

A Denunciation of Evil Rulers and False Prophets

Micah 3

Micah 3:1-4 - *“And I said: “Hear now, O heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel: Is it not for you to know justice? ² You who hate good and love evil; who strip the skin from My people, and the flesh from their bones; ³ who also eat the flesh of My people, flay their skin from them, break their bones, and chop them in pieces like meat for the pot, like flesh in the caldron.”*

⁴ Then they will cry to the Lord, but He will not hear them. He will even hide His face from them at that time, because they have been evil in their deeds.”

Background Notes

A simple outline of the prophecy of Micah would be “Three Messages of Judgment and Deliverance.” Message 1 is in chapters 1-2. Message 2 is in chapters 3-5. Message 3 is in chapters 6-7. Notice that each message begins with the exhortation: “Hear”!

Micah 1:2 began the first message – *“Hear, all you peoples! Listen, O earth, and all that is in it! Let the Lord God be a witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple.”*

In Micah 3:1, the beginning of the second message - *“Hear now, O heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know justice?”*

And Micah 6:1, the beginning of the third message – *“Hear now what the Lord says: Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice.”*

Each sermon in Micah’s prophecy begins with an exhortation to “hear,” and each message consists of judgment and deliverance. In the first message, the judgment is covered in all of chapter 1 and most of chapter 2. Remember, chapter 1 predicted the fall of Samaria and the northern kingdom of Israel, and the fall of Jerusalem and the southern kingdom of Judah. That’s the judgment part of the message. The deliverance part of the first message came in the last two verses of chapter 2.

Now, in the second message, the judgment is covered in chapter 3 and the deliverance is covered in chapters 4 and 5. Let’s look at the judgment part of Micah’s second message in Micah 3.

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord will not answer those who practice evil.

Verses 1-4 are a denunciation of the leaders and rulers of Judah for their evil practices. Verses 2 and 3 provide a vivid and shocking figurative description of how they were treating the people: *“You who hate good and love evil; who strip the skin from My people, and the flesh from their bones; who also eat the flesh of My people, flay their skin from them, break their bones, and chop them in pieces like meat for the pot, like flesh in the caldron.”*

The point in verses 2 and 3 is that the rulers didn't care about the people. They were treating the people as they would treat farm animals - like cattle, only to be killed and eaten.

Let me ask you - Have you ever treated a person like an animal? No doubt you'll say, "Of course not!" - but wait a minute. Are you an employer or a boss, and have people who work under you? Have you ever forgotten that they are people with feelings? Have you ever treated them like parts of a profit-making machine? Or like farm animals? If we have ever done so, we're as guilty as the rulers of Israel who were treating their people like animals.

Have you ever been a camp counselor or a teacher? How did you treat the children under you? Did you care for them and look out for their needs - or did you manipulate them, or yell at them and because they got on your nerves? The Lord will not answer those who practice evil. *“Then they will cry to the Lord, but He will not hear them. He will even hide His face from them at that time, because they have been evil in their deeds” (v4).*

When these rulers cried out to the Lord in their hour of need, the Lord would not hear them. The Lord “hid His face” in sorrow and righteous judgment when He allowed the Babylonians to invade and conquer the kingdom of Judah for her sins.

Is it possible that the Lord is not answering your prayers? How are you treating other people - people in your family, in your fellowship, or those who work for you? Do you care about them? Are you concerned for their welfare? The Lord will not answer those who practice evil.

2. The Lord will not guide those who proclaim falsehood.

Micah 3:5-8 - *“Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who make my people stray; who chant “Peace” while they chew with their teeth, but who prepare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths.*

⁶ *“Therefore you shall have night without vision, and you shall have darkness without divination; the sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be dark for them.*

⁷ *So the seers shall be ashamed, and the diviners abashed. Indeed they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer from God.”*

⁸ *But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.*"

The false prophets were denounced in verses 5-7. They didn't preach the truth. They preached for money, so they preached what the people wanted to hear - what the people were willing to pay for! They proclaimed peace to those who fed them and paid them - but they proclaimed war to those who didn't feed them or reward them! *"Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who make my people stray; who chant "Peace" while they chew with their teeth, but who prepare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths" (v5).*

They were like many preachers today who preach only what people want to hear – sometimes even falsehood! Therefore, says the Lord (v6-7), it will be night for these false prophets. They will have no vision or light or guidance. They will be ashamed, because there will be no answer from God. They will be like the blind leading the blind.

The same is true today. The blind lead the blind because of the lies that are being proclaimed. Think of the lie that is being taught today that people are basically good, and as long as you change their environment, people will not sin. What a lie! No wonder modern psychology has failed. The Lord will not guide those who proclaim falsehood.

3. The Lord will not protect those who promote injustice.

Micah 3:9-12 - *"Now hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity, ¹⁰ who build up Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with iniquity.*

¹¹ *Her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money - yet they lean on the Lord, and say, "Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us."*

¹² *Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed like a field. Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest."*

In these verses, all the various leaders in the nation were denounced for their sins of social injustice. The governing authorities were denounced for perverting justice and distorting all that is right (v9-10). Think of our nation, and how the standards for moral decency have been changed and distorted. Pornography, for example, is being displayed as art. Perverted sex is accepted as an alternative lifestyle.

In verse 11, the judges were denounced for taking bribes, and the priests and false prophets were denounced again for being in their jobs just for the money. How applicable all this is for today! Many people are in the ministry just for the money. But the Lord warns us that *"the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10).*

What significant national leader was not mentioned and denounced here, with these other various leaders? King Hezekiah! Good King Hezekiah was not involved in the corruption all around him. Unfortunately, the leaders were not like their king.

Even though there was a revival during King Hezekiah's reign, it was short-lived, and the sins of social injustice continued. The leaders thought that God was still protecting them. *"Yet they lean on the Lord, and say, "Is not the Lord among us?"*

No harm can come upon us” (v11). They thought that God would protect them because His Temple was in their midst. But they were not protected from God’s judgment on their continual sin and rebellion against Him, and God allowed the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar to sweep in and fulfill the prophecy of verse 12: “Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed like a field. Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest.”

In Jeremiah 26:18, right before the destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah quoted this prophecy given by Micah. The Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and the Temple was destroyed in 586BC. Like all sin, the sins of social injustice have serious consequences.

Are you involved in any kind of unjust attitudes, practices or dealings in your home, or your place of work, or your fellowship? The Lord will not overlook this sin, and the Lord will not protect those who promote injustice, whether an individual or a nation.

Practical Application

Don’t have a limited view of what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

In verse 8, Micah said that in contrast to the false prophets, *“I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.”*

Micah was filled with the Spirit of God, and he preached with righteous power! He was filled with the Spirit, and he spoke out against the sin and injustice in the nation.

Some Christians have the idea that “being filled with the Spirit” merely means an ecstatic spiritual experience or a dramatic display of some spiritual gift. Listen! That’s a very limited view of what the Bible teaches about what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

Micah 3 teaches that the Spirit-filled believer speaks out against sin with righteous power.

Ephesians 5 says that the Spirit-filled believer is one who rejoices in the Lord, and is thankful for all things. It says that a Spirit-filled believer will submit to the authority structures in the home and in the church.

Are you a Spirit-filled believer? Can you say that the fruits of God the Holy Spirit increasingly characterize your everyday life?

Don’t have a limited view of what it means to be filled with the Spirit!