

Micah

Introduction

1:1 This is the prophetic message that the LORD gave to¹ Micah of Moresheth. He delivered this message² during the reigns of³ Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. The prophecies pertain to⁴ Samaria⁵ and Jerusalem.⁶

The Judge is Coming

1:2 Listen, all you nations!⁷
Pay attention, all inhabitants of earth!⁸
The sovereign LORD will testify⁹ against you;
the LORD will accuse you¹⁰ from his majestic palace.¹¹
1:3 Look,¹² the LORD is coming out of his dwelling place!

He will descend and march on the earth's mountaintops!¹³

1:4 The mountains will disintegrate¹⁴ beneath him,
and the valleys will be split in two.¹⁵
The mountains will melt¹⁶ like wax in a fire,
the rocks will slide down like water cascading down a steep slope.¹⁷

1:5 All this is because of Jacob's rebellion and¹⁸ the sins of the nation¹⁹ of Israel. How has Jacob rebelled, you ask?²⁰
Samaria epitomizes their rebellion!²¹
Where are Judah's pagan worship centers, you ask?²²
They are right in Jerusalem!²³

¹ tn Heb "The word of the LORD which came to."
² tn The words "he delivered this message" are not in the Hebrew text, but are supplied in the translation for clarification.

³ tn Heb "in the days of" (so KJV, NASB, NRSV).
⁴ tn Heb "which he saw concerning."
⁵ map For location see Map2-B1; Map4-D3; Map5-E2; Map6-A4; Map7-C1.

⁶ map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁷ tn Heb "O peoples, all of them."
⁸ tn Heb "O earth and all its fullness"; KJV "and all that therein is."

⁹ tn Heb "May the sovereign LORD testify against you." The verb *vihiy* (וִיחִי) is jussive, which normally conveys a volitional sense of an urgent request or prayer ("may he testify!"). However, GKC 325-26 §109.k notes that here the jussive form is used without any volitional sense for the ordinary imperfect, as a rhythmic shortening at the beginning of a sentence, thus removed as far as possible from the principal accent (cf. Gen 49:17; Deut 28:8; 1 Sam 10:5; 2 Sam 5:24; Hos 6:1; 11:4; Amos 5:14; Zeph 2:13; Zech 9:5; Pss 72:16-17; 104:31; Job 18:12; 20:23, 26, 28; 27:8; 33:21; 34:37; Ruth 3:4). Thus, the translation here renders the jussive as an ordinary imperfect. Some translations render it in a traditional jussive sense: (1) urgent request: "And let my Lord God be your accuser" (NJPS); or (2) dependent purpose/result: "that the Sovereign LORD may witness against you" (NIV).

¹⁰ tn Heb "the LORD from his majestic palace." Since the verb is omitted it is unclear whether the implied term be supplied from the preceding line ("he will testify against you") or the following line ("he is leaving"). So the line may be rendered "the LORD will accuse you from his majestic temple" or "the LORD will come forth from his majestic temple." Most translations render it literally, but some remove the ambiguity: "the LORD God accuses you from his holy temple" (CEV); "He speaks from his holy temple" (TEV).

¹¹ tn Or "his holy temple" (KJV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT). This refers to the Lord's dwelling in heaven, however, rather than the temple in Jerusalem (note the following verse, which describes a theophany).

¹² tn Or "For look." The expression *ki-hinneh* (כִּי-הִנֵּה) may function as an explanatory introduction ("For look!"; Isa 26:21; 60:2; 65:17, 18; 66:15; Jer 1:15; 25:29; 30:10; 45:5; 46:27; 50:9; Ezek 30:9; 36:9; Zech 2:10; 3:8), or as an emphatic introduction ("Look!"; Jdgs 3:15; Isa 3:1; Jer 8:17; 30:3; 49:15; Hos 9:6; Joel 3:1 [HT 4:1]; Amos 4:2, 13; 6:11, 14; 9:9; Hab

1:6; Zech 2:9 [HT 2:13]; Zech 3:9; 11:16).

¹³ tn Or "high places" (KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

¹⁴ tn Or "melt" (NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT). This is a figurative description of earthquakes, landslides, and collapse of the mountains, rather than some sort of volcanic activity (note the remainder of the verse).

¹⁵ sn The mountains will disintegrate...the valleys will be split in two. This imagery pictures an earthquake and accompanying landslide.

¹⁶ tn The words "the mountains will melt" are supplied in the translation for clarification. The simile extends back to the first line of the verse.

¹⁷ tn The words "the rocks will slide down" are supplied in the translation for clarification. This simile elaborates on the prior one and further develops the imagery of the verse's first line.

¹⁸ tn Heb "and because of." This was simplified in the translation for stylistic reasons.

¹⁹ tn Heb "house."

²⁰ tn Heb "What is the rebellion of Jacob?"

²¹ tn Heb "Is it not Samaria?" The negated rhetorical question expects the answer, "It certainly is!" To make this clear the question has been translated as a strong affirmative statement.

²² tn Heb "What are Judah's high places?"

²³ tn Heb "Is it not Jerusalem?" The rhetorical question expects the answer, "It certainly is!"

sn In vv. 2-5 Micah narrows the scope of God's judgment from the nations (vv. 2-4) to his covenant people (v. 5). Universal judgment is coming, but ironically Israel is the focal point of God's anger. In v. 5c the prophet includes Judah within the scope of divine judgment, for it has followed in the pagan steps of the northern kingdom. He accomplishes this with rhetorical skill. In v. 5b he develops the first assertion of v. 5a ("All of this is because of Jacob's rebellion"). One expects in v. 5c an elaboration of the second assertion in v. 5a ("and the sins of the nation of Israel"), which one assumes, in light of v. 5b, pertains to the northern kingdom. But the prophet specifies the "sins" as "high places" and makes it clear that "the nation of Israel" includes Judah. Verses 6-7 further develop v. 5b (judgment on the northern kingdom), while vv. 8-16 expand on v. 5c (judgment on Judah).

map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

1:6 “I will turn Samaria¹ into a heap of ruins in an open field – vineyards will be planted there!² I will tumble³ the rubble of her stone walls⁴ down into the valley, and tear down her fortifications to their foundations.⁵
1:7 All her carved idols will be smashed to pieces; all her metal cult statues will be destroyed by fire.⁶ I will make a waste heap⁷ of all her images.
Since⁸ she gathered the metal⁹ as a prostitute collects her wages, the idols will become a prostitute’s wages again.”¹⁰

1:8 For this reason I¹¹ will mourn and wail;
I will walk around barefoot¹² and without my outer garments.¹³
I will howl¹⁴ like a wild dog,¹⁵ and screech¹⁶ like an owl.¹⁷
1:9 For Samaria’s¹⁸ disease¹⁹ is incurable. It has infected²⁰ Judah;

it has spread to²¹ the leadership²² of my people and has even contaminated Jerusalem!²³
1:10 Don’t spread the news in Gath!²⁴ Don’t shed even a single tear!²⁵
In Beth Leaphrah sit in the dust!²⁶
1:11 Residents²⁷ of Shaphir,²⁸ pass by in nakedness and humiliation!²⁹
The residents of Zaanan can’t leave their city.³⁰
Beth Ezel³¹ mourns,³²
“He takes from you what he desires.”³³
1:12 Indeed, the residents of Maroth³⁴ hope for something good to happen,³⁵

1 map For location see Map2-B1; Map4-D3; Map5-E2; Map6-A4; Map7-C1.

2 tn *Heb* “into a planting place for vineyards.”

3 tn *Heb* “pour” (so NASB, NIV); KJV, NRSV “pour down”; NAB “throw down”; NLT “roll.”

4 tn *Heb* “her stones.” The term *stones* is a metonymy for the city walls whose foundations were constructed of stone masonry.

5 tn *Heb* “I will uncover her foundations.” The term “foundations” refers to the lower courses of the stones of the city’s outer fortification walls.

6 tn *Heb* “and all her prostitute’s wages will be burned with fire.”

sn The precious metal used by Samaria’s pagan worship centers to make idols are here compared to a prostitute’s wages because Samaria had been unfaithful to the Lord and prostituted herself to pagan gods, such as Baal.

7 tn *Heb* “I will make desolate” (so NASB).

8 tn Or “for” (KJV, NASB, NRSV).

9 tn No object is specified in the Hebrew text; the words “the metal” are supplied from the context.

10 tn *Heb* “for from a prostitute’s wages she gathered, and to a prostitute’s wages they will return.” When the metal was first collected it was comparable to the coins a prostitute would receive for her services. The metal was then formed into idols, but now the Lord’s fiery judgment would reduce the metal images to their original condition.

11 tn The prophet is probably the speaker here.

12 tn Or “stripped.” The precise meaning of this Hebrew word is unclear. It may refer to walking barefoot (see 2 Sam 15:30) or to partially stripping oneself (see Job 12:17-19).

13 tn *Heb* “naked.” This probably does not refer to complete nudity, but to stripping off one’s outer garments as an outward sign of the destitution felt by the mourner.

14 tn *Heb* “I will make lamentation.”

15 tn Or “a jackal”; CEV “howling wolves.”

16 tn *Heb* “[make] a mourning.”

17 tn Or perhaps “ostrich” (cf. ASV, NAB, NASB, NRSV, NLT).

18 tn *Heb* “her”; the referent (Samaria) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

19 tc The MT reads the plural “wounds”; the singular is read by the LXX, Syriac, and Vg.

tn Or “wound.”

20 tn *Heb* “come to.”

21 tn Or “reached.”

22 tn *Heb* “the gate.” Kings and civic leaders typically conducted important business at the city gate (see 1 Kgs 22:10 for an example), and the term is understood here to refer by metonymy to the leadership who would be present at the gate.

23 tn *Heb* “to Jerusalem.” The expression “it has contaminated” do not appear in the Hebrew text, but have been supplied to fill out the parallelism with the preceding line.

map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

24 tn *Heb* “Tell it not in Gath.” The Hebrew word for “tell” (גָּת, *nagad*) sounds like the name of the city, Gath (גַּת, *gat*).

25 tn The Hebrew infinitive absolute before the negated jussive emphasizes the prohibition.

26 tc The translation assumes a masculine plural imperative. If one were to emend בְּיַת (b³vet) to בַּיַת (vet), Beth Leaphrah would then be the addressee and the feminine singular imperative (see Qere) could be retained, “O Beth Leaphrah, sit in the dust.”

tn *Heb* “roll about in mourning in the dust”; or “wallow about in mourning in the dust.” The verb פָּלַשׁ (*palash*, “roll about in mourning [in dust]”; HALOT 935 s.v. פָּלַשׁ) is figurative (metonymy) for sitting as an outward sign of mourning.

sn To sit in the dust was an outward sign of mourning. The name *Beth Leaphrah* means “house of dust.”

27 tn The Hebrew participial form, which is feminine singular, is here used in a collective sense for all the residents of the town. See GKC 394 §122.s.

28 sn The place name *Shaphir* means “pleasant” in Hebrew.

29 tn The imperative form is used rhetorically, emphasizing that the inhabitants of Shaphir will pass by into exile.

30 tn *Heb* “have not come out”; NIV “will not come out”; NLT “dare not come outside.”

sn The expression *can’t leave their city* alludes to a siege of the town. The place name *Zaanan* sounds like the verb “come out” (i.e., “can’t leave”) in Hebrew.

31 sn The place name *Beth Ezel* means “house of nearness” or “house of proximity” in Hebrew.

32 tn *Heb* “the lamentation of Beth Ezel.” The following words could be the lamentation offered up by Beth Ezel (subjective genitive) or the mourning song sung over it (objective genitive).

33 tc The form עֲמַדְתִּי (*emdato*) should be emended to הַמְדְּתִי (*khamadto*, “his [the conqueror’s] desire”).

tn The precise meaning of the line is uncertain. The translation assumes: (a) the subject of the third masculine singular verb יִקַּח (*yiqqakh*, “he/it takes”) is the conqueror, (b) the second masculine plural suffix (“you”) on the preposition מִן (*min*, “from”) refers to the residents of Shaphir and Zaanan, (c) the final form עֲמַדְתִּי should be emended to הַמְדְּתִי, “his [the conqueror’s] desire.”

34 sn The place name *Maroth* sounds like the Hebrew word for “bitter.”

35 tc The translation assumes an emendation of הִלַּה (*khalah*; from הִיל, *khil*, “to writhe”) to יִחַלָּה (*yikhalah*; from יָחַל, *yakhal*, “to wait”).

tn *Heb* “[the residents of Maroth] writhe [= “anxiously long

though the LORD has sent disaster against the city of Jerusalem.¹

1:13 Residents of Lachish,² hitch the horses to the chariots!

You³ influenced Daughter Zion⁴ to sin,⁵ for Israel's rebellious deeds can be traced back⁶ to you!

1:14 Therefore you⁷ will have to say farewell⁸ to Moresheth Gath.

The residents⁹ of Achzib¹⁰ will be as disappointing as a dried up well¹¹ to the kings of Israel.¹²

1:15 Residents of Mareshah,¹³ a conqueror will attack you,¹⁴ the leaders of Israel shall flee to Adullam.¹⁵

1:16 Shave your heads bald as you mourn for the children you love;¹⁶ shave your foreheads as bald¹⁷ as an eagle,¹⁸ for they are taken from you into exile.

Land Robbers Will Lose Their Land

2:1 Those who devise sinful plans are as good as dead,¹⁹ those who dream about doing evil as they lie in bed.²⁰

As soon as morning dawns they carry out their plans,²¹

because they have the power to do so.

2:2 They confiscate the fields they desire, and seize the houses they want.²²

They defraud people of their homes,²³ and deprive people of the land they have inherited.²⁴

2:3 Therefore the LORD says this: "Look, I am devising disaster for this nation!²⁵

It will be like a yoke from which you cannot free your neck.²⁶

You will no longer²⁷ walk proudly, for it will be a time of catastrophe.

2:4 In that day people will sing this taunt song to you –

they will mock you with this lament:²⁸

'We are completely destroyed; they sell off²⁹ the property of my people.

How they remove it from me!³⁰

They assign our fields to the conqueror.'³¹

for"?) good."

1 tn Heb "though disaster has come down from the LORD to the gate of Jerusalem."

2 sn The place name *Lachish* sounds like the Hebrew word for "team [of horses]."

3 tn Heb "she"; this has been translated as second person ("you") in keeping with the direct address to the residents of Lachish in the previous line.

4 sn The epithet *Daughter Zion* pictures the city of Jerusalem as a young lady.

5 tn Heb "She was the beginning of sin for Daughter Zion."

6 tn Heb "for in you was found the transgressions of Israel."

7 tn The subject of the feminine singular verb is probably Lachish.

8 tn Heb "you will give a dowry to"; NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV "give parting gifts to." Lachish is compared to a father who presents wedding gifts to his daughter as she leaves her father's home to take up residence with her husband. In similar fashion Lachish will bid farewell to Moresheth Gath, for the latter will be taken by the invader.

9 tn Heb "houses." By metonymy this refers to the people who live in them.

10 sn The place name *Achzib* (אַחֲזִיב, *'akhziv*, "place on the dried up river"; see HALOT 45 s.v. אַחֲזִיב) creates a word play on the similar sounding term כָּזָב (*kazav*, "lie, deception"; HALOT 468 s.v. כָּזָב). Like the dried up river upon which its name was based, the city of Achzib would fail to help the kings of Israel in their time of need.

11 tn Or "will be a deception." The term אַחֲזִיב (*'akhzav*) is often translated "deception," as derived from the verb אָכַזַב ("to deceive, lie"; HALOT 467-68 s.v. אָכַזַב). However, it probably means "what is dried up," since (1) the noun elsewhere refers to an empty well or dried river in summer (Jer 15:18; cf. Job 6:15-20) (HALOT 45 s.v. אַחֲזִיב); (2) the place-name "Achzib" (אַחֲזִיב) literally means "place on the [dried up river]" (HALOT 45 s.v. אַחֲזִיב); and (3) it is derived from the verb אָכַזַב ("to dry up [brook]"; Isa 58:11), which also appears in Mishnaic Hebrew and Arabic. The point of the metaphor is that Achzib will be as disappointing to the kings of Israel as a dried up spring in the summer is to a thirsty traveler in the Jordanian desert.

12 sn Because of the enemy invasion, *Achzib* would not be able to deliver soldiers for the army and/or services normally rendered to the crown.

13 sn The place name *Mareshah* sounds like the Hebrew word for "conqueror."

14 tn Heb "Again a conqueror I will bring to you, residents of Mareshah." The first person verb is problematic, for the LORD would have to be the subject (cf. NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT). But the prophet appears to be delivering this lament and the LORD is referred to in the third person in v. 12. Consequently many emend the verb to a third person form (אָכַזַב, *yavo*) and understand the "conqueror" as subject.

15 tn Heb "to Adullam the glory of Israel will go." This probably means that the nation's leadership will run for their lives and, like David of old, hide from their enemy in the caves of Adullam. Cf. NIV's "He who is the glory of Israel will come to

Adullam," which sounds as if an individual is in view, and could be understood as a messianic reference.

16 tn Heb "over the sons of your delight."

17 tn Heb "make wide your baldness."

18 tn Or "a vulture" (cf. NIV, TEV); CEV "a buzzard." The Hebrew term נֶשֶׁר (*neshar*) refers to the griffon vulture or eagle.

19 tn Heb "Woe to those who plan sin." The Hebrew term הוּי (*hoy*, "woe"; "ah") was a cry used in mourning the dead.

20 tn Heb "those who do evil upon their beds."

21 tn Heb "at the light of morning they do it."

22 tn Heb "they desire fields and rob [them], and houses and take [them] away."

23 tn Heb "and they oppress a man and his home."

24 tn Heb "and a man and his inheritance." The verb אָשַׁק (*ashaq*, "to oppress"; "to wrong") does double duty in the parallel structure and is understood by ellipsis in the second line.

25 tn Heb "clan" or "extended family."

26 tn Heb "from which you will not remove your neck." The words "It will be like a yoke" are supplied in the translation for clarification.

27 tn Or "you will not."

28 tc The form נִיחָה (*nihyah*) should be omitted as ditto-graphic (note the preceding נִיחָה נִיחָה *n^enahah n^ehiy*).

tn Heb "one will lament [with] a lamentation [and] say."

29 tn Or "exchange." The LXX suggests a reading יִמַּד (*yim-mad*) from מִדַּד (*madad*, "to measure"). In this case one could translate, "the property of my people is measured out [i.e., for resale]."

30 tn Heb "how one removes for me." Apparently the preposition has the nuance "from" here (cf. KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

31 tc The Hebrew term שׁוֹבֵב (*shovev*, "the one turning back") elsewhere has the nuance "apostate" (cf. NASB) or "traitor" (cf. NIV). The translation assumes an emendation to שָׂדֵה (*shavah*, "captor").

2:5 Therefore no one will assign you land in the LORD's community.¹

2:6 'Don't preach with such impassioned rhetoric,³ they say excitedly.²

'These prophets should not preach of such things; we will not be overtaken by humiliation.³

2:7 Does the family⁴ of Jacob say,⁵ 'The LORD's patience⁶ can't be exhausted – he would never do such things?'⁷ To be sure, my commands bring a reward for those who obey them,⁸

2:8 but you rise up as an enemy against my people.⁹

You steal a robe from a friend,¹⁰ from those who pass by peacefully as if returning from a war.¹¹

2:9 You wrongly evict widows¹² among my people from their cherished homes. You defraud their children¹³ of their prized inheritance.¹⁴

2:10 But you are the ones who will be forced to leave!¹⁵

For this land is not secure!¹⁶ Sin will thoroughly destroy it!¹⁷

2:11 If a lying windbag should come and say,¹⁸

tn Heb "to the one turning back he assigns our fields."

1 tn Heb "therefore you will not have one who strings out a measuring line by lot in the assembly of the LORD."

sn No one will assign you land in the LORD's community. When judgment passes and the people are restored to the land, those greedy ones who disregarded the ancient land allotments will not be allowed to participate in the future redistribution of the land.

2 tn Heb "Do not foam at the mouth," they foam at the mouth." The verb נָפַח (*nataf*) means "to drip." When used of speech it probably has the nuance "to drivel, to foam at the mouth" (HALOT 694 s.v. נָפַח). The sinful people tell the LORD's prophets not to "foam at the mouth," which probably refers in a derogatory way to their impassioned style of delivery. But the LORD (who is probably still speaking here, see v. 3) sarcastically refers to their impassioned exhortation as "foaming at the mouth."

3 tc If one follows the MT as it stands, it would appear that the LORD here condemns the people for their "foaming at the mouth" and then announces that judgment is inevitable. The present translation assumes that this is a continuation of the quotation of what the people say. In this case the subject of "foam at the mouth" is the LORD's prophets. In the second line יָבִט (*yissag*, a Niphal imperfect from בָּט, *sag*, "to remove") is emended to יַבְסִינֵנו (*yassigenu*; a Hiphil imperfect from נָסַג/נָסַג, *nasag/nasag*, "to reach; to overtake").

tn Heb "they should not foam at the mouth concerning these things, humiliation will not be removed."

4 tn Heb "house" (so many English versions); CEV "descendants."

5 tc The MT has אָמֹר (*amur*), an otherwise unattested passive participle, which is better emended to אָמֹר (*amor*), an infinitive absolute functioning as a finite verb (see BDB 55 s.v. אָמֹר).

6 tn The Hebrew word רוּחַ (*ruach*) often means "spirit" when used of the LORD, but here it seems to have an abstract sense, "patience." See BDB 925 s.v. 3.d.

7 tn Heb "Has the patience of the LORD run short? Or are these his deeds?" The rhetorical questions expect the answer, "No, of course not." The people contest the prophet's claims that the LORD's judgment is falling on the nation.

8 tn Heb "Do not my words accomplish good for the one who walks uprightly?" The rhetorical question expects the answer, "Of course they do!" The LORD begins his response to the claim of the house of Jacob that they are immune to judgment (see v. 7a). He points out that the godly are indeed rewarded, but then he goes on to show that those in the house of Jacob are not godly and can expect divine judgment, not blessing (vv. 8-11). Some emend "my words" to "his words." In this case, v. 7b is a continuation of the immediately preceding quotation. The people, thinking they are godly, confidently ask, "Do not his [God's] words accomplish good for the one who walks uprightly?"

9 tc Heb "Recently my people rise up as an enemy." The MT is problematic in light of v. 9, where "my people" are the object of oppression, not the perpetrators of it. The form וְאֶתְמוּלֵי (v⁹ *etmul*, "and recently") is probably the product of fusion and subsequent suppression of an (*ayin*) *ayin*. The translation assumes an emendation to וְאֶתְמוּלֵי (v⁹ *etmul*, "and you against [my people]"). The second person plural pronoun fits well with the second plural verb forms of vv. 8b-10. If this emendation is accepted, then יָקֹמֶם (*yqomem*, the imperfect of קָוַם [*qum*]) should be emended to קָמִימִם (*qamim*; a participle from the same root).

10 tc Heb "From the front of a garment glory [or perhaps, "a robe"] you strip off," but this makes little if any sense. The term מִמּוּל (*mimmul*, "from the front of") is probably the product of dittography (note the preceding word, which ends in [מ] *mem*) and subsequent suppression of *ayin* (*ayin*). The translation assumes an emendation to מִעַל (*me'al*, "from upon"). The translation also assumes an emendation to שַׁלְמַח אֶדֶר (*shalmah 'eder*, "a garment, glory [or robe]") to שַׁלְמִים אֶדֶרֶת (*shol^mim 'aderet*, "[from] a friend the robe [you strip off]"). The MT's אֶדֶר (*'eder*) is the result of misdivision (the article has erroneously been attached to the preceding word) and haplography (of the final *tav*, which also begins the following word).

11 tc The passive participle שֹׁבֵי (*shuvey*) is unattested elsewhere and should be emended to a participle שְׂבִיִּים (*shavim*).

tn Heb "from those passing by peacefully, returnees from war." Actual refugees, however, are probably not in view. The second line compares those who pass by peacefully with individuals returning from war. The battle is over and they do not expect their own countrymen to attack them.

12 tn Heb "women." This may be a synecdoche of the whole (women) for the part (widows).

13 tn Heb "her little children" or "her infants"; ASV, NRSV "young children."

14 tn Heb "from their children you take my glory forever." The *yod* (י) ending on הַדָּרִיִּי (*hadariy*) is usually taken as a first person common singular suffix ("my glory"). But it may be the archaic genitive ending ("glory of") in the construct expression "glory of perpetuity," that is, "perpetual glory." In either case, this probably refers to the dignity or honor the LORD bestowed on each Israelite family by giving them a share of his land to be inherited perpetually from one generation to another within each family. The term הַדָּר (*hadar*) may refer to possessions that a person prizes (Lam 1:6).

15 tn Heb "Arise and go!" These imperatives are rhetorical. Those who wrongly drove widows and orphans from their homes and land inheritances will themselves be driven out of the land (cf. Isa 5:8-17). This is an example of poetic justice.

16 tn Heb "for this is no resting place." The LORD speaks to the oppressors.

17 tn Heb "uncleanness will destroy, and destruction will be severe."

18 tn Heb "if a man, coming [as] wind and falsehood, should lie"; NASB "walking after wind and falsehood"; NIV "a liar and a deceiver."

‘I’ll promise you blessings of wine and beer,¹
 he would be just the right preacher for these people!²

The Lord Will Restore His People

2:12 I will certainly gather all of you, O Jacob,
 I will certainly assemble those Israelites who remain.³
 I will bring them together like sheep in a fold,⁴
 like a flock in the middle of a pasture,⁵
 they will be so numerous that they will make a lot of noise.⁶
2:13 The one who can break through barriers will lead them out⁷
 they will break out, pass through the gate, and leave.⁸
 Their king will advance⁹ before them,
 The LORD himself will lead them.¹⁰

God Will Judge Judah’s Sinful Leaders

3:1 I said,
 “Listen, you leaders¹¹ of Jacob,
 you rulers of the nation¹² of Israel!
 You ought to know what is just,¹³
3:2 yet you¹⁴ hate what is good,¹⁵
 and love what is evil.¹⁶
 You flay my people’s skin¹⁷

and rip the flesh from their bones.¹⁸
3:3 You¹⁹ devour my people’s flesh,
 strip off their skin,
 and crush their bones.
 You chop them up like flesh in a pot²⁰ –
 like meat in a kettle.
3:4 Someday these sinners will cry to the
 LORD for help,²¹
 but he will not answer them.
 He will hide his face from them at that
 time,
 because they have done such wicked
 deeds.”

3:5 This is what the LORD says: “The
 prophets who misled my people
 are as good as dead.²²
 If someone gives them enough to eat,
 they offer an oracle of peace.²³
 But if someone does not give them food,
 they are ready to declare war on him.²⁴
3:6 Therefore night will fall, and you will
 receive no visions,²⁵
 it will grow dark, and you will no longer
 be able to read the omens.²⁶

¹ **tn** Heb “I will foam at the mouth concerning wine and beer.”

² **tn** Heb “he would be the foamer at the mouth for this people.”

³ **tn** Heb “the remnant of Israel.”

⁴ **tc** The MT reads בַּצְרָה (*batsrah*, “Bozrah”) but the form should be emended to בְּצִדָּה (*batsirah*, “into the fold”). See D. R. Hillers, *Micah* (Hermeneia), 38.

⁵ **tc** The MT reads “its pasture,” but the final vav (ו) belongs with the following verb. See GKC 413 §127.i.

⁶ **tn** Heb “and they will be noisy [or perhaps, “excited”] from men.” The subject of the third feminine plural verb תְּרִיבֶנָּה (*ʾhimenah*, “they will be noisy”) is probably the feminine singular תְּסוֹן (*tsʻon*, “flock”). (For another example of this collective singular noun with a feminine plural verb, see Gen 30:38.) In the construction בְּאָדָם (*meʾadam*, “from men”) the preposition is probably causal. L. C. Allen translates “bleating in fear of men” (*Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah* [NICOT], 300), but it is possible to take the causal sense as “because of the large quantity of men.” In this case the sheep metaphor and the underlying reality are mixed.

⁷ **tn** Heb “the one who breaks through goes up before them.” The verb form is understood as a perfect of certitude, emphasizing the certainty of this coming event.

⁸ **tn** The three verb forms (a perfect and two preterites with vav [ו] consecutive) indicate certitude.

sn The “fold” from which the sheep/people *break out* is probably a reference to their place of exile.

⁹ **tn** The verb form (a preterite with vav [ו] consecutive) indicates certitude.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “the LORD [will be] at their head.”

¹¹ **tn** Heb “heads.”

¹² **tn** Heb “house.”

¹³ **tn** Heb “Should you not know justice?” The rhetorical question expects the answer, “Of course you should!”

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “the ones who.”

¹⁵ **tn** Or “good.”

¹⁶ **tn** Or “evil.”

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “their skin from upon them.” The referent of the

pronoun (“my people,” referring to Jacob and/or the house of Israel, with the LORD as the speaker) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “and their flesh from their bones.”

sn Micah compares the social injustice perpetrated by the house of Jacob/Israel to cannibalism, because it threatens the very lives of the oppressed.

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “who.”

²⁰ **tc** The MT reads “and they chop up as in a pot.” The translation assumes an emendation of כַּאֲשֶׁר (*kaʾasher*, “as”) to כִּישׁׁר (*kishʻer*, “like flesh”).

²¹ **tn** Heb “then they will cry out to the LORD.” The words “Someday these sinners” have been supplied in the translation for clarification.

²² **tn** Heb “concerning the prophets, those who mislead my people.” The first person pronominal suffix is awkward in a quotation formula that introduces the words of the LORD. For this reason some prefer to begin the quotation after “the LORD says” (cf. NIV), but this leaves “concerning the prophets” hanging very awkwardly at the beginning of the quotation. It is preferable to add הֵי הֵי (*hoy*, “woe, ah”) at the beginning of the quotation, right after the graphically similar הִי הִי (*ʾhvah*; see D. R. Hillers, *Micah* [Hermeneia], 44). The phrase הֵי הֵי (*hoy al*, “woe upon”) occurs in Jer 50:27 and Ezek 13:3 (with “the prophets” following the preposition in the latter instance).

²³ **tn** Heb “those who bite with their teeth and cry out, ‘peace.’” The phrase “bite with the teeth” is taken here as idiomatic for eating. Apparently these prophets were driven by mercenary motives. If they were paid well, they gave positive oracles to their clients, but if someone could not afford to pay them, they were hostile and delivered oracles of doom.

²⁴ **tn** Heb “but [as for the one] who does not place [food] in their mouths, they prepare for war against him.”

²⁵ **tn** Heb “it will be night for you without a vision.”

sn The coming of *night* (and darkness in the following line) symbolizes the cessation of revelation.

²⁶ **tn** Heb “it will be dark for you without divination.”

sn The reading of *omens* (Heb “divination”) was forbidden in the law (Deut 18:10), so this probably reflects the prophets’ view of how they received divine revelation.

The sun will set on these prophets,
and the daylight will turn to darkness
over their heads.¹

3:7 The prophets² will be ashamed;
the omen readers will be humiliated.
All of them will cover their mouths,³
for they will receive no divine oracles.”⁴

3:8 But I⁵ am full of the courage that the
LORD’s Spirit gives,
and have a strong commitment to justice.⁶
This enables me to confront Jacob with
its rebellion,
and Israel with its sin.⁷

3:9 Listen to this, you leaders of the fam-
ily⁸ of Jacob,
you rulers of the nation⁹ of Israel!
You¹⁰ hate justice
and pervert all that is right.

3:10 You¹¹ build Zion through bloody
crimes,¹²

Jerusalem¹³ through unjust violence.

3:11 Her¹⁴ leaders take bribes when they
decide legal cases,¹⁵

her priests proclaim rulings for profit,
and her prophets read omens for pay.
Yet they claim to trust¹⁶ the LORD and say,
“The LORD is among us.¹⁷

Disaster will not overtake¹⁸ us!”

3:12 Therefore, because of you,¹⁹ Zion
will be plowed up like²⁰ a field,
Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins,

¹ *tn* Heb “and the day will be dark over them.”

² *tn* Or “seers.”

³ *tn* Or “the mustache,” or perhaps “the beard.” Cf. KJV, NAB, NRSV “cover their lips.”

⁴ *tn* Heb “for there will be no answer from God.”

⁵ *sn* The prophet Micah speaks here and contrasts himself with the mercenaries just denounced by the LORD in the preceding verses.

⁶ *tn* Heb “am full of power, the Spirit of the LORD, and justice and strength.” The appositional phrase “the Spirit of the LORD” explains the source of the prophet’s power. The phrase “justice and strength” is understood here as a hendiadys, referring to the prophet’s strong sense of justice.

⁷ *tn* Heb “to declare to Jacob his rebellion and to Israel his sin.” The words “this enables me” are supplied in the translation for clarification.

⁸ *tn* Heb “house.”

⁹ *tn* Heb “house.”

¹⁰ *tn* Heb “who.” A new sentence was begun here in the translation for stylistic reasons (also at the beginning of v. 10).

¹¹ *tn* Heb “who.”

¹² *tn* Heb “bloodshed” (so NAB, NASB, NIV); NLT “murder.”

¹³ *map* For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁴ *sn* The pronoun *Her* refers to Jerusalem (note the previous line).

¹⁵ *tn* Heb “judge for a bribe.”

¹⁶ *tn* Heb “they lean upon” (so KJV, NIV, NRSV); NAB “rely on.”

¹⁷ *tn* Heb “Is not the LORD in our midst?” The rhetorical question expects the answer, “Of course he is!”

¹⁸ *tn* Or “come upon” (so many English versions); NCV “happen to us”; CEV “come to us.”

¹⁹ *tn* The plural pronoun refers to the leaders, priests, and prophets mentioned in the preceding verse.

²⁰ *tn* Or “into” (an adverbial accusative of result).

and the Temple Mount²¹ will become a
hill overgrown with brush!²²

Better Days Ahead for Jerusalem

4:1 In the future²³ the LORD’s Temple
Mount will be the most important
mountain of all;²⁴

it will be more prominent than other
hills.²⁵

People will stream to it.

4:2 Many nations will come, saying,
“Come on! Let’s go up to the LORD’s
mountain,

to the temple²⁶ of Jacob’s God,
so he can teach us his commands²⁷

and we can live by his laws.”²⁸

For Zion will be the source of instruction;
the LORD’s teachings will proceed from
Jerusalem.²⁹

4:3 He will arbitrate³⁰ between many
peoples

and settle disputes between many³¹ dis-
tant nations.³²

They will beat their swords into plow-
shares,³³

and their spears into pruning hooks.³⁴
Nations will not use weapons³⁵ against

other nations,

and they will no longer train for war.

4:4 Each will sit under his own grapevine
or under his own fig tree without any
fear.³⁶

The LORD who commands armies has
decreed it.³⁷

²¹ *tn* Heb “the mountain of the house” (so KJV, ASV, NRSV).

²² *tn* Heb “a high place of overgrowth.”

²³ *tn* Heb “at the end of days.”

²⁴ *tn* Heb “will be established as the head of the mountains.”

²⁵ *tn* Heb “it will be lifted up above the hills.”

²⁶ *tn* Heb “house.”

²⁷ *tn* Heb “ways.”

²⁸ *tn* Heb “and we can walk in his paths.”

²⁹ *tn* Heb “instruction [or, “law”] will go out from Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

³⁰ *tn* Or “judge.”

³¹ *tn* Or “mighty” (NASB); KJV, NAB, NIV, NRSV “strong”; TEV “among the great powers.”

³² *tn* Heb “[for many nations] to a distance.”

³³ *sn* Instead of referring to the large plow as a whole, the plowshare is simply the metal tip which actually breaks the earth and cuts the furrow.

³⁴ *sn* This implement was used to prune the vines, i.e., to cut off extra leaves and young shoots (M. Klingbeil, *NIDOTTE* 1:1117-18). It was a short knife with a curved hook at the end sharpened on the inside like a sickle.

³⁵ *tn* Heb “take up the sword.”

³⁶ *tn* Heb “and there will be no one making [him] afraid.”

³⁷ *tn* Heb “for the mouth of the LORD of Hosts has spoken.”

4:5 Though all the nations follow their
respective gods,¹
we will follow² the LORD our God forever.

Restoration Will Follow Crisis

4:6 “In that day,” says the LORD, “I will
gather the lame,
and assemble the outcasts whom I injured.³

4:7 I will transform the lame into the
nucleus of a new nation,⁴
and those far off⁵ into a mighty nation.
The LORD will reign over them on Mount
Zion,

from that day forward and forevermore.”⁶

4:8 As for you, watchtower for the flock,⁷
fortress of Daughter Zion⁸ –
your former dominion will be restored,⁹
the sovereignty that belongs to Daughter
Jerusalem.

4:9 Jerusalem, why are you¹⁰ now shouting
so loudly?¹¹

Has your king disappeared?¹²
Has your wise leader¹³ been destroyed?
Is this why¹⁴ pain grips¹⁵ you as if you
were a woman in labor?

4:10 Twist and strain,¹⁶ Daughter Zion, as
if you were in labor!

For you will leave the city
and live in the open field.

You will go to Babylon,
but there you will be rescued.
There the LORD will deliver¹⁷ you
from the power¹⁸ of your enemies.

4:11 Many nations have now assembled
against you.

They say, “Jerusalem must be desecrat-
ed,¹⁹
so we can gloat over Zion!”²⁰

4:12 But they do not know what the LORD
is planning;

they do not understand his strategy.
He has gathered them like stalks of grain
to be threshed²¹ at the threshing floor.

4:13 “Get up and thresh, Daughter Zion!

For I will give you iron horns,²²
I will give you bronze hooves,
and you will crush many nations.”²³

You will devote to the LORD the spoils
you take from them,
and dedicate their wealth to the sovereign
Ruler²⁴ of the whole earth.²⁵

5:1 (4:14)²⁶ But now slash yourself,²⁷
daughter surrounded by soldiers!²⁸

¹ **tn** *Heb* “walk each in the name of his god.” The term “name” here has the idea of “authority.” To “walk in the name” of a god is to recognize the god’s authority as binding over one’s life.

² **tn** *Heb* “walk in the name of.”

³ **sn** The exiles of the nation are compared to *lame* and *injured* sheep.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “make the lame into a remnant.”

⁵ **tn** The precise meaning of this difficult form is uncertain. The present translation assumes the form is a Niphal participle of an otherwise unattested denominative verb הָלָה (hala’, “to be far off”; see BDB 229 s.v.), but attractive emendations include הַחֲלָה (hannakhalah, “the sick one[s]”) from חָלָה (khalah) and הַחֲנִי’א (hannil’ah, “the weary one[s]”) from חָנִי’א (la’ah).

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “from now until forever.”

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Migdal-eder.” Some English versions transliterate this phrase, apparently because they view it as a place name (cf. NAB).

⁸ **sn** The city of David, located within Jerusalem, is addressed as *Daughter Zion*. As the home of the Davidic king, who was Israel’s shepherd (Ps 78:70-72), the royal citadel could be viewed metaphorically as the watchtower of the flock.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “to you it will come, the former dominion will arrive.”

¹⁰ **tn** The Hebrew form is feminine singular, indicating that Jerusalem, personified as a young woman, is now addressed (see v. 10). In v. 8 the tower/fortress was addressed with masculine forms, so there is clearly a shift in addressee here. “Jerusalem” has been supplied in the translation at the beginning of v. 9 to make this shift apparent.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Now why are you shouting [with] a shout.”

¹² **tn** *Heb* “Is there no king over you?”

¹³ **tn** Traditionally, “counselor” (cf. KJV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV). This refers to the king mentioned in the previous line; the title points to the king’s roles as chief strategist and policy maker, both of which required extraordinary wisdom.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “that.” The Hebrew particle כִּי (ki) is used here in a resultative sense; for this use see R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 73, §450.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “grabs hold of, seizes.”

¹⁶ **tn** Or perhaps “scream”; NRSV, TEV, NLT “groan.”

¹⁷ **tn** Or “redeem” (KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “hand.” The Hebrew idiom is a metonymy for power or control.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “let her be desecrated.” the referent (Jerusalem) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “and let our eye look upon Zion.”

²¹ **tn** The words “to be threshed” are not in the Hebrew text, but have been supplied in the translation to make it clear that the LORD is planning to enable “Daughter Zion” to “thresh” her enemies.

²² **tn** *Heb* “I will make your horn iron.”

²³ **sn** Jerusalem (*Daughter Zion* at the beginning of the verse; cf. 4:8) is here compared to a powerful ox which crushes the grain on the threshing floor with its *hooves*.

²⁴ **tn** Or “the Lord” (so many English versions); *Heb* “the master.”

²⁵ **tn** *Heb* “and their wealth to the master of all the earth.” The verb “devote” does double duty in the parallelism and is supplied in the second line for clarification.

sn In vv. 11-13 the prophet jumps from the present crisis (which will result in exile, v. 10) to a time beyond the restoration of the exiles when God will protect his city from invaders. The LORD’s victory over the Assyrian armies in 701 B.C. foreshadowed this.

²⁶ **sn** Beginning with 5:1, the verse numbers through 5:15 in the English Bible differ by one from the verse numbers in the Hebrew text (*BHS*), with 5:1 ET = 4:14 HT, 5:2 ET = 5:1 HT, 5:3 ET = 5:2 HT, etc., through 5:15 ET = 5:14 HT. From 6:1 the verse numbers in the English Bible and the Hebrew Bible are again the same.

²⁷ **tn** The Hebrew verb גָּדַד (gadad) can be translated “slash yourself” or “gather in troops.” A number of English translations are based on the latter meaning (e.g., NASB, NIV, NLT).

sn *Slash yourself*. Slashing one’s body was a form of mourning. See Deut 14:1; 1 Kgs 18:28; Jer 16:6; 41:5; 47:5.

²⁸ **tn** *Heb* “daughter of a troop of warriors.”

sn The *daughter surrounded by soldiers* is an image of the city of Jerusalem under siege (note the address “Daughter Jerusalem” in 4:8).

We are besieged!
With a scepter⁴ they strike Israel's ruler²
on the side of his face.

A King Will Come and a Remnant Will Prosper

5:2 (5:1) As for you, Bethlehem Ephra-
tah,³
seemingly insignificant⁴ among the clans
of Judah –
from you a king will emerge who will
rule over Israel on my behalf,⁵
one whose origins⁶ are in the distant
past.⁷
5:3 So the LORD⁸ will hand the people of
Israel⁹ over to their enemies¹⁰
until the time when the woman in labor¹¹
gives birth.¹²
Then the rest of the king's¹³ countrymen
will return
to be reunited with the people of Israel.¹⁴

¹ tn Or "staff"; KJV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT "rod"; CEV "stick"; NCV "club."

² sn Striking a king with a scepter, a symbol of rulership, would be especially ironic and humiliating.

³ tn Traditionally, "the judge of Israel" (so KJV, NASB).

⁴ sn Ephrathah is either an alternate name for Bethlehem or the name of the district in which Bethlehem was located. See Ruth 4:11.

⁵ map For location of Bethlehem see Map5-B1; Map7-E2; Map8-E2; Map10-B4.

⁶ tn Heb "being small." Some omit לְהֵיוֹת (lihyot, "being") because it fits awkwardly and appears again in the next line.

⁷ tn Heb "from you for me one will go out to be a ruler over Israel."

⁸ tn Heb "his goings out." The term may refer to the ruler's origins (cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT) or to his activities.

⁹ tn Heb "from the past, from the days of antiquity." Elsewhere both phrases refer to the early periods in the history of the world or of the nation of Israel. For מִקְדָּם (miqqedem, "from the past") see Neh 12:46; Pss 74:12; 77:11; Isa 45:21; 46:10. For מִיָּמֵי עוֹלָם (mimyei 'olam, "from the days of antiquity") see Isa 63:9, 11; Amos 9:11; Mic 7:14; Mal 3:4. In Neh 12:46 and Amos 9:11 the Davidic era is in view.

¹⁰ sn In riddle-like fashion this verse alludes to David, as the references to Bethlehem and to his ancient origins/activities indicate. The passage anticipates the second coming of the great king to usher in a new era of national glory for Israel. Other prophets are more direct and name this coming ideal ruler "David" (Jer 30:9; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hos 3:5). Of course, this prophecy of "David's" second coming is actually fulfilled through his descendant, the Messiah, who will rule in the spirit and power of his famous ancestor and bring to realization the Davidic royal ideal in an even greater way than the historical David (see Isa 11:1, 10; Jer 33:15).

¹¹ tn Heb "he"; the referent (the LORD) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹² tn Heb "them"; the referent (the people of Israel) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹³ tn The words "to their enemies" are supplied in the translation for clarification.

¹⁴ sn The woman in labor. Personified, suffering Jerusalem is the referent. See 4:9-10.

¹⁵ sn Gives birth. The point of the figurative language is that Jerusalem finally finds relief from her suffering. See 4:10.

¹⁶ tn Heb "his"; the referent (the king) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹⁷ tn Heb "to the sons of Israel." The words "be reunited with" are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁸ sn The rest of the king's countrymen are the coming king's fellow Judahites, while the people of Israel are the northern tribes. The verse pictures the reunification of the nation under the Davidic king. See Isa 11:12-13; Jer 31:2-6, 15-20;

5:4 He will assume his post¹⁵ and shepherd
the people¹⁶ by the LORD's strength,
by the sovereign authority of the LORD
his God.¹⁷

They will live securely,¹⁸ for at that time
he will be honored¹⁹ for at that time
even in the distant regions of²⁰ the earth.

5:5 He will give us peace.²¹
Should the Assyrians try to invade our
land
and attempt to set foot in our fortresses,²²
we will send²³ against them seven²⁴ shep-
herd-rulers,²⁵
make that eight commanders.²⁶

5:6 They will rule²⁷ the land of Assyria
with the sword,
the land of Nimrod²⁸ with a drawn
sword.²⁹

Our king³⁰ will rescue us from the As-
syrians
should they attempt to invade our land
and try to set foot in our territory.

5:7 Those survivors from³¹ Jacob will
live³²

in the midst of many nations.³³

They will be like the dew the LORD sends,
like the rain on the grass,
that does not hope for men to come
or wait around for humans to arrive.³⁴

Ezek 37; Hos 1:11; 3:5.

¹⁵ tn Heb "stand up"; NAB "stand firm"; NASB "will arise."

¹⁶ tn The words "the people" are supplied in the translation for clarification.

¹⁷ tn Heb "by the majesty of the name of the LORD his God."

¹⁸ tn The words "in peace" are supplied in the translation for clarification. Perhaps וְיָשָׁבוּ (v'yashavu, "and they will live") should be emended to וְשָׁבוּ (v'shavu, "and they will return").

¹⁹ tn Heb "be great."

²⁰ tn Or "to the ends of."

²¹ tn Heb "and this one will be peace"; ASV "and this man shall be our peace" (cf. Eph 2:14).

²² tc Some prefer to read "in our land," emending the text to וְאֶדְמַתֵּנוּ (v'admatenu).

²³ tn Heb "raise up."

²⁴ sn The numbers seven and eight here symbolize completeness and emphasize that Israel will have more than enough military leadership and strength to withstand the Assyrian advance.

²⁵ tn Heb "shepherds."

²⁶ tn Heb "and eight leaders of men."

²⁷ tn Or perhaps "break"; or "defeat."

²⁸ sn According to Gen 10:8-12, Nimrod, who was famous as a warrior and hunter, founded Assyria.

²⁹ tc The MT reads "in her gates," but the text should be emended to בְּפִתְחֶיהָ (b'pithkha, "with a drawn sword").

³⁰ tn Heb "he"; the referent (the coming king) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

³¹ tn Heb "the remnant of" (also in v. 8).

³² tn Heb "will be."

³³ tn This could mean "scattered" among the nations" (cf. CEV, NLT) or "surrounded by many nations" (cf. NRSV).

³⁴ tn Heb "that does not hope for man, and does not wait for the sons of men."

³⁵ sn Men wait eagerly for the dew and the rain, not vice versa. Just as the dew and rain are subject to the LORD, not men, so the remnant of Israel will succeed by the supernatural power of God and not need the support of other nations. There may even be a military metaphor here. Israel will overwhelm their enemies, just as the dew completely covers the grass (see 2 Sam 17:12). This interpretation would be consistent with the

5:8 Those survivors from Jacob will live among the nations, in the midst of many peoples. They will be like a lion among the animals of the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of sheep, which attacks when it passes through; it rips its prey¹ and there is no one to stop it.²
 5:9 Lift your hand triumphantly against your adversaries,³ may all your enemies be destroyed!⁴

The Lord Will Purify His People

5:10 “In that day,” says the LORD, “I will destroy⁵ your horses from your midst, and smash your chariots.
 5:11 I will destroy the cities of your land, and tear down all your fortresses.
 5:12 I will remove the sorcery⁶ that you practice,⁷ and you will no longer have omen readers living among you.⁸
 5:13 I will remove your idols and sacred pillars from your midst; you will no longer worship what your own hands made.
 5:14 I will uproot your images of Asherah⁹ from your midst, and destroy your idols.¹⁰
 5:15 I will angrily seek vengeance on the nations that do not obey me.”¹¹

The Lord Demands Justice, not Ritual

6:1 Listen to what the LORD says:

“Get up! Defend yourself¹² before the mountains!¹³
 Present your case before the hills!”¹⁴
 6:2 Hear the LORD’s accusation, you mountains, you enduring foundations of the earth! For the LORD has a case against his people; he has a dispute with Israel!¹⁵
 6:3 “My people, how have I wronged you?¹⁶ How have I wearied you? Answer me!
 6:4 In fact, I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I delivered you from that place of slavery. I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to lead you.¹⁷
 6:5 My people, recall how King Balak of Moab planned to harm you,¹⁸ how Balaam son of Beor responded to him. Recall how you journeyed from Shittim to Gilgal, so you might acknowledge that the LORD has treated you fairly.”¹⁹
 6:6 With what should I²⁰ enter the LORD’s presence? With what²¹ should I bow before the sovereign God?²² Should I enter his presence with burnt offerings, with year-old calves?
 6:7 Will the LORD accept a thousand rams, or ten thousand streams of olive oil? Should I give him my firstborn child as payment for my rebellion, my offspring – my own flesh and blood – for my sin?²³

image of v. 7.

¹ **tn** The words “its prey” are supplied in the translation for clarification.

² **tn** *Heb* “and there is no deliverer.”

³ **tn** *Heb* “let your hand be lifted against your adversaries.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “be cut off.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “cut off” (also in the following verse).

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “magic charms” (so NCV, TEV); NIV, NLT “witchcraft”; NAB “the means of divination.” The precise meaning of this Hebrew word is uncertain, but note its use in Isa 47:9, 12.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “from your hands.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “and you will not have omen-readers.”

⁹ **tn** Or “Asherah poles.”

sn *Asherah* was a leading deity of the Canaanite pantheon, wife/sister of El and goddess of fertility. She was commonly worshiped at shrines in or near groves of evergreen trees, or, failing that, at places marked by wooden poles. These were to be burned or cut down (Deut 12:3; 16:21; Judg 6:25, 28, 30; 2 Kgs 18:4). The LORD states that he will destroy these images, something the Israelites themselves should have done but failed to do.

¹⁰ **tn** The MT reads “your cities,” but many emend the text to צִרְיָהּ (*tsirekha*, “your images”) or אֲצִבְכָּהּ (*atsbekha*, “your idols”).

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “I will accomplish in anger and in rage, vengeance on the nations who do not listen.”

¹² **tn** Or “plead your case” (NASB, NIV, NRSV); NAB “present your plea”; NLT “state your case.”

sn *Defend yourself*. The LORD challenges Israel to defend itself against the charges he is bringing.

¹³ **sn** As in some ancient Near Eastern treaties, the *mountains* are personified as legal witnesses that will settle the dispute between God and Israel.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “let the hills hear your voice.”

¹⁵ **tn** This verse briefly interrupts the LORD’s statement (see vv. 1, 3) as the prophet summons the mountains as witnesses. Because of this v. 2 has been placed in parentheses in the translation.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “My people, what have I done to you?”

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “before you.”

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “remember what Balak...planned.”

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “From Shittim to Gilgal, in order to know the just acts of the LORD.” Something appears to be missing at the beginning of the line. The present translation supplies the words, “Recall how you went.” This apparently refers to how Israel crossed the Jordan River (see Josh 3:1; 4:19-24).

²⁰ **sn** *With what should I enter the LORD’s presence?* The prophet speaks again, playing the role of an inquisitive worshiper who wants to know what God really desires from his followers.

²¹ **tn** The words “with what” do double duty in the parallelism and are supplied in the second line of the translation for clarification.

²² **tn** Or “the exalted God.”

²³ **tn** *Heb* “the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul.” The

6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good,
and what the LORD really wants from
you:¹
He wants you to² promote³ justice, to be
faithful,⁴
and to live obediently before⁵ your God.

6:9 Listen! The LORD is calling⁶ to the city!
It is wise to respect your authority, O LORD!⁷
Listen, O nation, and those assembled in
the city!⁸

6:10 "I will not overlook,⁹ O sinful house,
the dishonest gain you have hoarded
away.¹⁰

or the smaller-than-standard measure I
hate so much.¹¹

6:11 I do not condone the use of rigged
scales,
or a bag of deceptive weights.¹²

6:12 The city's rich men think nothing of
resorting to violence,¹³

her inhabitants lie,¹⁴
their tongues speak deceptive words.¹⁵

Hebrew term נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*) is often translated "soul," but the word usually refers to the whole person; here "the sin of my soul" = "my sin."

¹ **sn** What the LORD really wants from you. Now the prophet switches roles and answers the hypothetical worshiper's question. He makes it clear that the LORD desires proper attitudes more than ritual and sacrifice.

² **tn** Heb "except." This statement is actually linked with what precedes, "What does he want from you except...."

³ **tn** Heb "to do," in the sense of "promote."

⁴ **tn** Heb "to love faithfulness."

⁵ **tn** Heb "to walk humbly [or perhaps, "carefully"] with."

⁶ **tn** Or "the voice of the LORD is calling." The translation understands קוֹל (*qol*, "voice") as equivalent to an imperative.

⁷ **tn** Heb "one who sees your name is wisdom." It is probably better to emend יִרְאֶה (*yir'eh*, "he sees") to יִרְאֶה (*yir'ah*, "fearing"). One may then translate, "fearing your name is wisdom." The LORD's "name" here stands by metonymy for his authority.

⁸ **tn** Heb (apparently) "Listen [to] the staff and the one who appointed it." Verse 10 then begins with עוֹד (*vod*, "still" or "again"). The translation assumes an emendation to שְׁמִינֵי מַטֵּהוּ בְּיַד הַיְיָ (*shim'u matteh umo'ed ha'ir*, "listen, O tribe and the assembly of the city").

⁹ **tn** The meaning of the first Hebrew word in the line is unclear. Possibly it is a combination of the interrogative particle and אִישׁ (*ish*), an alternate form of יֵשׁ (*yesh*, "there is/are"). One could then translate literally, "Are there treasures of sin [in] the house of the sinful?" The translation assumes an emendation to הֲאֵשֶׁה (*ha'eshah*, from נָשָׂה, *nasha*, "to forget"), "Will I forget?" The rhetorical question expects an answer, "No, I will not forget."

¹⁰ **tn** Heb "the treasures of sin"; NASB "treasures of wickedness"; NIV "ill-gotten treasures."

¹¹ **tn** Heb "the accursed scant measure."

sn Merchants would use a smaller than standard measure so they could give the customer less than he thought he was paying for.

¹² **tn** Heb "Do I acquit sinful scales, and a bag of deceptive weights?" The rhetorical question expects an answer, "No, I do not," and has been translated as a declarative statement for clarity and emphasis.

sn Merchants also used rigged scales and deceptive weights to cheat their customers. See the note at Amos 8:5.

¹³ **tn** Heb "because her rich are full of violence."

¹⁴ **tn** Heb "speak lies."

¹⁵ **tn** Heb "and their tongue is deceptive in their mouth."

6:13 I will strike you brutally¹⁶
and destroy you because of your sin.

6:14 You will eat, but not be satisfied.
Even if you have the strength¹⁷ to over-
take some prey,¹⁸

you will not be able to carry it away;¹⁹
if you do happen to carry away some-
thing,

I will deliver it over to the sword.

6:15 You will plant crops, but will not
harvest them;
you will squeeze oil from the olives,²⁰
but you will have no oil to rub on your
bodies;²¹

you will squeeze juice from the grapes,
but you will have no wine to drink.²²

6:16 You implement the regulations of
Omri,
and all the practices of Ahab's dynasty;²³
you follow their policies.²⁴

Therefore I will make you an appalling
sight,²⁵

the city's²⁶ inhabitants will be taunted
derisively,²⁷

and nations will mock all of you."²⁸

¹⁶ **tn** Heb "and also I, I will make you sick, striking you."

¹⁷ **tc** The first Hebrew term in the line (וְיִשְׁחַקְחָהּ, *yeshkhakha*) is obscure. HALOT 446 s.v. יִשְׁחַק understands a noun meaning "filth," which would yield the translation, "and your filth is inside you." The translation assumes an emendation to וְיִשְׁחַקְחָהּ (*yeshh-khakh*, "and [if] there is strength inside you").

¹⁸ **tn** The meaning of the Hebrew term וְיִשְׁחַקְחָהּ (*yeshkhakha*) is unclear. The translation assumes it is a Hiphil imperfect from וְיִשְׁחַקְחָהּ (*nasag/nasag*, "reach; overtake") and that hunting imagery is employed. (Note the reference to hunger in the first line of the verse.) See D. R. Hillers, *Micah* (Hermeneia), 80.

¹⁹ **tn** The Hiphil of פָּלַט (*palat*) is used in Isa 5:29 of an animal carrying its prey to a secure place.

²⁰ **tn** Heb "you will tread olives." Literally treading on olives with one's feet could be harmful and would not supply the necessary pressure to release the oil. See O. Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*, 119. The Hebrew term דָּרַחַךְ (*darakh*) may have an idiomatic sense of "press" here, or perhaps the imagery of the following parallel line (referring to treading grapes) has dictated the word choice.

²¹ **tn** Heb "but you will not rub yourselves with oil."

²² **tn** Heb "and juice, but you will not drink wine." The verb דָּרַחַךְ (*darakh*, "you will tread") must be supplied from the preceding line.

²³ **tn** Heb "the edicts of Omri are kept, and all the deeds of the house of Ahab."

²⁴ **tn** Heb "and you walk in their plans."

sn The Omride dynasty, of which Ahab was the most infamous king, had a reputation for implementing unjust and oppressive measures. See 1 Kgs 21.

²⁵ **tn** The Hebrew term שָׁמָמָה (*shammah*) can refer to "destruction; ruin," or to the reaction it produces in those who witness the destruction.

²⁶ **tn** Heb "her"; the referent (the city) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

²⁷ **tn** Heb "[an object] of hissing," which was a way of taunting someone.

²⁸ **tc** The translation assumes an emendation of the MT's עַמִּי (*ammī*, "my people") to עַמִּים (*ammim*, "nations").

tn Heb "and the reproach of my people you will bear." The second person verb is plural here, in contrast to the singular forms used in vv. 13-15.

Micah Laments Judah's Sin

7:1 I am depressed!¹
 Indeed,² it is as if the summer fruit has
 been gathered,
 and the grapes have been harvested.³
 There is no grape cluster to eat,
 no fresh figs that I crave so much.⁴
 7:2 Faithful men have disappeared⁵ from
 the land;
 there are no godly men left.⁶
 They all wait in ambush so they can shed
 blood;⁷
 they hunt their own brother with a net.⁸
 7:3 They are determined to be experts at
 doing evil;⁹
 government officials and judges take
 bribes,¹⁰
 prominent men make demands,
 and they all do what is necessary to sat-
 isfy them.¹¹
 7:4 The best of them is like a thorn;
 the most godly among them are more
 dangerous than a row of thorn bushes.¹²
 The day you try to avoid by posting
 watchmen –
 your appointed time of punishment – is
 on the way,¹³
 and then you will experience confusion.¹⁴
 7:5 Do not rely on a friend;
 do not trust a companion!

¹ *tn* Heb “woe to me!” In light of the image that follows, perhaps one could translate, “I am disappointed.”

² *tn* Or “for.”

³ *tn* Heb “I am like the gathering of the summer fruit, like the gleanings of the harvest.” Micah is not comparing himself to the harvested fruit. There is an ellipsis here, as the second half of the verse makes clear. The idea is, “I am like [one at the time] the summer fruit is gathered and the grapes are harvested.”

⁴ *tn* Heb “my appetite craves.”

⁵ *tn* Or “have perished”; “have been destroyed.”

⁶ *tn* Heb “and an upright one among men there is not.”

⁷ *tn* Heb “for bloodshed” (so NASB); TEV “for a chance to commit murder.”

⁸ *sn* Micah compares these ungodly people to hunters trying to capture their prey *with a net*.

⁹ *tn* Heb “upon evil [are their] hands to do [it] well.”

¹⁰ *tn* Heb “the official asks – and the judge – for a bribe.”

¹¹ *tn* More literally, “the great one announces what his appetite desires and they weave it together.” Apparently this means that subordinates plot and maneuver to make sure the prominent man’s desires materialize.

¹² *tn* Heb “[the] godly from a row of thorn bushes.” The preposition מִן (*min*) is comparative and the comparative element (perhaps “sharper” is the idea) is omitted. See BDB 582 s.v. 6 and GKC 431 §133.e.

¹³ *tn* Heb “the day of your watchmen, your appointed [time], is coming.” The present translation takes “watchmen” to refer to actual sentries. However, the “watchmen” could refer figuratively to the prophets who had warned Judah of approaching judgment. In this case one could translate, “The day your prophets warned about – your appointed time of punishment – is on the way.”

¹⁴ *tn* Heb “and now will be their confusion.”

Don’t even share secrets with the one
 who lies in your arms!¹⁵

7:6 For a son thinks his father is a fool,
 a daughter challenges¹⁶ her mother,
 and a daughter-in-law her mother-in-law;
 a man’s enemies are his own servants.¹⁷

7:7 But I will keep watching for the LORD;
 I will wait for the God who delivers me.
 My God will hear my lament.¹⁸

Jerusalem Will Be Vindicated

7:8 My enemies,¹⁹ do not gloat²⁰ over me!
 Though I have fallen, I will get up.
 Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be
 my light.²¹

7:9 I must endure²² the LORD’s anger,
 for I have sinned against him.

But then²³ he will defend my cause,²⁴
 and accomplish justice on my behalf.

He will lead me out into the light;
 I will experience firsthand²⁵ his deliver-
 ance.²⁶

7:10 When my enemies see this, they will
 be covered with shame.

They say²⁷ to me, “Where is the LORD
 your God?”

I will gloat over them.²⁸

Then they will be trampled down²⁹
 like mud in the streets.

7:11 It will be a day for rebuilding your
 walls;
 in that day your boundary will be ex-
 tended.³⁰

¹⁵ *tn* Heb “from the one who lies in your arms, guard the doors of your mouth.”

¹⁶ *tn* Heb “rises up against.”

¹⁷ *tn* Heb “the enemies of a man are the men of his house.”

¹⁸ *tn* Heb “me.” In the interest of clarity the nature of the prophet’s cry has been specified as “my lament” in the translation.

¹⁹ *tn* The singular form is understood as collective.

²⁰ *tn* Or “rejoice” (KJV, NAB, NASB, NRSV); NCV “don’t laugh at me.”

²¹ *sn* *Darkness* represents judgment; *light* (also in v. 9) symbolizes deliverance. The LORD is the source of the latter.

²² *tn* Heb “lift, bear.”

²³ *tn* Heb “until.”

²⁴ *tn* Or “plead my case” (NASB and NIV both similar); NRSV “until he takes my side.”

²⁵ *tn* Heb “see.”

²⁶ *tn* Or “justice, vindication.”

²⁷ *tn* Heb “who say.” A new sentence was begun here in the translation for stylistic reasons.

²⁸ *tn* Heb “My eyes will look on them.”

²⁹ *tn* Heb “a trampled-down place.”

³⁰ *sn* Personified Jerusalem declares her confidence in vv. 8-10; in this verse she is assured that she will indeed be vindicated.

A Closing Prayer

7:12 In that day people¹ will come to you² from Assyria as far as³ Egypt, from Egypt as far as the Euphrates River,⁴ from the seacoasts⁵ and the mountains.⁶
 7:13 The earth will become desolate⁷ because of what its inhabitants have done.⁸
 7:14 Shepherd your people with your shepherd's rod,⁹ the flock that belongs to you,¹⁰ the one that lives alone in a thicket, in the midst of a pastureland.¹¹ Allow them to graze in Bashan and Gilead,¹² as they did in the old days.¹³
 7:15 "As in the days when you departed from the land of Egypt, I will show you¹⁴ miraculous deeds."¹⁵
 7:16 Nations will see this and be disappointed by¹⁶ all their strength, they will put their hands over their mouths, and act as if they were deaf.¹⁷

¹ **tn** Heb "they." The referent has been specified as "people," referring either to the nations (coming to God with their tribute) or to the exiles of Israel (returning to the Lord).

² **tn** The masculine pronominal suffix suggests the Lord is addressed. Some emend to a feminine form and take Jerusalem as the addressee.

³ **tc** The MT reads וְעַיִר (v^e *arey*, "and the cities [of Egypt]"), but the parallel line indicates this is a corruption of וְעַד (v^e *ad*, "even to").

⁴ **tn** Heb "the River," referring to the Euphrates River. This has been specified in the translation for clarity (so also NASB, NIV).

⁵ **tn** Heb "and sea from sea." Many prefer to emend this to מִיָּם עַד יָם (*miyyam ad yam*, "from sea to sea").

⁶ **tn** Heb "and mountain of the mountain." Many prefer to emend this to וּמְהַר עַד הָרַר (*umehar ad har*, "and mountain to mountain").

⁷ **tn** Or "will be ruined."

⁸ **tn** Heb "on account of its inhabitants, because of the fruit of their deeds."

⁹ **tn** Or "with your scepter" (the Hebrew term can mean either "rod" or "scepter").

¹⁰ **tn** Heb "the flock of your inheritance."

¹¹ **tn** Or "in the midst of Carmel." The Hebrew term translated "pastureland" may be a place name.

sn The point seems to be that Israel is in a vulnerable position, like sheep in a thicket populated by predators, while rich pastureland (their homeland and God's blessings) is in view.

¹² **sn** The regions of *Bashan* and *Gilead*, located in Transjordan, were noted for their rich grazing lands.

¹³ **tn** Heb "as in the days of antiquity."

¹⁴ **tn** Heb "him." This probably refers to Israel in a collective sense. Because the switch from direct address to the third person is awkward, some prefer to emend the suffix to a second person form. In any case, it is necessary to employ a second person pronoun in the translation to maintain the connection for the English reader.

¹⁵ **sn** I will show you miraculous deeds. In this verse the Lord responds to the petition of v. 14 with a brief promise of deliverance.

¹⁶ **tn** Or "be ashamed of."

¹⁷ **tn** Heb "and their ears will be deaf." Apparently this means the opposing nations will be left dumbfounded by the

7:17 They will lick the dust like a snake, like serpents crawling on the ground.¹⁸ They will come trembling from their strongholds to the Lord our God;¹⁹ they will be terrified²⁰ of you.²¹
 7:18 There is no other God like you!²² You²³ forgive sin and pardon²⁴ the rebellion of those who remain among your people.²⁵ You do not remain angry forever,²⁶ but delight in showing loyal love.
 7:19 You will once again²⁷ have mercy on us; you will conquer²⁸ our evil deeds; you will hurl our²⁹ sins into the depths of the sea.³⁰
 7:20 You will be loyal to Jacob and extend your loyal love to Abraham,³¹ which you promised on oath to our ancestors³² in ancient times.³³

Lord's power. Their inability to respond will make them appear to be deaf mutes.

¹⁸ **tn** Heb "like crawling things on the ground." The parallelism suggests snakes are in view.

¹⁹ **tn** The translation assumes that the phrase אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי ה' (*el-yehovah 'elohenu*, "to the Lord our God") goes with what precedes. Another option is to take the phrase with the following verb, in which case one could translate, "to the Lord our God they will turn in dread."

²⁰ **tn** Heb "they will be in dread and afraid."

²¹ **tn** The Lord is addressed directly using the second person.

²² **tn** Heb "Who is a God like you?" The rhetorical question expects the answer, "No one!"

²³ **tn** Heb "one who." The prayer moves from direct address (second person) in v. 18a to a descriptive (third person) style in vv. 18b-19a and then back to direct address (second person) in vv. 19b-20. Due to considerations of English style and the unfamiliarity of the modern reader with alternation of persons in Hebrew poetry, the entire section has been rendered as direct address (second person) in the translation.

²⁴ **tn** Heb "pass over."

²⁵ **tn** Heb "of the remnant of his inheritance."

²⁶ **tn** Heb "he does not keep hold of his anger forever."

²⁷ **tn** The verb יָשׁוּב (*yashuv*, "he will return") is here used adverbially in relation to the following verb, indicating that the Lord will again show mercy.

²⁸ **tn** Some prefer to read יִכְבֹּס (*yikhbos*, "he will cleanse"; see HALOT 459 s.v. כָּבַס [כּ]). If the MT is taken as it stands, sin is personified as an enemy that the Lord subdues.

²⁹ **tn** Heb "their sins," but the final *mem* (ם) may be enclitic rather than a pronominal suffix. In this case the suffix from the preceding line ("our") may be understood as doing double duty.

³⁰ **sn** In this metaphor the Lord disposes of Israel's sins by throwing them into the waters of the sea (here symbolic of chaos).

³¹ **tn** More literally, "You will extend loyalty to Jacob, and loyal love to Abraham."

³² **tn** Heb "our fathers." The Hebrew term refers here to more distant ancestors, not immediate parents.

³³ **tn** Heb "which you swore [or, "pledged"] to our fathers from days of old."