

MICAH KINGDOM GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 1: MICAH 1-2

Context: The prophet Micah, prophesying between 700-650BC, alerts the people of Israel and Judah to the coming judgement of God. This judgement was coming because of their treatment of the poor and rampant idolatry.

Discussion Questions:

READ MICAH 1:2-16 IN FULL

1. What are your immediate thoughts about the language used by the prophet?

Note on the text: Prophets in the Old Testament were literary masters who used Hebrew poetry to convey the divine message with much intensity. Prophets like Micah used visual imagery in their poetry to paint a vivid picture of God's heart, which was meant to invade the collective imagination of the people.

Prophets like Micah were also a minority voice within a pervasive political system. You should picture Micah, standing on the street corner, performing his prophetic words off by heart, as the people of Israel and Judah mostly rejected him.

2. How does this change your way of viewing these words of Micah?

3. Discuss the images used in the verses below. How do these images convey God's emotion towards Israel's sin?

-Micah 1:3-6

-Micah 1:8

Note on the text: The people in Israel and Judah were quite comfortable with their political and economic system. They were not in any hurry to alter their way of life, which included land-grabbing off the poor and marginalised, and systematic worship of foreign idols. Every town was responsible for propagating this system of worship and treatment of the poor, so Micah targets each town in Israel and Judah with a specific oracle of judgement. He does this through a clever play on words (see table below).

Micah's play on words in 1:10-15

<i>Town</i>	<i>Town Name Meaning</i>	<i>Word play in judgement</i>
<i>Gath</i>	<i>cf. David's lament over Saul</i>	
<i>Beth-le-aphrah</i>	<i>"house of dust"</i>	<i>"roll in the dust"</i>
<i>Shaphir</i>	<i>"beautiful"</i>	<i>"naked and in shame"</i>
<i>Zaanan</i>	<i>"one who goes out"</i>	<i>"will not come out"</i>
<i>Beth-ezel</i>	<i>"house of help/protection"</i>	<i>"no longer protects you"</i>
<i>Maroth</i>	<i>"bitterness"</i>	<i>"writhe in pain"</i>
<i>Jerusalem</i>		
<i>Lachish</i>	<i>"team of horses"</i>	<i>"harness fast horses"</i>
<i>Moresheth-gath</i>	<i>"parting gift/dowry"</i>	<i>"parting gifts"</i>
<i>Achzib</i>	<i>"lie"</i>	<i>"prove deceptive"</i>
<i>Mareshah</i>	<i>"possessor/conqueror"</i>	<i>"a conqueror against you"</i>
<i>Adullam</i>	<i>cf. David hiding from Saul</i>	<i>"flee to"</i>

READ MICAH 2:6-11 IN FULL

Note on the text: Through these verses we see clearly how comfortable these people were with the political and economic landscape in Israel and Judah. The “prophets” described in v6 were vocal advocates for this landscape of injustice. The poor had no voice, only these noisy prophets had a voice. They were used by the Kings and Jewish leaders to propagate information and ideas that kept them in power. Ideas like “God does not become impatient” (v7) and “plenty of wine and beer” (v11 – a message of increased affluence). Micah directly challenges these public ideas as he channels the heart of God.

4. What are some of the unjust ideas that are communicated to our society right now, that run contrary to the heart of God?
5. How might we, as the chosen people of the same God Micah served, confront these ideas and stand up for God’s heart in our culture?