

**GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

**Read the Bible in a Year Challenge**

Week 48

---

<b>Monday</b>	Micah 1	Psalm 119:73-112	Matthew 23
<b>Tuesday</b>	Micah 2	Psalm 119:113-144	Matthew 24
<b>Wednesday</b>	Micah 3	Psalm 119:145-176	Matthew 25
<b>Thursday</b>	Micah 4	Psalm 120	Matthew 26
<b>Friday</b>	Micah 5	Psalm 121	Matthew 27
<b>Saturday</b>	Micah 6	Psalm 122	Matthew 28

**Sunday:** *Enjoy the lessons from Scripture as they are read aloud in Sunday worship. The Bible study summary for each Sunday of the year is found as a separate document on the parish website, under "Adult Education, Bible Study".*

---

**The readings from Micah:**

1. Micah (whose name means "who is like the LORD?"), was the last of the eighth century (B.C.) prophets, came from S.W. Judah, and is thought of, generally, as a prophet of doom (*cf.* Jer. 26.18-19).
  - a. Micah's preaching is concerned with sin and punishment, not with political and cultic matters.
  - b. He is not a "political" prophet.
  - c. He is preoccupied with social justice (*see, e.g.,* 2.9), showing no fear of princes, prophets and priests.
    - i. Micah is very much an "independent" prophet. Little is known of his life, other than when he lived, and that he was from Moresheth, a small village S.W. of Jerusalem.
      1. Micah was explicit in his certainty that he had been called to prophesy by God (3.8).
  - d. Micah's chief concern is with the people's rejection of the LORD, and he expresses anger at the leaders responsible for Jerusalem's impending doom (ch. 3).
2. The theological issues presented by Micah relate principally to the nature of God and the ways in which God relates to humanity. This is also expressed from the perspective of how humanity relate to each other and to God.
  - a. God can be angry and destructive, yet overflowing with pity and compassion, expressing Himself in promises that He will not abandon His people permanently.
    - i. Micah does not avoid the issue of God's anger, as sometimes happens in other prophesies.
  - b. Micah is concerned with what God expects from us. Can humanity be saved by piety and sacrificial practices?
  - c. Calamities and catastrophes are depicted as clearly the result of human behavior, and lack of fidelity to God.

3. The book shows a classical organization in prophecy: oracles of doom followed by oracles of promise.
  - a. Chs 1 and 2 (to v. 11) contain oracles of judgment by God against His people. Not only will Samaria be condemned, but Jerusalem will be judged as well.
    - i. The peoples' crimes are depicted in terms of the social injustice of the leaders.
      1. The accusation becomes a lamentation over Jerusalem and the southern cities (1.8-16).
        - a. Vv. 10-16 contain a number of puns based on the names of the southern cities besieged by Sennacherib (of Assyria). For example, "Beth-le-aphrah" (literally "house of dust") is to roll itself "in the dust" (1.10), with "roll yourself" (Heb.: *hitpallaštī*) being a phonetic pun on the Philistines—the cities are identified as near to the Philistine territory.
  - b. Chs. 2, 3 and 6 are concerned with social injustice. Ch. 2 begins with an oracle of woe against oppressors (2.1-5), followed by an account of the rejection of this prophecy (2.6-11).
    - i. Despite this rejection, a promise that a righteous remnant will be returned is given (2.12-13).
  - c. Ch. 3 focuses on condemnation of the leaders. The addressees are the heads of the twelve tribes, who should know what is right.
    - i. False prophets, however, have led the leaders astray (3.5-7) by telling them what they want to hear.
      1. Those who have no vision will be punished by the removal of sunlight.
      - ii. The oracles are directed, as well, against the priests and prophets (3.9-12).
  - d. Ch. 4 introduces the themes of consolation and messianic hope. This may be a later interjection into Micah, inserted after the return of exiles from Babylon.
    - i. Vv. 1-5 reverse the oracle of doom found at 3.10-12. Zion, Jerusalem, and the Temple are mentioned again.
      1. All nations will now come to Zion, for Zion is the center of the world, as the place where the LORD gives the Law.
        - a. Because of this rule of the Law, a messianic peace will rule the earth. Restoration (4.6-8) will follow after exile (4.9-14).
  - e. Ch. 5 contains the verses best known to most Christians, from the Sunday lessons for The Fourth Sunday in Advent (*cf.* Mtt. 2.5-6). 5.1.-3 prophesy that the Messiah will come from Bethlehem.
    - i. The text includes allusions to the messianic texts of Isa. 7, 9, 11; 2 Sam. 7; and Ps. 89.
      1. The Messiah is portrayed as the idealized king and as shepherd.
      2. The king shall bring peace and deliverance from Assyria (v. 5), with the righteous remnant remaining in the midst of the many nations (peoples) that now come to Zion (vv. 7-8).
        - a. At v. 9 the verbal form shifts to 1<sup>st</sup> p. sing., emphasizing that the LORD is speaking. What is promised is not only deliverance, but destruction of the causes of sin.
  - f. Ch. 6 returns to the themes of chs. 1-3. Three times the people are addressed in the terminology of a lawsuit, with the LORD as plaintiff.
    - i. The lamentation found at 6.3-5 is used on Good Friday.
    - ii. At vv. 6-7 the questions imply that the confession of sin is a necessary precondition. On this basis is the oracle given of what the LORD requires.

- iii. The chapter ends with a dark oracle (vv. 9-16). The text presents problems. In the Masoretic Text (Hebrew O.T.) “sound wisdom” (which may equal “salvation” in this context) precedes the solemn invocation “Hear”. In the *Septuagint* (Greek O.T.) this is “He will save those who fear His Name”.

**The psalms: N.B.** *In The Bible Challenge the Psalter is read twice (once in each half year). We may all be led into new insights, particularly in focusing on praying each psalm (preferably aloud). See the summary for week 1 for a general introduction.*

1. *See the study summaries for weeks 21 and 22.*

**The Gospel according to St. Matthew:**

1. *See the study summaries for weeks 1, 4 and 5 for a discussion of the readings from Matthew.*