

**Delivering Bad News God's Way
And About Those Who Love Being Evil...
Micah 1:8 – 2:13**

Scripture quotations are taken from the following translations:

ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

**Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible® (NASB),
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973,
1975, 1977, 1995, 2020 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission. www.Lockman.org**

Scripture quoted by permission. Quotations designated (NET) are from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996, 2019 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://netbible.com> All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

The Good News Translation Bible (GNB) text used in this product is being used by permission. Copyright © American Bible Society, 1966, 1971, 1976, 1992

Scripture taken from the Holy Bible: International Standard Version® Release 2.0. (ISV) Copyright © 1996–2011 by the ISV Foundation. Used by permission of Davidson Press, LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED INTERNATIONALLY

Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible (NRSV), Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and are used by permission. All rights reserved

**Scripture taken from the New King James Version (NKJV).
Copyright 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.**

The primary issue being addressed by Micah in his first message is the apostasy of both Kingdoms, the North and the South. He has made a passing reference to Judah but begins by pronouncing judgement for Samaria, the capital of Israel. "The cancer is to be cut out at the source. The magnificent city set upon a hill amid a green valley, to Isaiah's perceptive eye looking like an ephemeral garland on the head of a carouser (Isa. 28:1–4), is to become a ruined tell, a sad memorial to bygone splendor. Its slopes are to lose their urban character and be cultivated as vine terraces.

Nothing less than the eradication of the capital is worthy punishment for its crimes against God." (Allen 1976, 272-273)

After stating that in verse 7, Micah reflects on what is to take place. He will talk about Jerusalem again, a place that he has already accused of being the "high place" of Judah. The place of worship of false gods. But first, we see the true heart of Micah reflecting for us what our heart should be as we study prophecy.

Jonah is not our model.

Micah 1:8–9

"Because of this I must mourn and wail, I must go barefoot and naked; I must do mourning like the jackals, And a mourning like the ostriches. For her wound is incurable, For it has come to Judah; It has reached the gate of my people, Even to Jerusalem." (NASB 2020)

Micah reflects the heart of YAHWEH as he pauses in the delivery of the prophecy regarding the Northern Kingdom. His heart is soft and speaks even to us living in these last days. We are now seeing prophecy being fulfilled around us so how should we tell others?

Being fascinated with prophecy is a good thing. We must study it.

I am personally excited for the soon return of Jesus Christ for His church. But what is our reaction when we read that not everyone gets to go. Billions will be left behind and things are not going to be better than they are now, not at all. It will be a horrible time to have to live through, and not everyone will survive it, most will not.

Prophecy should not titillate us intellectually or fire us up patriotically. Prophecy should break us emotionally. Micah was a godly man. When he heard about judgment, he wailed; he wept; he was broken. May the Lord begin to work that kind of heart into us. (Courson 2006, 829)

The message Micah is giving affects him, a lot. The result of what he has just said has driven him to mourning and wailing on behalf of Israel and Judah. When the Lord chooses to use us to communicate His word to others, do we do a Jonah and show no love at all as we communicate our spin on “turn or burn;” or is our heart reflective of our Lord’s heart towards the lost?

I have always had concern about yellers. You know who a yeller is, right? They are usually traveling revival preachers who call down fire and brimstone on the lost while yelling at the top of their lungs. The key is how to balance that show of anger with the heart of God.

We struggle with the wrath of God, His anger about sin versus His love for us. Micah reflects God’s aggressive love for His people, the Jews, as well as His desire to see them come to their senses and repent. His desire is to see faithfulness on the part of His own.

I think of Jonathan Edwards preaching his sermon in 1741, **Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God** and after seeing the title only, believe that God must be angry with me. I was led to believe that by more than one yeller who failed to reflect His mercy and His grace. God is not angry with us. It is simply not true. But He is angry at our sin and what that produces.

The message of the sermon can be summarized: “It is only the mercy of God that keeps people from falling into hell, and God is free to withdraw that mercy at any moment.” In *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, Jonathan Edwards used vivid illustrations of hell and the perilousness of life in order to force people to consider the reality of their eternal destiny and to invoke a decision to receive Jesus Christ as Savior. (Got Questions Ministries 2014-2021)

Ken Campbell talks about this.

Is God Angry With Us, Or Sin and Its Results?

“Romans 1:18 tells us clearly that God is angry with the wickedness and corruption of mankind. Psalm 7:11 goes further and says that God is angry with the wicked every day. Moses told the Israelites after they made the golden calf that the Lord was angry enough to destroy them (Deuteronomy 9:19).” But He didn’t, extending grace.

“1 Kings 16:13 informs us that God is provoked to anger by worthless idols. Since God is jealous of His holy name and has a jealous love for His people, idolatry especially arouses His anger, which leads Him to vindicate His righteous nature by punishing the wicked.” But even Nineveh received grace.

“God hates sin and evil and must punish and destroy it. Judgment day is called the ‘day of God’s wrath’, because He will finally and completely pour out His anger on the devil and all evil.

Thankfully, when God expresses His anger to mankind in history, His anger is temporary and modified by mercy.”

Romans 5:6–9. “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.” (ESV)

“Do not confuse the discipline that the Lord metes out to us from time to time as arising from His anger; rather such discipline is the expression of His passionate love to us, a love that is determined to mold us in the image of His Son, a love that uses both blessings and discipline to achieve that goal.” (Campbell 1996, 52-53)

Jesus knew all about our sin problem when He went to the cross. It was His love for us that kept Him nailed to it as He achieved everything for us.

But here is the key, **God’s grace**. His grace reflects His loving care for us and His desire to not see any lost. **Grace is God’s riches at Christ’s expense**. “The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, **not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.**” (2 Peter 3:9, NRSV)

Micah is delivering a harsh message reflecting a reality he has seen. What we see in the heart of Micah is the heart of the man or woman that God chooses to use and deliver such a harsh message.

The message of Micah is harsh, there is no getting away from that.

In fact, God, the most loving person in the Bible, is also the angriest person in the Bible...The wrath of God in the Bible reveals not cruelty but humility. He’s willing to get involved. We matter to him. The Bible says, “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16). It never says, “God is anger.” But it couldn’t say that God is love without his anger. (Ortlund Jr. and Hughes 2005, 101-102)

“What is the wrath of God? His wrath is his active, resolute opposition to all evil. His delight is spontaneous and intrinsic to his being, but his wrath is provoked by the defiance of his creatures. His love will never make peace with our evil. What we must understand is that God’s wrath is perfect, no less perfect than “the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience” (Romans 2:4). His wrath is not moody vindictiveness; it is the solemn determination of a doctor cutting away the cancer that’s killing his patient. And for God, the anger is personal, not detached and clinical. This Doctor hates the cancer, because he loves the carriers of the disease and he will rid the universe of all their afflictions.” (Ortlund Jr. and Hughes 2005, 102)

To deliver this kind of message, then as well as now, the Lord wants someone “with a tender heart if the message is to be harsh. Why? Because before God judges a people, He wants them to know how He feels; so He sent the weeping prophet Jeremiah and then this weeping prophet Micah. When the people listen to his message, then to his mourning and wailing, they understand how God feels about their sin. God is not vindictive. Although He takes no delight in judgment, He must judge sin.” (McGee 1997, 773-774)

Micah 1:8

“Because of this I must mourn and wail, I must go barefoot and naked; I must do mourning like the jackals, And a mourning like the ostriches.” (NASB 2020)

Remember, he has seen the future. He knows what is coming and he knows the impact it will have on Judah and Israel. His mourning is over Israel, but he will expand to discuss Judah as well. Disaster that is taking place in Israel, will deeply impact Judah, there is simply no getting away from it. Refugees will start pouring in as the Assyrian army approaches and then will come the survivors.

Micah has seen what is coming. He knows the scope as well as the impact to both nations.

Micah's grief "lies in the hopelessness of Samaria's outlook and in the fact that the calamity will include his own city, Jerusalem." (Powis Smith, Ward and Bewer 1911, 38)

He is already looking 20 years into the future where he has been and seen what is coming.

We forget that some prophets may have been time travelers.

Going "barefoot" is a sign of mourning in 2 Sam 15:30. "Naked" here means stripped of one's outer and inner robes and so clothed only in a loincloth (1 Sam 19:24; Isa 20:2-4; cf. John 21:7). Micah, like Isaiah, may actually have walked barefoot through Jerusalem while wearing only a loincloth. His sadness was so great that he howled like a jackal and moaned (or screeched) like an owl. (Barker 1999, 54-55)

I think that view is a bit overly conservative. In other words, I believe it some takes liberty with the text. To me, nekkid means nekkid.

Isaiah had a similar message and a similar behavior in Isaiah 20:1-6. Isaiah was identifying with the captives of the Assyrian military, who would not even be allowed a loin cloth. It is entirely possible that Micah is doing the same and walking through Jerusalem naked like a POW would be. This act conveys the implications to Jerusalem of the impending fall of Israel.

How bad are the conditions leading to the judgement? In his mourning, Micah lets it be known not only how bad, but the infectious nature of the disease being cut out of the nation.

Micah 1:9

"For her wound is incurable, For it has come to Judah; It has reached the gate of my people, Even to Jerusalem." (NASB 2020)

Micah has now moved to prophesy those events to take place during the rule of Hezekiah after the fall of Israel. From history, we know that "Sennacherib attacked Philistia and Judah in 701 B.C. He advanced along the Phoenician coast, dethroned the king of Tyre, dealt the Egyptian army a severe blow in the Valley of Eltekeh in the Sorek River area, accepted the surrender of Ashkelon and Ekron, and headed for his great encounter with the Judean city of Lachish. So significant and so thorough was his conquest of the great city of Lachish that he celebrated by having huge murals drawn on his palace walls in Nineveh (now housed in the British Museum). (Kaiser and Ogilvie 1992, 34-35)

Jerusalem is the center, the gate to Micah's people. That is the ultimate target of the Assyrian military as they move through Judah.

Micah outlines the cities surrounding Jerusalem that will not escape from the Assyrians. As he does this, he uses wordplay. "For Westerners, this is a clever text because it abounds with wordplays and puns that could be conceived as "comic relief" by "a man of letters." But for the ancient Israelite who linked names and destinies, this was ominous." (Dempster 2017, 67)

Micah 1:10-15

"Do not tell it in Gath, Do not weep at all. At **Beth-le-aphrah** roll yourself in the dust in mourning. Go on your way, inhabitant of **Shaphir**, in shameful nakedness. The inhabitant of **Zaan**an does not escape. The mourning of **Beth-ezel**: "He will take from you its support." For the inhabitant of **Maroth** Waits for something good, Because a disaster has come down from the LORD To the gate of **Jerusalem**. Harness the chariot to the team of horses, You inhabitant of **Lachish**— She was the beginning of sin To the daughter of Zion— Because in you were found The rebellious acts of Israel. Therefore you will give parting gifts In behalf of **Moresbeth-gath**; The houses of **Achzib** will become a deception To the kings of Israel. Moreover, I will bring on you The one who takes possession, You inhabitant of **Mareshah**. The glory of Israel will enter **Adullam**." (NASB 2020)

Each city name has a meaning and the list is quite specific. “The entire list occupies a quadrant to the south-west of Jerusalem, and includes Micah’s home town. At least four are fortified cities in the system of defences erected to protect Judah from attack from the direction of the coastal plain.” The list are those cities that will fall to Assyria. (Mays 1976, 53)

The city list also tells a story as well. The language in the Hebrew here feels more like the stream of consciousness coming from the pen of someone witnessing disaster and simply placing his thoughts down as they come to him. Like the notes of a reporter.

Hysterical grief we have already seen, now we are given, by Micah, a view of the why. He has seen for himself the death and destruction to be done by the Assyrian military soon and it has emotionally impacted him.

Some though look at these verses as the ravings of someone on the verge of madness.

First, we do not wish to infer that the prophet was out of his mind, or that he had no self-control. Verses 10–16 are not the ravings of a lunatic. They make a lot of sense, or we think we can make quite a bit of sense out of them, and we think that this is what the prophet intended. Ecstatic utterance has enormous emotional power, and here we have as well a considerable amount of system and structure. (Anderson and Freedman 2008, 247)

Stephen Dempster provides the following from his commentary on Micah.

City Name	Potential Meaning
Gath	In Tell Town don't tell it
Beth-le-aphrah	In the House of Dust, roll in the dust
Shaphir	Leave Beauty Town in nakedness and shame
Zaanan	There is no exit for those of Exit Town
Beth-ezel	The mourning of Neighbor Town means no more neighbors
Maroth	The residents of Bitterville wait for something good
Jerusalem	War from YAHWEH comes to the gate of the City of Peace
Lachish	Harness the chariots to the horses, inhabitants of Harness Town
Moresbeth-Gath	Give parting gifts to the owner of the winepress
Achzib	The House of Deception will deceive the Kings of Israel
Mareshah	I will bring a conqueror to Conquering Town
Adullam	The glory of Israel will flee to the land of caves

This is a wild lament by the prophet as he sees a swath of destruction with Samaria in its wake, stretching over southern Judah and threatening Jerusalem (1:8). If his words are “not the ravings of a lunatic,” they are more like the uncontrolled grief of a person stunned by shock or grief. (Dempster 2017, 68)

The nine towns he mentions ‘comprise a circle of nine miles in radius around Micah’s hometown of Moresbeth-gath and are visible from there’. The message is blunt, the prospect is appalling and the future of Jerusalem as a capital is bleak: ‘Without its satellites Jerusalem would no longer be a capital.’ (Prior 1988, 118)

There is another message here too. The first city referenced was Gath, a city associated with King David. After the death of Saul and Jonathan, David wrote a song of mourning, and the phrase comes from that song.

2 Samuel 1:19–20

“Your glory, O Israel, lies slain upon your high places! How the mighty have fallen! Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon; or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice, the daughters of the uncircumcised will exult.” (NRSV)

The last city referenced, Adullam, also had a part to play in the life of King David. Shortly after escaping from Saul, at the very beginning of his life on the run, David and those with him hid out in the cave of Adullam.

1 Samuel 22:1–2

“David left there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; when his brothers and all his father’s house heard of it, they went down there to him. Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Those who were with him numbered about four hundred.” (NRSV)

This is the future for those who live in the land as the Assyrian army moves through it. They will find themselves just like David, on the run, hiding in caves, and again in the future when the Beast pursues them.

This is being predicted by Micah for the leading figures in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Just as Saul hounded David, so would the Assyrians hound the leadership of Israel.

What is coming is the end of an era. The humbling end to the current Davidic Kingdom. Micah sees that event coming and his city list talks to that. Oh, and Israel is done.

Lachish, a city we have already talked about, was the fortress in Judah. They became the headquarters of military might while Jerusalem was the religious center and the home of the King. Judah took great pride in their military might as well as their alliances with Egypt and others and this continued through the time of Hezekiah, until Lachish fell. Once that happened, the only thing that could save Jerusalem was YAHWEH.

Micah clearly states that disaster will come to the gate of Jerusalem, and it did. But the Assyrians never entered because of Hezekiah and his prayer in Isaiah 37.

Micah 1:16

“Shave yourself bald, yes, cut off your hair, Because of the children of your delight; Extend your baldness like the eagle, For they will go from you into exile.” (NASB 2020)

We started off with Micah overwhelmed by what he had seen and deep into mourning for Israel, but he went on and related what he had seen about the disaster in Israel spreading south into Judah. Now he is telling the people of Judah to mourn. They need to repent, but it is already too late for Israel.

It was certain— “they shall go from you into captivity.” The prophet uses the prophetic perfect tense, indicating that the northern captivity is so certain that it is as good as complete— “they have gone from you into exile” (NRSV). And so they did go into exile in 721 B.C. under Sargon II. But Sargon’s successor Sennacherib came and captured 200,150 Judeans, young and old, male and female, in 701 B.C. (Kaiser and Ogilvie 1992, 37)

Micah is not done with the first message though. He has given a message to Israel and to Judah dealing with what external threats will do to them. But there are internal problems in both Kingdoms that he singles out, those who are busy oppressing their own people.

We have heard this message before about Israel in our study of the Minor Prophets. Some of this will sound familiar as a result.

This is all about the sins of the people against each other. Since that is the case, some of it will also sound like Micah is talking to our culture today as well. He is.

Micah 2:1–2

“Woe to those who devise wrongdoing, Who practice evil on their beds! When morning comes, they do it, Because it is in the power of their hands. They covet fields, so they seize them; And houses, so they take them. They exploit a man and his house, A person and his inheritance.” (NASB 2020)

Micah begins with an indictment against the powerful, the rich, the privileged. They are the ones who threaten both Kingdoms from the inside like a rot that will not go away. They are also the ones who threaten us even today. The recent agenda of the World Economic Forum 2023 points to that.

The fifty-third annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) brought together fifty-two world leaders, seventeen hundred corporate executives, sundry artists, and other personalities to address “Cooperation in a Fragmented World.” Fragmentation is the nemesis of the World Economic Forum and its United Nations (UN) and corporate partners. “Fragmentation” means that segments of the world population are not adhering to the agenda of climate change catastrophism and the precepts of the Great Reset. (Rectenwald 2023)

Has anything changed since Micah wrote these words down? Not really. Again, speaking about the recent WEF meeting at Davos, the opinion of their agenda is as follows.

“In short, with the Davos agenda, we are confronted with a concerted, coordinated campaign to dismantle the productive capabilities in energy, manufacturing, and farming. This project, driven by elites and accruing to their benefit, is amounting to the largest Great Leap Backward in recorded history.

If it is not stopped and reversed, it will lead to economic disaster, including dramatically reduced consumption and living standards. And it will almost certainly result in more hunger in the developed world and famines in the developing world.” (Rectenwald 2023)

Here in Micah, the same situation is being dealt with. The rich and powerful do things to take advantage of others. Why? Because they can. They say they are Jews, but they are not believers because they are not right with God. Love my neighbor? No, their saying would be the same we see today, I love me first.

The first part of the indictment stresses the deliberate, intentional nature of the crimes committed by the powerful. They lie awake and scheme, and eagerly carry out their plots when morning breaks. They do this because they can; they are conscious of their power and use it. (Hillers 1984, 33)

This group of people loves themselves to the exclusion of all others. This is not Biblical at all but comes from the enemy.

“The difference between the love of self in the Bible and the emphasis on self-esteem and self-acceptance in popular psychological literature today is significant. Biblical love is not selfish or egocentric. It does not encourage the philosophy of self-indulgence, the primacy of the individual, and the enhancement of self-esteem. The biblical love of self is based on an awareness of God’s love for his creation and an acceptance that we were created in his image. If God loves us, then we in turn must honor that love, first by taking care of ourselves by repenting and finding forgiveness of sin in Christ and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38–39).

The highest expression of a godly self-love is found in accepting the love of God and being obedient to his will. An immediate expression of this type of self-love will be a desire to love and serve others. The

sacrificial love of God in Jesus Christ gives us the preeminent example and the model to follow.” (Jones 2006, 65-66)

For those being addressed by Micah, their self-centered love for self results in coveting what others have.

Micah 2:2

“They covet fields, so they seize them; And houses, so they take them. They exploit a man and his house, A person and his inheritance.” (NASB 2020)

Coveting strikes right at the heart of man’s spiritual malady and unethical behavior toward another person’s property. (Waltke 2007, 95)

A careful study of the Big Ten will show that coveting is the starting point leading to everything else in the list.

For these fine folks Micah is addressing, they desire someone's property, so they simply take it. This is the same behavior discussed in Hosea. These are covenant breaking sins.

Exploitation is the name of the game, and the language implies this is a group of people who do all they can, using the law as a cover, to take what they want for themselves.

Legalized, governmentally approved theft. Just like what we see taking place today. For example, California now wants to tax residents even after they have already left the state (CA AB259).

These people were defrauding the people of the covenant blessings. By taking the people’s land and houses, they were taking away from the people what Yahweh had given them (cf. Deut 4:38; 26:1). (Hoyt 2018, 632)

These were not people who were following the law regarding requirements of the Sabbatical Year or the Jubilee Year.

The Lord intends to deal with these folks.

Micah 2:3–5

“Therefore this is what the LORD says: “Behold, I am planning against this family a catastrophe From which you cannot remove your necks; And you will not walk haughtily, For it will be an evil time. On that day they will take up against you a song of mocking And utter a song of mourning and say, ‘We are completely destroyed! He exchanges the share of my people; How He removes it from me! To the apostate He apports our fields.’ Therefore you will have no one applying a measuring line For you by lot in the assembly of the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

Micah relates that the Lord is the one planning judgement on this very generation, the one he is addressing. God is about to treat them as they have treated those they have defrauded. They had plotted and schemed to steal land and defraud their own people, so God has His own plans. They are about to reap what they sowed, literally.

What goes around, comes around.

All that land, all the possessions they have acquired, will be taken by the Assyrian military. The violence they used to obtain, will be used against them when it is taken. They cannot mitigate this or remove this.

Not only is calamity coming, but their punishment will weigh on their necks, and they will be unable to escape it. This alludes to the idea of a yoke placed on the neck of animals. This judgment comes straight from the curses for breaking the covenant. (Hoyt 2018, 635)

Just as Amos said it would be an evil time (Amos 5:13), Micah reflects the same wording. Judgement is inevitable without repentance.

After the Lord informs them what is coming, Micah points out the song that will hit the top 10 mocking them for being victimized by a predicament of their own making. The rich and powerful will cease to be and they will be the object of derision in song.

Using terms that come from the law dealing with the year of Jubilee, the song makes it clear to the rich and powerful that when they return from exile, the land taken from them, will not be returned to them or their families.

Every fifty years in Israel was a year of jubilee. In this year all land was returned to those families to whom it had originally been entrusted. When the reallocation took place each family who had a claim on any part of the land would be able to send a representative to the assembly. However, the Lord said that these particular rich, greedy men would have no one to represent them in the assembly of the Lord (2:5). Presumably the Lord would ban them from this important ceremony. (Bentley 1994, 35)

Not only did the rich oppress their own people. They used the law to their advantage and made it look like God was behind all their actions. To make this look good, they had their own prophets for hire. We now hear from the Prophets for hire as they comment on the word coming from Micah, the true prophet of God. They have rejected the word he gave in Micah 2:1-5.

The false prophets speak up and provide guidance to Micah about what he should say rather than what he is saying. Stick to spiritual matters and stop dragging marketplace issues into the discussion.

Micah 2:6

“Do not prophesy,’ so they prophesy. But if they do not prophesy about these things, Insults will not be turned back.” (NASB 2020)

We can assume that Micah reports this incident because the ban was aimed at him. Yet the verbs are plural, prophets versus prophets. Micah is seen as one of many, sees himself as one of many, in a line, if not in a group. (Anderson and Freedman 2008, 306)

This is the same thing we hear today. The culture invites us to say nothing in public and wishes to relegate us to Christian ghettos (Churches) where we can be controlled. “They reckoned that preaching should not tackle issues of daily behaviour and business ethics. Preachers should concentrate on spiritual matters and not interfere in marketplace issues. They should talk about worship, prayer and a personal relationship with God, not fraud and corruption. Still worse was Micah’s language about imminent disaster—Disgrace will not overtake us. It was arrogant, insensitive and farcical to talk about divine judgment on legitimate business activity. The way they chose to operate in the marketplace was their own affair, not the prophet’s. What did he know, let alone understand, about property and finance? (Prior 1988, 130-131)

The issues Micah is talking to are very much the same issues we see around us today. Truth is no longer desired, and the culture has redefined Christianity. Per several senior elected officials, abortion is the Christian thing to do.

Cultural forms of Christianity have been largely dechristianized and tamed, and nominal Christianity is fast disappearing. There is no social capital to be gained by joining a congregation defined by biblical truth. To the contrary, such membership will now destroy social capital. Liberal Protestantism is the quintessence of cultural Christianity, and the culture prevailed over Christianity long ago. Are evangelicals and other conservative Christians in the United States prepared to be considered enemies of the regime? (Mohler Jr. 2020, xv-xvi)

Many of those with Micah's job description became enemies of the state. They were actively hunted down in Israel and would suffer the same fate later in Judah. At this point, there was still some support within the priesthood as well as the administration. Micah had a response for these false prophets who had sided with their benefactors over the truth of God's word. "Micah didn't give up, even though results were slow in coming. Micah preached for anywhere between 16 and 25 years before there was any response." (Guzik 2001, Mic 2:6-9)

Micah 2:7-8

““Is it being said, house of Jacob: ‘Is the Spirit of the LORD impatient? Are these His works?’ Do My words not do good For the one walking rightly? Recently My people have arisen as an enemy— You strip the robe off the garment From unsuspecting passers-by, From those returned from war.”” (NASB 2020)

Micah shoots off four questions to the false prophets in the employ of the rich. The first question asks about the validity of the following three questions. Is it true that people are saying? Micah then follows with the rhetorical questions.

“Is the Spirit of the Lord impatient?” The assumption was, God loved His people and He had not judged them yet, so what Micah is saying couldn't possibly be true since God is longsuffering. No, He isn't impatient, time is simply up unless repentance occurs.

“Are these His works?” Again, the consensus of the false prophets was that God is long suffering, surely this impending judgment could not be His work since we are His people. Our benefactors are only making better provision for the people; by combining properties and farms, they become more efficient. But the law did not see it that way.

“Do My words not do good for the one walking rightly?” So for the individual who is following YAHWEH and faithful to Him, is what I am saying accusing him or defending him. It defends him and does good for him as it condemns what your benefactors are doing to him. “Micah insists that his words “do good.” But only to the upright, or the one who walks with the upright. He then goes on the attack, showing that his hearers do not meet this requirement because they are guilty of terrible atrocities committed against my people (v 9a).” (Anderson and Freedman 2008, 308)

Micah 2:8-9

“Recently My people have arisen as an enemy— You strip the robe off the garment From unsuspecting passers-by, From those returned from war. You evict the women of My people, Each one from her pleasant house. From her children you take My splendor forever.” (NASB 2020)

In the estimation of the LORD, the people had actually risen up like an enemy against Him. Many of them had become hostile, violent thieves who assaulted those who simply passed by (v. 8). They stole people's fashionable clothing and other valuables. (Leadership Ministries Worldwide 2008, 265)

By coveting what belonged to others, the rich and powerful had moved from simply wanting more land and more goods to the act of taking it. It didn't matter who or where their victims were.

No place in the land was safe anymore. They would attack in the marketplace or even in the Temple grounds, no place was safe because the coveting had turned into the acquisition of stuff.

The rich had no problem stealing homes and property from widows. They also had no issue with taking away property from the young before they could fully inherit and enjoy what was theirs.

People who act this way deserve to be removed from the land.

Micah 2:10–11

“Arise and go, For this is no place of rest Because of the uncleanness that brings on destruction, A painful destruction. If someone walking after wind and falsehood Had lied and said, ‘I will prophesy to you about wine and liquor,’ He would become a prophet to this people.” (NASB 2020)

They are doing all they can to provide for themselves at the cost of others and provide a place of rest, but the promise is simple, no rest will be available for them.

Micah, “having overthrown in vv. 7–9 the objection to his threatening prophecies, by pointing to the sins of the people, now repeats the announcement of punishment, and that in the form of a summons to go out of the land into captivity, because the land cannot bear the defilement consequent upon such abominations.” (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 302)

And then there is another word for those false prophets who are busy telling you things you want to hear. Twisting the law to appease their payors.

We must remember that this picture is one that has been repeated throughout history and one we see in the culture today. False teaching is rampant.

Here in the west, there are two gospels. The good news that leads us to repentance of sin and eternal life in Jesus Christ; and the other that seeks affirmation of the sinner in their sin and leaves them there in it.

The biblical gospel proclaims that human beings are terribly sinful and that God’s grace is truly amazing. The American gospel proclaims that lost sinners are truly amazing and that any talk of God’s judgment is really terrible. As for God’s grace, it’s like icing on the cake for the sinner—and be assured that the sinner’s cake is already quite beautiful and wonderful. God just wants to add some special ingredients to make it taste even better. (Brown 2021, 40-41)

For the false prophets who are attacking Micah, there is a word from Micah. “The prophets who accuse him of error are guilty of a gross materialism which is scarcely less than his imaginary case. He is lampooning them, but he chooses his words with care. What is their message but airy-fairy nonsense? There is no substance in their fantasies. Their prophesying is a tissue of lies, a travesty of the truth.” (Allen 1976, 298-299)

Micah 2:11

“If someone walking after wind and falsehood Had lied and said, ‘I will prophesy to you about wine and liquor,’ He would become a prophet to this people.” (NASB 2020)

Micah expresses their message as one of prosperity, material blessing, literally, alcohol galore. Micah seeks repentance from his listeners in Judah, in Israel it is already too late. But the false prophets have nothing to do with the need for repentance. They are all about affirming the rich and powerful in their lifestyles. They have no issue with twisting God’s word to ensure their listeners they can have their best life right now.

His rivals were ready enough to repeat such liturgical promises of material blessing meant for the faithful, but neglected to add the underlying conditions or to relate them to spiritual values. And how eager their hearers were to swallow such lies as gospel truth! (Allen 1976, 299)

And we wonder why the prosperity gospel message is so popular today. It is the same message of the false prophets in Judah.

The Bible does indeed make promises to those who are faithful followers of Jesus Christ just as there were promises made to the Hebrews. Repentance, faithfulness, and obedience are referenced in connection with those promises.

But there are those who take scriptures out of context and create the impression that God can be manipulated to give you what you want if you follow their formula and give to their ministry. The differences can be very subtle. Hallmarks of those who teach this is they do not teach the Bible chapter by chapter verse by verse, and they would not encourage anyone listening to them to exercise what Acts 17:11 says.

What makes the prosperity gospel attractive for fallen man is that it seems to place God on his side, while eliminating the hindrance of his sanctity and sovereignty. The god of these evangelists is not the one revealed in the Scriptures, whom we must approach on his terms. Instead, their god is a combination of Aladdin's lamp genie and Psychiatrist Almighty, who can be easily manipulated through offerings and "words of faith." (Michelén 2014)

And this is why Micah is talking about false prophets prophesying about wine. They are speaking to the audience in order to obtain funds from them. They are saying only what the audience wants to hear, Micah is not.

Micah 2:12–13

“I will certainly assemble all of you, Jacob, I will certainly gather the remnant of Israel. I will put them together like sheep in the fold; Like a flock in the midst of its pasture They will be noisy with people. The one who breaks through goes up before them; They break through, pass through the gate, and go out by it. So their king passes on before them, And the LORD at their head.” (NASB 2020)

Some of what the false prophets said was true. Prosperity and wine were indeed promised, if the people were faithful, but the other side of the coin was left out. What happens if you aren't faithful.

Micah's message had been mainly negative: the people needed to repent or they would experience divine chastening. Now Micah reminded his hearers that there were positive blessings ahead for Israel, but they would come later. (Constable 2003, Mic 2:12)

The nation will indeed be brought together. At the time of Micah's ministry, that had not been a reality for over 200 years. But there is a future where they are once again, one. We see two truths here about the future.

The first truth we see here in these two verses is that the Lord will regather and renew His people as their Shepherd. The outlook for the near future is grim, for both nations. There is hope.

The second truth is the Lord Himself will lead His people as King.

Much as a shepherd breaks open or clears the way for his sheep, going before them and leading them out the gate to pastures, so the Lord will remove all obstacles to blessing for His people Israel. (Martin 1985, 1481)

Yet to come, in the Millennium, will come this long-awaited blessing for the nation.

Works Cited

- Allen, Leslie C. 1976. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Anderson, Francis I., and David Noel Freedman. 2008. *Micah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, Anchor Yale Bible*. Vol. 24E. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Barker, Kenneth L. 1999. *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, The New American Commentary*. Vol. 20. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- Bentley, Michael. 1994. *Balancing the Books: Micah and Nahum Simply Explained, Welwyn Commentary Series*. Darlington: Evangelical Press.
- Brown, Michael L. 2021. *Revival or We Die: A Great Awakening is Our Only Hope*. Kindle Edition. Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc.
- Campbell, Ken. 1996. *Those Ugly Emotions: How to Manage Your Emotions*. Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications.
- Constable, Tom. 2003. "Notes on Micah 2022 Edition." In *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible*, by Tom Constable. Galaxie Software.
- Courson, Jon. 2006. *Jon Courson's Application Commentary: Volume Two: Psalms-Malachi*. Vol. 2. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Dempster, Stephen G. 2017. *Micah, The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary*. Edited by J. Gordon McConville and Craig Bartholomew. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Got Questions Ministries. 2014-2021. *Got Questions? Bible Questions Answered*. Vol. 2. Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.
- Guzik, David. 2001. *Micah, David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible*. Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik.
- Hillers, Delbert R. 1984. *Micah: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Micah, Hermeneia-a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*. Edited by Paul D. Hanson and Loren R. Fisher. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press.
- Hoyt, JoAnna M. 2018. *Amos, Jonah, & Micah, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary*. Edited by H. Wayne House and William D. Barrick. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
- Jones, Ian F. 2006. *The Counsel of Heaven on Earth: Foundations for Biblical Christian Counseling*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- Kaiser, Walter C., and Lloyd J. Ogilvie. 1992. *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, The Preacher's Commentary Series*. Vol. 23. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc.
- Keil, Carl Friedrich, and Franz Delitzsch. 1996. *Micah*. Vol. 10, in *Commentary on the Old Testament*, by Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, translated by James Martin. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Leadership Ministries Worldwide. 2008. *Joel-Nahum, The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible*. Chattanooga, TN: Leadership Ministries Worldwide.
- Martin, John A. 1985. *Micah*. Vol. 1, in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, edited by J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- Mays, James Luther. 1976. *Micah: A Commentary, The Old Testament Library*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press.
- McGee, J. Vernon. 1997. *Thru the Bible Commentary*. Electronic Edition. Vol. 3. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Michélen, Sugel. 2014. "Why is the Prosperity Gospel Attractive?" *9 Marks Journal* (January-February, May-June/Summer-Fall).
- Mohler Jr., R. Albert. 2020. *The Gathering Storm: Secularism, Culture, and the Church*. Kindle Edition. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Ortlund Jr., Raymond C., and R. Kent Hughes. 2005. *Isaiah: God Saves Sinners, Preaching the Word*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.
- Powis Smith, J. M., William Hayes Ward, and Julius August Bewer. 1911. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel, International Critical Commentary*. New York, NY: C. Scribner's Sons.
- Prior, David. 1988. *The Message of Joel, Micah and Habakkuk: Listening to the Voice of God, The Bible Speaks Today*. Edited by J. A. Motyer and Derek Tidball. Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press.
- Rectenwald, Michael. 2023. "Mastering the Future: The Megalomaniacal Ambitions of the WEF." *Mises Institute*. January 24. Accessed January 31, 2023. <https://mises.org/wire/mastering-future-megalomaniacal-ambitions-wef>.
- Waltke, Bruce K. 2007. *A Commentary on Micah*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.