

Who speaks where in Micah 1–3? – A brief guide, 2021, Peter Schmidt [Chapters 4–7 undone.]

The third column offers expanded section headings (or annotations) for orienting the reader with regard to speaker, addressee, and type of discourse (genre).

Highlighting: **speech margins (present in Hebrew text)**; **vocatives**; **phrases capturing the thrust of the passage**

Speaker	Addressee	Headings	Text (ESVUS16, without section headings)	Remarks
Micah	reader	Micah presents his book	1 1 The word of the Lord that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.	
Micah	all nations	Micah calls witnesses to a lawsuit and describes the appearing of God	2 Hear, you peoples, all of you; pay attention, O earth, and all that is in it, and let the Lord God be a witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple. 3 For behold, the Lord is coming out of his place, and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth. 4 And the mountains will melt under him, and the valleys will split open, like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place.	On the question whether the nations are witnesses, or are accused themselves, or “you people[s?]” means the Israelites only, see the commentaries.
shift of speaker: now the LORD (at the latest in v. 6)		Micah names the accused parties and prophesies Samaria’s destruction	5 All this is for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem? 6 Therefore I will make Samaria a heap in the open country, a place for planting vineyards, and I will pour down her stones into the valley and uncover her foundations. 7 All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces, all her wages shall be burned with fire, and all her idols I will lay waste, for from the fee of a prostitute she gathered them, and to the fee of a prostitute they shall return.	
Micah	the readers	Micah reacts with a lament	8 For this I will lament and wail; I will go stripped and naked; I will make lamentation like the jackals, and mourning like the ostriches. 9 For her wound is incurable, and it has come to Judah; it has reached to the gate of my people, to Jerusalem.	Handbook on 1:8: “It will usually be necessary to include in a translation some indication of the change of speaker, because otherwise it will sound as though God himself is still talking. . . .”
Micah	towns	Micah utters his lament, addressing the inhabitants of certain towns	10 Tell it not in Gath; weep not at all; in Beth-le-aphrah roll yourselves in the dust. 11 Pass on your way, inhabitants of Shaphir, in nakedness and shame; the inhabitants of Zaanan do not come out; the lamentation of Beth-ezel shall take away from you its standing place. 12 For the inhabitants of Maroth wait anxiously for good,	How to deal with the extensive wordplays is a separate issue.

			<p>because disaster has come down from the Lord to the gate of Jerusalem.</p> <p>13 Harness the steeds to the chariots, inhabitants of Lachish; it was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion, for in you were found the transgressions of Israel.</p> <p>14 Therefore you shall give parting gifts to Moresheth-gath; the houses of Achzib shall be a deceitful thing to the kings of Israel.</p> <p>15 I will again bring a conqueror to you, inhabitants of Mareshah; the glory of Israel shall come to Adullam.</p> <p>16 Make yourselves bald and cut off your hair, for the children of your delight; make yourselves as bald as the eagle, for they shall go from you into exile.</p>	
Micah	powerful abusive people	Micah addresses people in power	<p>2</p> <p>1 Woe to those who devise wickedness and work evil on their beds! When the morning dawns, they perform it, because it is in the power of their hand.</p> <p>2 They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them away; they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.</p>	
the LORD	<p><i>Handbook:</i> “the first line of the Lord’s speech refers to the evildoers as “this family” (RSV), which may be an insulting way of talking about them. ... A possibility in English may be “you gang” or “you crew.””</p>	The Lord announces judgment to them	<p>3 Therefore thus says the Lord: behold, against this family I am devising disaster, from which you cannot remove your necks, and you shall not walk haughtily, for it will be a time of disaster.</p> <p>4 In that day they shall take up a taunt song against you and moan bitterly, and say, “ We are utterly ruined; he changes the portion of my people; how he removes it from me! To an apostate he allots our fields.”</p> <p>5 Therefore you will have none to cast the line by lot in the assembly of the Lord.</p>	<p>This section is a sub-section belonging together with the one above.</p> <p>→ inserted quotation</p> <p>Last line: this is God speaking of himself in 3. person, or a closing comment by Micah, cf. 3:7.</p>
the powerful people who do not want to listen	Micah; then, Micah replies / comments	Micah is rejected; he defends himself and renews his accusation.	<p>6 “Do not preach”— thus they preach — “one should not preach of such things; disgrace will not overtake us.”</p> <p>7 Should this be said, O house of Jacob? Has the Lord grown impatient? Are these his deeds? Do not my words do good to him who walks uprightly?</p> <p>8 But lately my people have risen up as an enemy; you strip the rich robe from those who pass by trustingly with no thought of war.</p> <p>9 The women of my people you drive out from their delightful houses; from their young children you take away my splendor forever.</p> <p>10 Arise and go, for this is no place to rest, because of uncleanness that destroys</p>	<p>VV. 6-7: very difficult. See commentaries. Compare NJPS and NLT for two different ways of dividing up the dialog.</p> <p>V. 10 is ambiguous: It could also be the</p>

			with a grievous destruction. 11 If a man should go about and utter wind and lies, saying, "I will preach to you of wine and strong drink," he would be the preacher for this people!	powerful people chasing away Micah.
the LORD	Israel	The Lord promises to gather his people under his own kingship	12 I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob; I will gather the remnant of Israel; I will set them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture, a noisy multitude of men. 13 He who opens the breach goes up before them; they break through and pass the gate, going out by it. Their king passes on before them, the Lord at their head.	
Micah	Israelite leaders	Micah prophesies that the Lord will withhold his help from the cruel leaders	3 1 And I said: Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know justice?— 2 you who hate the good and love the evil, who tear the skin from off my people and their flesh from off their bones, 3 who eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones in pieces and chop them up like meat in a pot, like flesh in a cauldron. 4 Then they will cry to the Lord, but he will not answer them; he will hide his face from them at that time, because they have made their deeds evil.	<i>Handbook:</i> "The opening words "And I said" (RSV) indicate that this section was probably delivered originally as a sermon." → Then: better "Someday ..." (NJPS, NET08)
the LORD	everybody / pseudo-prophets	The Lord threatens the pseudo-prophets	5 Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who cry "Peace" when they have something to eat, but declare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths. 6 Therefore it shall be night to you, without vision, and darkness to you, without divination. The sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be black over them; 7 the seers shall be disgraced, and the diviners put to shame; they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer from God.	First he talks <i>about</i> the prophets, then he talks to them in 2. person (v. 6: "you") Last line: this is God speaking of himself in 3. person, or a closing comment by Micah, cf. 2:5.
Micah	ditto	Micah affirms his own calling	8 But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.	
Micah	Israelite leaders	Micah prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem due to its leaders' behavior	9 Hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who detest justice and make crooked all that is straight, 10 who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity. 11 Its heads give judgment for a bribe; its priests teach for a price; its prophets practice divination for money; yet they lean on the Lord and say, "Is not the Lord in the midst of us? No disaster shall come upon us." 12 Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height.	→ Vocative almost identical to 3:1. Because this oracle is about Jerusalem (see v. 12), "Israel" cannot be the northern kingdom here. → inserted quotation

Structure of the book of Micah

Smith (WBC, 1984) (p. 8):

Many writers on Micah divide the book into three major sections: 1–3 (judgment); 4–5 (hope); 6–7 (judgment and hope). J. M. P. Smith and George Adam Smith used this system of arrangement. John T. Willis and L. C. Allen have made a strong case for arranging the material into three major divisions (1–2; 3–5; 6–7). F. C. Eiselen in his old but valuable commentary on the Minor Prophets used this outline for the book. In support of this outline we note that chaps. 1, 3, and 6 all begin with the words “Hear ye.” Each of these sections begins with a message of judgment and ends with a note of hope. ... If larger units are present, then the grouping of chaps. 1–2; 3–5; and 6–7 together as three judgment/hope oracles seems to have the most support from the text.

Hoyt (EEC, 2019) (p. 564-565; table simplified and adjusted):

Micah follows a three-cycle pattern of covenant lawsuit, woe, and hope, though the middle section does not contain a woe oracle.

	Oracle	Oracle Type	Introductory Word	
I.	1:2-16	Covenant lawsuit	Hear!	
	2:1-11	Woe	Woe!	
	2:12-13	Hope	I will certainly gather	
II.	3:1-12	Covenant lawsuit (chiasm of three)	Hear!	
	4:1-5:14	Hope Oracle (chiasm of seven + conclusion)	And it was	
III.	6:1-16	Covenant lawsuit	Hear!	
	7:1-6	Woe	Woe!	
	7:7-20	Hope	But I	