Assyrian king gave much wine to his soldiers. Deserters told this to the enemy, who attacked that night."

Nahum 1:14

Ninevites would be wiped out - Nineveh's destruction in 612 B.C. marked a permanent end to the Assyrian Empire. The city itself never again rose to any significant importance. Today, Nineveh is an archaeological site in Iraq.

Nahum 2:6

Nineveh would be hit with a flood - According to the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus, who lived in the First Century B.C., heavy rains had caused the Tigris River to overflow and flood part of Nineveh. The flooding destroyed some of Nineveh's protective walls. That might have helped the attacking forces conquer Nineveh.

Nahum 3:12

Nineveh's fortresses would be easily captured - Ancient Babylonian records say the fortified towns around Nineveh began to fall in 614 B.C., about two years before the total defeat of the Assyrian empire.

Nahum 3:15

Nineveh would be destroyed by fire - Archaeologists unearthed the site during the 1800s and found a layer of ash covering the ruins.

Nahum 3:17

Nineveh's army officers would desert - Babylonian records claim that Assyrian army members did flee from the battle.

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DESTINATION: *Habakkuk*

Habakkuk is the eighth of the twelve minor prophets and the last of the five prophets who are known to have prophesied in the Southern Kingdom of Judah before the exile. It was written during a time when Judah was in blatant rebellion against God and the strength of Babylon was rising around them. Three of the five prophets, Isaiah, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah, focused the majority of their message and ministry on Judah and Jerusalem. The fourth prophet, Micah, focused more on the common people “living in the western foothills of Judah.” Habakkuk was the only one of the five who didn’t prophesy directly against Judah, but encouraged people to “live by faith in the dark days ahead.”

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

c. 875 – 600 B.C. Assyrian Empire at its strength

722 B.C. Fall of the Northern Kingdom

710 B.C. Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah

c.742-681 B.C. Ministries of Micah and Isaiah in Judah

c. 612 – 598 Time of Habakkuk’s life and ministry in Judah

605 B.C. First exile of Jews to Babylon

586 B.C. Fall of Jerusalem

TRIP PLANNER:

The book of Habakkuk was written to assure God's people that evil does not endure forever. It is the only minor prophet who did not address the people directly. It is written more as a journal of Habakkuk's questions of God and God's answers. The book can be divided into four sections:

1. The Burden (Chapter 1)
2. The Watch (Chapter 2:1)
3. The Vision (Chapter 2:2-20)
4. The Prayer (Chapter 3)

PEOPLE OF INTEREST:

Habakkuk – No personal information is known about Habakkuk.

His name means “embrace” – in the comforting sense. Scholars have placed him possibly as a temple prophet or a guardian to the Temple of Solomon. His contemporaries were Nahum and Zephaniah. He was likely one of the first group to be taken into exile in 605 B.C.

PLACES OF INTEREST:

Judah – One of the 12 tribes of Israel, and one of two tribes that comprised the Southern Kingdom of Israel. Its capital was Jerusalem.

Babylon – Also known as Chaldea. The nation of Babylon was at its peak of power during Habakkuk's writing. He watched as they invaded and conquered all the surrounding regions and eventually captured and destroyed Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah.

FUN FACTS:

Watch and Wait – The pivotal verse in Habakkuk is Chapter 2:1: “I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts. I will look to see what he will say to me and what answer I am to give to this complaint.”

Lessons from Habakkuk –

1. God can handle all of our questions but He may answer only a few.
2. The bottom line of faith is not to silence all of our doubts so that we never struggle again, but to make us sure of God and confident of His care.
3. Waiting strengthens our patience and lengthens our perspective.

*Chuck Swindoll, *Insight for Living*

Verse to claim in times of difficulty –

Though the fig tree do not blossom,
nor fruit be on the vines,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.

God, the Lord, is my strength (Hab. 3:17-19a RSV)

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