

**Soylent Green in the 8th Century BC
Micah Turns to Horror for His Second Message
Micah 3**

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.**

Warning

Some of the examples that Micah uses in his second message are incredibly graphic and violent, intentionally so.

He is trying to get the attention of a group so hardened by sin, that they have reached the point where the only thing that will work to reach them is by contrasting God's grace with absolute horror.

These are YAHWEH's people outwardly, but not inwardly. Terror may be the only way to reach them and there's no guarantee that will work either. Micah will work to give them nightmares though.

In the most gruesome figure, showing both their brutality and their venality, Micah portrays them as tearing the skin off their victims, tearing their flesh off their bones, and eating their flesh, leaving only unpalatable skin and bones. (Waltke 2007, 156)

So, to the question, is there horror in the Bible? Yes, and Micah is one of the authors of it. For all who dislike playing on the emotions in order to obtain decisions for the Lord, I include myself in that group, we need to take note here.

Micah had no problem with doing so.

Spoilers, this message begins with a central theme as it begins, addressed to leadership. The theme is “Israel and Judah rejected the King’s counsel by abusing justice, abandoning mercy, embracing pride, and being motivated by popularity and greed.” (Redmond, Curtis and Fentress 2016, 92)

Rejecting the counsel of the King of the universe, now that has consequences.

We know that “in the societies of Israel and Judah, some of the major leadership structures were of a political and religious nature. In the political arena, the kings and tribal leaders played important roles. In the religious sphere, the most prominent leadership positions were held by the prophets and priests. These leadership positions showed clear evidence of power.” (Wessels 2009, 34)

This is power which, per the first message, has been abused. “Abuse of power often results in acts of violence or emotional exploitation. Power however needs not be negative or experienced as negative, since is a necessary component to achieve something or get things or people in motion. In this regard power is an essential ingredient in a society. Power in the positive and negative sense of the word was prevalent in Israelite and Judean societies through the ages.” (Wessels 2009, 34)

David wielded power in the positive sense most of the time; but failed miserably with the sordid affair involving Bathsheba and her husband, Uriah, whom he had murdered via a war crime while in a combat situation (2 Samuel 11:2 – 12:15).

The Kings in Israel had gone completely to the dark side with Ahab as the poster child for abusive behavior. Meanwhile in Judah, things would go back and forth.

Again, power in both Kingdoms did not solely reside in government, but also in the Prophets and the Priests and ruling elites; the rich and thus, the powerful.

We will see in this message indictments against leadership. Specifically, charges will be made against:

1. The princes as a group (political and economic leadership)
2. The false prophets as a group (religious teachers)
3. The priests, princes, and false prophets, all are guilty (everyone in the pool)

But notice the last grouping has two groups in it who should know better.

Micah starts off with an excursion into horror.

Last time we wrapped up the first message of Micah. Micah concluded his message by jumping to the future and the restoration of the nation with the remnant at the end of the Tribulation and then on into the Millennium.

Now comes the second message and Micah begins by addressing the current administration in both Kingdoms. The message is to the leaders of Jacob making this all-inclusive. As we look at this second message, we will see that it is bad news in the beginning.

3:1 – 5:15 – Message Two

The Removal of Evil Leaders 3:1 – 12

Deliverance of Zion and the Coming King 4:1 – 5:15

Micah 3:1–4

“And I said, “Hear now, you leaders of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel: Is it not for you to know justice? You who hate good and love evil, Who tear off their skin from them And their flesh from their bones, Who eat the flesh of my people, Strip off their skin from them, Smash their bones, And chop them up as for the pot, And as meat in a cauldron!” Then they will cry out to the LORD, But He will not answer them. Instead, He will hide His face from them at that time Because they have practiced evil deeds.” (NASB 2020)

Micah wastes no time in his second message and sets off up front with the familiar command “hear” pointed directly to the leadership. The leaders of Jacob term is inclusive of Judah, but the specific attack here is to “rulers of the house of Israel.” There is debate on this term. Is this applicable to Judah as well, is it only Israel or is it only Judah.

Since there are references further into the message about Zion and Jerusalem (Micah 3:10 – 12), I tend to think this speaks to both. These are the political leaders, princes, rulers and the economically powerful who can force their will by way of the marketplace.

Micah charges “the rulers of Israel with having grossly betrayed the trust reposed in them,—the guardians of justice have become abettors of and participants in crime.” (Povls Smith, Ward and Bewer 1911, 72)

Three charges against the governmental leadership are levied.

1. They are incapable of providing justice
2. They hate good
3. They love evil

Micah does not go into a list of specific crimes but instead attacks the political leadership of Judah and Israel head on. He launches “a salvo against Judah and Israel’s political elites, likening them to cannibals who devour the flesh from people’s bones. This imagery, which is graphic to the extreme, would have resonated with the prophets’ intended audience due to word choices made. While the Hebrew word *pashat*, commonly translated as “flay,” refers to a specific method of butchering that was used in cultic sacrifice (Lev. 1:6), the authors’ audience would have also recognized *pashat* as a common Assyrian terror tactic that was widely advertised to discourage rebellion in occupied areas (Andersen and Friedman, 353). At the time of the resulting invasion, YHWH would answer the ruling elites’ cries with the same silence with which they had responded to their subjects’ cries for justice (3:4).” (Dempsey, et al. 2014, 873)

The leaders would immediately know that Micah is accusing them of being no better than the Assyrians. Ashurbanipal memorialized the Assyrian actions for all to see. “The details of the stone relief are graphic. The naked male captives are lying facedown with their arms and legs spread open and tied separately to one of four stakes; a wooden spacer bar is attached to the ankles with lashed ropes to limit their resisting movements. Assyrian soldiers used knives to peel the skin off these live captives. Should death not ensue immediately, the skinned captives were left to die from bleeding, exposure to the sun, and/or being eaten by wild animals and birds.” (Webb and Oeste 2019, 281)

This became a favorite practice of the Assyrian’s. The various King’s wrote in their annals about the various atrocities they performed.

Ashurnasirpal described his dealings with a certain city he had conquered as follows: “Six hundred of their warriors I put to the sword; 3000 captives I burned with fire; I left not a single one among them alive to serve as a hostage. Kholai, their governor, I captured alive. Their corpses I piled into heaps; their men and maidens I burned in the fire; Khulai, their governor, I flayed and his skin I spread upon the wall of the city of Damdamusa; the city I destroyed, I ravaged, I burned with fire.” (Boyd 1990, 61)

When Micah says the leadership “tear off the skin,” he is using a word that was well known for those who feared the Assyrians. For Assyria, flaying people alive was simply the penalty for armed rebellion. “This practice contributed to the hatred of the Assyrians as overlords (cf. Nahum and Jonah). Here, the practice is used as a simile for the practice of the Israelite elite who oppressed the poor. Flaying alive refers to the slow economic death forced upon the lower classes by twisting judgments in legal decisions.” (Glibrant 1998)

Micah wanted to shock his audience back to reality. They needed to be in their right mind and by comparing them to the Assyrians, he knew they would also be thinking about what might happen to them

if taken by the Assyrians. Was Micah trying to scare the leadership into repentance? Yes, and it would work with Judah who would later, under Hezekiah, see the Assyrian army destroyed by YAHWEH.

There are times where it becomes imperative to have those who are not believers, be able to “see” what is in their future if they continue to reject the Lord. It worked for me. I didn’t want to go to hell, so I came to Christ instead.

It was not a decision based on logic; it was based on fear. My fear of eternal punishment. Micah is working the same angle here. He mentions the Assyrian angle and then brings up cannibalism as well.

Thus the strategy of the prophet is to shock and evoke revulsion. This is a desperate tactic to get his audience to wake up and face reality by facing themselves! (Dempster 2017, 111)

The actions of the governmental rulers is intentionally being contrasted and compared to the worst atrocities conducted by their enemy, the Assyrian army. Then he intentionally goes even further to discuss activities that are normal only in times of siege, starvation and cannibalism. This is in the future for both Kingdoms.

If they continue down the path they are on, he is showing them that they will move from metaphorically devouring their victims, to being forced to do so in real time as the enemy moves in. At the point of becoming cannibals, they seek the Lord, but it is too late for them.

Micah 3:4

“Then they will cry out to the LORD, But He will not answer them. Instead, He will hide His face from them at that time Because they have practiced evil deeds.” (NASB 2020)

This is like having a discussion with those who are treading water around the ark telling Noah that they need to have some more time to make a decision. It was already too late for Israel.

2 Corinthians 6:2

“For God says, “At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you.” Indeed, the “right time” is now. Today is the day of salvation.” (NLT)

None of us know if we even have a tomorrow, the time to make a decision regarding Christ is always – now. The time for Micah’s listeners to repent – now. There is bad news for those who wait too long, they may harden their hearts to the point that repentance is no longer even possible, and God simply stops talking to them. This is what they wanted, false gods, so that is what they are left with.

Micah 3:4

“Then they will cry out to the LORD, But He will not answer them. Instead, He will hide His face from them at that time Because they have practiced evil deeds.” (NASB 2020)

They are already deep into reaping what they had sown, they were deserving of what was happening to them. The time for repentance was over and judgement had begun.

Micah has their attention. “The absence of specific future judgments in this section is part of a very carefully planned rhetorical strategy. This strategy is similar to when someone issues a threat by simply saying “You’ll be sorry!” If said by a person with power to carry out the threat, such a simple statement of future response to their coming action is a powerful rhetorical strategy. Often in such a situation, the soon-to-be-victim does not want to know what will happen; they simply want to find a way to stop it from happening. The same is true here. Great dread would have been instilled in the people by Micah forgoing the description of judgment and merely stating that the leaders will cry out in agony, but Yahweh will not listen or respond. It will be a time of great agony with no relief.” (Hoyt 2018, 675)

When the oppressors cry out, they are not repenting. They are in agony.

Deuteronomy 31:16–18

“And the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them. Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, **and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured.** And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?’ **And I will surely hide my face in that day because of all the evil that they have done, because they have turned to other gods.**” (ESV)

They would spend years hardening their hearts to the point that repentance was no longer possible. When that point is reached, then God has nothing more to say to you. That is the unpardonable sin. Rejecting the Lord to the point that He says, “fine, I will give you what you want. Eternity without Me.” (Luke 23:8 – 9)

The key is in the last part of verse 4, because they practiced evil deeds. This was a lifestyle choice for them, and because of that, there is no relationship. They will cry out, but not based on relationship, based on the pain and suffering though. Yes. James talked about this level of belief in his discussion of faith and works.

James 2:18–20

“But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. **Even the demons believe—and shudder!** Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?” (ESV)

Micah is done for now with the ruling elites of Israel and Judah. The oppression, the sin against their own people is no better than cannibalism in his eyes.

He will draw them back in though before the end of the chapter.

Now he moves onto the false prophets.

Micah 3:5–8

“This is what the LORD says concerning the prophets who lead my people astray: When they have something to bite with their teeth, They cry out, “Peace!” But against him who puts nothing in their mouths They declare holy war. Therefore it will be night for you—without vision, And darkness for you—without divination. The sun will go down on the prophets, And the day will become dark over them. The seers will be put to shame, And the diviners will be ashamed. Indeed, they will all cover their lips Because there is no answer from God. On the other hand, I am filled with power— With the Spirit of the LORD— And with justice and courage To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, And to Israel his sin.” (NASB 2020)

Immediately, as Micah begins, we know that he is talking to false prophets, those whose only intent is to line their pockets while leading people astray. This contrasts with those who are true prophets, who leave the monetary support up to the Lord and are only interested in leading His people in His ways.

I find it interesting that the false prophets of Micah’s day are the false teachers of today (2 Peter 2, Jude). What is it that the false prophets are doing that is contrary to what YAHWEH is saying and leading?

For these Prophets, they are interested in one thing, money. To those who are willing to pay them, they are proclaiming peace, the word is shalom. There is a lot wrapped up in this term.

Shalom is not just peacefulness and calm but prosperity and well-being, wholeness and completeness. When a soldier returned from the front, King David asked him about the shalom of his commander, the shalom of his people, and the shalom of the battle (2 Sam. 11:7). When Christ promised his disciples,

“[Shalom] I leave with you, my [shalom] I give to you” (John 14:27), he had much more in mind than just inner calm. (Tverberg 2018, 259)

While the leadership is about the business of robbing their own people, they ensure that the false prophets are being paid and as a result receive continuing affirmation of blessings of peace and prosperity, just as long as the money keeps flowing to these false prophets. They are affirming the leadership in their sin rather than telling them of their need to repent and enjoy shalom as a result of faithfully following YAHWEH.

This is no different than what we see with false teachers today. Peter did warn us about this.

2 Peter 2:1–3

“But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way, they will bring sudden destruction on themselves. Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of these teachers, the way of truth will be slandered. In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be delayed.” (NLT)

Many of these false teachers have an overabundance of what is needed for their ministry.

Don't get me wrong, the Lord **is the Lord of more than enough**, but the intent is for us to use that to increase ministry to others, loving our neighbors as ourselves and global outreach. In some cases that may indeed mean purchasing a plane or two; as the ministry opportunities increase, so does the need for more tools and varied tools to address that need.

But that is not the case here in Micah or with what Peter is saying. Here, it is simply the aggregation of wealth in order to have more, personally. There is no sharing or giving going on here. This is greed on the part of those who should not be in love with money, pure and simple.

We see this attitude in the words of Jesus to the Laodicean church. The Laodicean Church is a type of the last days church, and we see them around us today.

Revelation 3:15–17

“I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! **You say, ‘I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!’** And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.” (NLT)

There is nothing wrong with being rich, those are all resources given by the Lord to be used for Him. He gives as we grow in faithfulness to Him. But again, for the false prophets, that is not the goal. They proclaim shalom. But...

Isaiah 57:21

“There is no peace (shalom) for the wicked,” says my God.” (NLT)

Isaiah, who ministers during the same time as Micah, makes it clear. There is no shalom for the wicked. The problem is the human heart. If we do not have peace with God, then there is no way we can have peace with anyone else much less ourselves. The solution then and now is the same, repentance.

Romans 5:1

“Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” (NET 2nd ed.)

There is one other thing the false prophets are doing, which again is counter to what the true prophet of God would do. The true prophet delivers God's word faithfully, whether it is good or bad news. But the false prophet, who is in it for the money, simply will not pronounce blessings on those who will not pay to play.

Micah 3:5b

"...But against him who puts nothing in their mouths They declare holy war." (NASB 2020)

The expectation of a prophet was to support the regime, in return, the regime would pay. No pay, then prophesy war on the one not paying.

If the prophet has been paid, then that prophet gives them a positive response (peace), but if the prophet has not been paid, then that prophet pronounces a curse on the people (war). The problem with this behavior is that it cannot be trusted. The greed of the prophet, not God's intentions, controls the message. (Nogalski 2011, 547)

We have a classic example involving King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah.

2 Chronicles 18:4–7

"But Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel, "Inquire first for the word of the LORD." Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, four hundred of them, and said to them, "Shall we go to battle against Ramoth-gilead, or shall I refrain?" They said, "Go up; for God will give it into the hand of the king." But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there no other prophet of the LORD here of whom we may inquire?" The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one other by whom we may inquire of the LORD, Micaiah son of Imlah; but I hate him, for he never prophesies anything favorable about me, but only disaster." Jehoshaphat said, "Let the king not say such a thing." (NRSV)

400 prophets prophesied victory for Ahab, they would, he paid them. But one would not.

2 Chronicles 18:18–22

"Then Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, with all the host of heaven standing to the right and to the left of him. And the LORD said, 'Who will entice King Ahab of Israel, so that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' Then one said one thing, and another said another, until a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, saying, 'I will entice him.' The LORD asked him, 'How?' He replied, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' Then the LORD said, 'You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do it.' So you see, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these your prophets; the LORD has decreed disaster for you." (NRSV)

But what about the conduct of these false prophets, Micah pronounces a judgement from YAHWEH on them that seems ironic.

Micah 3:6–7

"Therefore it will be night for you—without vision, And darkness for you—without divination. The sun will go down on the prophets, And the day will become dark over them. The seers will be put to shame, And the diviners will be ashamed. Indeed, they will all cover their lips Because there is no answer from God." (NASB 2020)

For a prophet to be a prophet of YAHWEH, they have been to the Divine Council, they have seen the council and talked with some of its members. Or the Word of God has had a direct meeting with them. Both require seeing and hearing, but these so-called prophets have never seen or heard a word.

So, God tells them they will lose their vision. They have been using divination, forbidden in the Torah, as a means of obtaining a word from God. He is saying that will no longer work for them, it never really did.

The loss of sight means they never belonged to God in the first place, and He is making that clear. They are and have been in darkness, they cannot see.

Those who make a living by speaking a word supposedly from God, will no longer be able to speak. So what good is a prophet for pay if they have nothing to see and nothing to talk about?

They had sold their souls to wealthy patrons and they were prepared to look anywhere for spiritual light. One of the strange characteristics of those with money and power is the fascination they have for the spiritual—not often directed to the Lord himself (taking God seriously means personal change), but ready to experiment with any source of supernatural guidance, healing or inner strength. (Prior 1988, 142)

We see that with today. Simply look at those who are celebrities and start counting how many believe something other than in Jesus. Now, some have no fear to declare their allegiance openly to Satan such as seen in a recent Grammy awards program.

Micah is not like these false prophets who are pronouncing blessing for a buck and cursing for free. Unless of course you pay them to curse someone else; that they would do.

Micah contrasts himself with these false prophets so it can be clear who is speaking for YAHWEH and who is not. This reminds me of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 23:16–18

“Thus says the LORD of hosts: Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you; they are deluding you. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. They keep saying to those who despise the word of the LORD, “It shall be well with you”; and to all who stubbornly follow their own stubborn hearts, they say, “No calamity shall come upon you.” For who has stood in the council of the LORD so as to see and to hear his word? Who has given heed to his word so as to proclaim it?” (NRSV)

Micah presents his credentials.

Micah 3:8

“On the other hand, I am filled with power— With the Spirit of the LORD— And with justice and courage To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, And to Israel his sin.” (NASB 2020)

Micah is letting the false prophets of Israel and Judah, as well as the false teachers of our day, know what the qualifications are that he has, that they do not. As believers in Jesus Christ, we can claim the same credentials as the Holy Spirit empowers us.

One – he is filled with power because he is filled with the Spirit of YAHWEH. The word power, in Hebrew, is the word כֹּחַ (kōha).

This word mean – “strength, power, of man, of people, of a prophet (the divine force.)” (Koehler, et al. 1994-2000, 468-469)

“This power from the spirit of Yahweh refers to physical strength and the ability to endure great opposition. The idea of a prophet being filled by the spirit is unique to Micah.” (Hoyt 2018, 684) To put this into NT terms -

Romans 8:37–39

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (NKJV)

Micah is secure and empowered with the Holy Spirit for the job he has been called to. Us too.

Secondly – he is set apart from the false prophets by his justice and his strength. For Micah, his being filled with justice flows from the power of the Spirit. (Gignilliat 2019, 140)

Micah is engaged in spiritual warfare with the False Prophets. The False Prophets do not represent YAHWEH, but they do represent the enemy. Satan, fallen divine beings and demons.

Since Micah is engaged here in an acerbic (severe) battle with false prophets, who undoubtedly consecrated war against him, it is proper to look to this meaning in war. The word is often associated, as here, with I AM's victory on behalf of justice (Isa 42:1–4; Ps 89:15–16[14–15]). God's gēbūrâ is celebrated in song (Pss 21:14[13]; 71:18; 145:4). (Waltke 2007, 167)

Micah has victory because he is filled with the Spirit which enables him to achieve justice in what he says and does. He is motivated by the Lord, not cash.

As a true prophet of YAHWEH, Micah will step forward and communicate the word of the Lord no matter what anyone wants to hear. He does not respond to the desires of others; he only serves one. “The false prophets seem to have responded mostly to the requests of those who consulted them to determine I AM's will; true prophets, though uninvited, unasked, and unwelcome, boldly stepped forward to condemn injustices and crimes.” (Waltke 2007, 171)

The third thing that Micah points out; because of the Holy Spirit, because of the power from on high providing justice and victory and the courage to preach what he must, he is fully empowered to tell both kingdoms of their rebellion, the one that will see Assyria take the northern kingdom into exile and cause distress in the south. He will focus on the sin of Israel, the northern kingdom, not the cash he can make from them.

“The empowering Spirit of Yahweh confers on Micah everything the opposing religious leader's lack, all that had made them credible religious authorities in the first place, such as revelations, special knowledge, and insight into the future. They have lost these abilities. Micah, on the other hand, now has what they have lost: the attributes of רוּחַ (ruach) which include the ability to function as a true prophet. This involves insight and sensitivity as to what is right and to the advantage of people in society; also the daring and perseverance that make it possible to address leaders and point out the injustice of their actions.” (Wessels 2009, 42-43)

These are Micah's credentials, ones which the false prophets do not have. “This for Micah is the final proof of his divine mission. Why should he run the gauntlet of society's hostility? And why did Amos court banishment, Jeremiah imprisonment, and Uriah ben Shemaiah death unless they prophesied at God's behest? How much easier it would be for Micah to curry popularity and line his pockets in the process. But it is not for him to choose his message. God's mind at the moment is set against his people's sin, and this man of God can only follow suit.” (Allen 1976, 315)

Micah 3:9–12

“Now hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel, Who despise justice And twist everything that is straight, Who build Zion with bloodshed, And Jerusalem with malice. Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe, Her priests teach for pay, And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD not in our midst? Catastrophe will not come upon us.” Therefore on account of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, And the mountain of the temple will become high places of a forest.” (NASB 2020)

Micah now moves on to address leaders, the false prophets and the priests as a group.

He begins by again addressing both the north and south by using the term house of Jacob. This will move to a word against Israel, but he will also address Judah as well before he is done with this chapter.

The bottom line, using God talk, does not make you a follower of YAHWEH. The same holds for us as we engage in being fruit inspectors (Matthew 7:16, Galatians 5:22 – 25), observing and hearing God talk does not mean the person is a Christian. Fruit does.

First up, the rulers and specific to the rulers in Judah but still also talking to Israel. Again, the command to hear. Because of those things which were previously outlined by Micah for us, summarized here as despising justice and twisting everything, they “build Zion with blood, etc., i.e., obtain the means of erecting splendid buildings by cruel extortions, and partly also by actual judicial murders, as Ahab (1 Kings 21 compared with Mic. 6:16), and after him Jehoiakim, had done (Jer. 22:13–17).” (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 307)

Micah finds fault with their control of the community on moral grounds. They do not share his passionate concern for justice. In fact, to them it must be a loathsome, abominable thing. Such is the only conclusion to be drawn from the unjust verdicts for which the courts were evidently notorious. The leaders of society were marked by moral perversity. They permitted and practiced crookedness instead of equity. (Allen 1976, 317)

The challenge Micah issues is no different then the one he started the 2nd message with, but now he includes the courts. Do we have a list anywhere that is more complete than the generalized one Micah presents? His prophetic colleague Isaiah provides one.

Isaiah 3:2–3

“The mighty man and the man of war, The judge and the prophet, And the diviner and the elder; The captain of fifty and the honorable man, The counselor and the skillful artisan, And the expert enchanter.” (NKJV)

Of course, today, there is no issue with the courts, judges or those who lead us politically is there? Corruption was all about the ruling elite of Israel and Judah, the same for most western countries today as well.

Just open your favorite news web site and someone is being accused of corruption. In fact, it seems to almost be a requirement for office anymore. Lie about who you are and what you have done and then once in office tell everyone it was a lie. No, never admit any of it. That is the standard today.

Deuteronomy 16:19–20

“You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. You shall follow what is altogether just, that you may live and inherit the land which the LORD your God is giving you.” (NKJV)

Judgement for a bribe, so much for the secular marketplace.

It must be better at Temple, right? No, the priests and the prophets are both in it for the money.

The leaders use God talk; they pay the religious leadership enough money to pronounce blessings on their wickedness. God is nowhere at all in their actions, and nothing is being done according to the Torah, but they are relying on their being Jews, God’s chosen people as a guarantee that all is well. They are totally ignoring what the Lord told them.

Because of the leadership, the secular, religious and economic, judgment is coming. Micah wants to make sure there is a clear understanding of what Zion will look like once judgement comes.

Micah 3:12

“Therefore on account of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, And the mountain of the temple will become high places of a forest.” (NASB 2020)

Here is the thing, for Judah, this prophetic announcement was heard. King Hezekiah took notice of what it was that Micah was saying.

History does tell us, though, that this radical message of judgment helped avert divine judgment in Micah's time. It was this oracle in particular that was remembered as the turning point, in causing the king and people to repent. The preaching of judgment can affect change. (Dempster 2017, 121)

This still holds true today. We live in the last days, those days that Jesus talked more about than any other. His message has not changed from the message of Micah. Repent is the call yet it is still not the favorable thing to do.

We see earthquakes are taking place everywhere, yet we think we have time. We are literally treading water next to the ark.

1 Thessalonians 4:16–18

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be suddenly caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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.
- Boyd, Bob. 1990. "Assyrian Brutality." *Bible and Spade* 3 (2).
- Dempsey, Carol J., Marvin A. Sweeney, Chris A. Franke, Kelly J. Murphy, Wilma Ann Bailey, Corrine L. Carvalho, and Anatheia E. Portier-Young. 2014. "Themes and Perspectives in the Prophets: Truth, Tragedy, Trauma." In *The Old Testament and Apocrypha, Fortress Commentary on the Bible*, edited by Gale A. Yee, Hugh R. Page Jr. and Matthew J. M. Coomber. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- 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.
- Gignilliat, Mark S. 2019. *Micah: An International Theological Commentary, The International Theological Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*. Edited by Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain. London: T&T Clark.
- Glibrant, Thoralf. 1998. "מִיכָה." In *The Old Testament Hebrew-English Dictionary, The Complete Biblical Library*. WORDsearch.
- Hoyt, JoAnna M. 2018. *Amos, Jonah & Micah, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary*. Edited by H. Wayne House and William D. Barrick. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
- 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.
- Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, M. E. J. Richardson, and J. J. Stamm. 1994-2000. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Brill.
- Nogalski, James D. 2011. *The Book of the Twelve: Hosea-Malachi, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary*. Edited by Leslie Andres and Samuel E. Balentine. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Incorporated.
- Powls 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.
- Redmond, Eric, William Curtis, and Ken Fentress. 2016. *Exalting Jesus in Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk*. Nashville, TN: Holman Research.
- Tverberg, Lois. 2018. *Reading the Bible with Rabbi Jesus: How a Jewish Perspective Can Transform Your Understanding*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books: A Division of Baker Publishing Group.
- Waltke, Bruce K. 2007. *A Commentary on Micah*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Webb, William J., and Gordon K. Oest. 2019. *Bloody, Brutal and Barbaric?: Wrestling with Troubling War Texts*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press.

Wessels, Wilhelm J. 2009. "Empowered by the Spirit of Yahweh; A Study of Micah 3:8." Edited by Paul Elbert. *Journal of Biblical and Pneumatological Research* (Wipf and Stock Publishers) 1.