

Micah 1: "The Lord is Coming!"

Micah of Moresheth (a town 25 miles south of Jerusalem) prophecies over Israel and Judah to a Judean audience during the time of kings Jotham (good), Ahaz (bad) and Hezekiah (very good) (v1) - 750-687BC. Likelihood is, from the structure of the book that he prophecies events to come during Ahaz (bad), Hezekiah (very good) and Manasseh (REALLY bad). During this time, Assyria is the world super power.

Three things define a good or bad king in the book of Kings:

1. Whether the king followed God's law.
2. Whether the king destroyed idols (specifically Baals and Asherim)
3. Whether the king destroyed the high places - places where Yahweh was worshipped outside of the temple in Jerusalem (which was the only right place to make sacrifice).

Read Micah 1 and as you do ask yourself the question - Where is Jesus in this passage? (Scripture points to recreation from a fallen creation therefore all Scripture is salvation history which is only possible through Jesus.)

Q. Where is Jesus in this passage? Is he implied? Is he simply in the name Yahweh (LORD)? "I don't know," is a valid answer!

After the introduction (v1) there is a judgement oracle (vv 2-7). It is written before 722BC when Israel succumbed to the Assyrian army.

Q. How and why is God bringing judgement on Israel ("Jacob")?

Verse 8 onwards is probably some time later - after 722BC but before 701BC. Micah says that the disease that started in Israel is spreading into Judah (v9). This is consistent with the rule of king Ahaz. The passage ends with Micah saying that their children will go into exile (v16). In 586BC they did go into exile (to Babylon).

2 Kings 18 & 19 give us an interpretation of this event. Hezekiah begins to reign in Ahaz's place and Jerusalem comes under siege from Assyria. So Hezekiah humbles himself and goes into the temple to seek Yahweh. He prays for relief from the oppression and the same night an angel kills 185,000 Assyrians!

Q. Look for words in Micah 1:8-16 which hint at a siege coming to Judah.

Q. What did Hezekiah do right that no king of Israel managed to do?

Q. Who was the saviour of Judah? Yahweh or Hezekiah?

The Mosaic covenant required two things, "I will be their God and they will be my people." Deuteronomy 28 describes the blessings and curses for keeping or breaking the covenant. Israel broke the covenant and were removed from the promised land. Hezekiah kept the covenant on behalf of his people and they were allowed to stay (for now). Eventually Micah was correct - not this generation but their children (i.e. another generation) would go into exile.

Q. What are the similarities between Hezekiah and Jesus?

In the same way that the king interceded on behalf of his people so King Jesus intercedes on our behalf (Rom 8:34) so that we don't get the exile from the promised land ("heaven") that we deserve.

Question for the road: Is it ok for God to kill of 185,000 people in one go? Does he do that kind of thing today?