

1. God's judgment would come first to the Northern Kingdom (vv. 6-7) and then to the Southern Kingdom. (vv. 9-16)
2. The capital city of the Northern Kingdom (Samaria) would be completely destroyed - even to its foundations. Samaria's ruins can still be seen today.
3. Rather than a populated city, Samaria was turned into a heap of rubble. You can stand on that hill today and see nothing but ruins. (verses 6-7)
4. This prophecy was fulfilled in 722 B.C. when the Assyrian army captured the city after a three-year siege. (2 Kings 17:1-5)
5. Because of the idolatry in Samaria the Lord said He would bring it all to an end by a great destruction of the city.
6. In Baalism, a pagan fertility religion, "sacred" prostitutes were set apart for the "worship" of pagan fertility deities and wages were paid to them as "temple gifts."
7. The "wages/temple gifts" were the gifts the people of Samaria gave to the shrine prostitutes as part of pagan fertility rites.
8. Apparently this practice had spread throughout Samaria. In effect, they were committing spiritual adultery.
9. They had sought out other gods so now God would send them away to lands where foreign gods were worshiped, giving them what they evidently wanted.
10. Notice the phrase "therefore or because of this" at the beginning of verse 8. It refers to the coming Assyrian capture of Samaria. (verses 6-7)
11. Micah also perceives that Judah and Jerusalem will suffer at the hands of Assyria. (verses 9-16)
12. As history has shown, it would happen approximately twenty years later. So - between 1:2-7 and 1:8-16 a period of two decades would occur.
13. Micah's heart (undoubtedly reflecting the heart of God) is broken as he contemplates the fate of Samaria. (v. 8)
14. He is filled with compassion as he considers what will also happen to Judah and Jerusalem. (v. 9)
15. There is another interesting phrase in verse 8 - going "stripped/barefoot." It is a sign of mourning. (2 Sam 15:30)
16. The phrase "naked" here means stripped of one's outer and inner robes and clothed only in a loincloth. (1 Samuel 19:24; Isaiah 20:2-4; John 21:7)

17. His sadness was so great that he howled like a jackal and moaned (or screeched) like an owl.

Note: The mournful, sobbing cry of the jackal is used symbolically of a man lamenting his bitter fate in Job 30:29, where both jackal and owl occur together.
18. The destruction of the city of Samaria began in 722 B.C. under Sargon II. He imported people into the land from various nations he had conquered; and as Jews and Gentiles intermarried, the result was a mixed people group that the Jews despised. Even during Jesus' day, the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. (John 4:1-9)
19. Sargon ruled Assyria from 722-705 B.C. Detail of his reign is known from the inscriptions found at his palace at Khorsabad - built in 717-707 B.C - and from historical texts and letters found at Nineveh and Nimrud.
20. Although he is named only once in the OT (Is. 20:1), his campaigns in Syro-Palestine are of importance in understanding the historical background of the prophecies of Isaiah.
21. Sargon claimed the capture of Samaria, which had been started by his brother Shalmaneser V for 3 years (2 Kings 17:5-6) until his death.
22. It is probable that Sargon completed this operation and hurried back to Assyria to claim the throne as its legal successor.
23. The word "For" in verse 9 introduces the reason for Micah's grief, namely, the implications of Samaria's fall for Judah and Jerusalem.
24. Samaria's "wound" refers to the judgment about to overtake them. That wound is described as "incurable." It will also spread like a cancer to the Southern Kingdom.
25. The wound to Jerusalem came by King Sennacherib of Assyria in 701 B.C. (Isaiah 36:1)
26. The gate of a city was the location of judicial, commercial, and administrative activity. After Sennacherib conquered a lot of Judah, he did reach the gate of Jerusalem, but he did not take the city at that time. (Judah went in to captivity to Babylon in 586 B.C.)
27. Micah describes the ruin of the southern part of Judah by the invading Assyrians in 701 B.C. (Micah 1:10-16; 2 Kings 18:7ff)
28. They swept through the land and took forty-six cities, but they could not take Jerusalem because God protected it.
29. Micah came to his own city, Moresheth, which sounds like a Hebrew word meaning "betrothed"; and brides were given farewell gifts. In other words, the town would no longer belong to Judah but would "leave home" and belong to the invaders.
30. Had the people of Israel and Judah turned to the Lord in repentance and faith, He would have given them victory. Instead, they believed the false prophets, held fast to their idols, and sinned their way right into defeat. (affecting even the children - verse 16)